Rock Valley College

Self-Study Report | 2014

February 3, 2014

It is with both pride and humility that we present the Higher Learning Commission Self-study Report for Rock Valley College. We embarked on our self-study process in September of 2011, and the journey has been an excellent opportunity for reflection and challenge. As it is designed, the Self Study process afforded us this time to carefully assess our strengths, while identifying and acknowledging areas where we can improve. This process has been enlightening and rewarding, if not arduous, at times.

Before being named Interim President, I was intimately involved in the process and witnessed the collaboration of dozens of colleagues who have participated in what we all accept as one of our greatest responsibilities at the College. The teams have researched, written, questioned, shared, challenged, and rewritten throughout this time. The commitment and resolve of these team members cannot be understated, and I am grateful for their service.

The final Self-study Report is candid and clear. We are very proud of the service Rock Valley College provides to our students, yet we know we can – and will – do some things better. Each criterion was not only carefully evaluated and reported upon, but broadly discussed with faculty, staff, and administrators.

As the self-study process concludes, we look forward to the team visit to discuss our findings and share results and plans with them and our college community. This next step finds us at a time of transition at the College, and these discussions will provide both validation and strong direction for our future.

It is our pleasure to offer this Self-study Report and begin the next stage of the reaccreditation process.

Sincerely,

Michael Mastroianni
Interim President
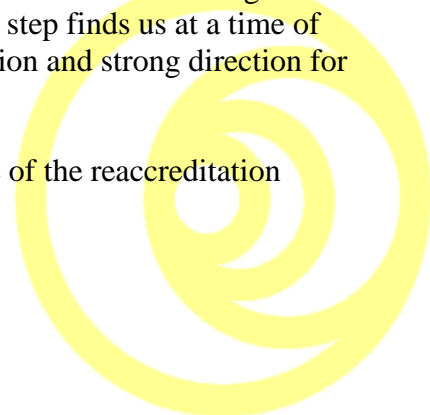
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PART I: OVERVIEW OF ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE

Rock Valley College (RVC) is a Class I community college serving the residents of Community College District 511 with administrative offices located on the main campus in Rockford, Illinois. Founded in 1964, the College is one of 40 community college districts recognized by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). RVC offers more than 100 courses for transfer, career programs, and certificates.

MISSION DOCUMENT

RVC is committed to the idea that community colleges change lives. To this end a mission document has been developed that frames the efforts of the College.   This mission document (discussed further in Part III, Chapter 1) contains vision, mission, and core values statements.

Vision: As its community's college, Rock Valley College makes a difference through teaching, learning and leading.	**Mission:** Rock Valley College is an educational leader in providing quality, accessible, lifelong learning opportunities, cultural enrichment, and support for economic and technological development. The College accomplishes its mission by providing the highest quality programs and services to: • Prepare students for successful transfer, competitive employment, professional, and personal growth • Foster innovative, collaborative relationships to advance a seamless educational system, an appreciation of the arts, economic, and technical development • Provide leadership in developing a nurturing culture that values learning, honors and respects each individual, and uses resources responsibly

Core Values:

Learner-centered Community	The College is dedicated to providing lifelong learning opportunities that foster student success.
Mutual Respect	At all times, the College upholds the dignity of each individual by being ethical, respectful, fair, and courteous in our communication and actions.
Excellence	By setting high expectations, the College promotes excellence in teaching and learning. We are service-centered and hold ourselves and each other accountable.
Diversity	The College promotes, celebrates and accepts diversity, including cultural and ethnic diversity, diversity of thought, and diverse views of others.
Collaboration	The College values working together and with the community in innovative, enriching partnerships.
Innovation	The College anticipates change and explores creative approaches to address the future.
Public Trust	The College honors the trust placed in us by the public and upholds it through quality of service, integrity of actions, and efficient use of resources.

HISTORICAL PROFILE

For almost 50 years, RVC has offered comprehensive educational opportunities in a broad range of subjects to tens of thousands of residents of its service district. The College was established in 1964

through a district-wide referendum after a two-year study established the need for a community college. RVC's district is comprised of Winnebago and Boone counties, and parts of Stephenson, Ogle, McHenry, and DeKalb counties.

In addition to the main campus located on a 217-acre tract of land at Mulford and Spring Brook Roads, RVC operates programs at other local facilities, including the following:
- Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE), home to several health and technical programs, as well as general education classes (Samuelson Road, Rockford)
- Learning and Opportunity Center (Stewart Square, downtown Rockford)
- Aviation Center at the Chicago-Rockford International Airport (on Falcon Road, Rockford)
- Truck Driver Training (2816 North Main Street, Rockford)
- Bell School Road Center, which houses the college's Center for Learning in Retirement (CLR) program (Bell School Road, Rockford).

The Bengt Sjostrom Starlight Theatre, located on RVC's main campus, is one of the Midwest's largest and most successful summer outdoor theaters. Starlight Theatre has a one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art, open-air, star-shaped roof.

RVC holds Continuing Education classes at more than 50 sites throughout its district, and operates employment and training programs at the Illinois Employment Training Center (303 North Main Street, Rockford). The College is involved in workplace training programs, innovative cooperative programs with area high schools and state-of-the-market technology programs for business and industry.

Since opening for classes in 1965, RVC has grown from a small community college with 35 faculty members and 1,100 students to an institution of approximately 160 faculty members and 250 part-time adjunct faculty (credit classes) and more than 8,600 students.

DISTRICT PROFILE

As stated previously, the College's district is comprised of Winnebago and Boone counties, as well as parts of Stephenson, Ogle, McHenry, and DeKalb counties. Within this region is an urban center, Rockford, IL, where the main campus is located and the population of which largely feeds enrollment at RVC. District 511 also contains a number of rural areas governed by smaller municipalities.

Rock Valley College District 511

In 2013, the RVC region housed approximately 351,000 people, comprising approximately 3% of the population of the State of Illinois. Over the last five years, the population in this region has increased less than one percent as compared to approximately 2% growth in the State. Most people living within this region are White (72%), Hispanic/Latino (13%), or Black/African American (11%). Figure 1 below illustrates the demographic distribution by race/ethnicity across a 10-year period. While the number of Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American is increasing, the region served by RVC continues to be predominantly White.
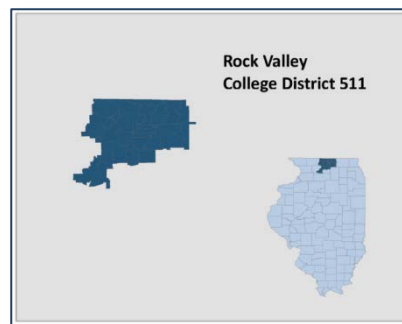
Figure 1: Race/Ethnicity Demographic of RVC Region, 2004-2013
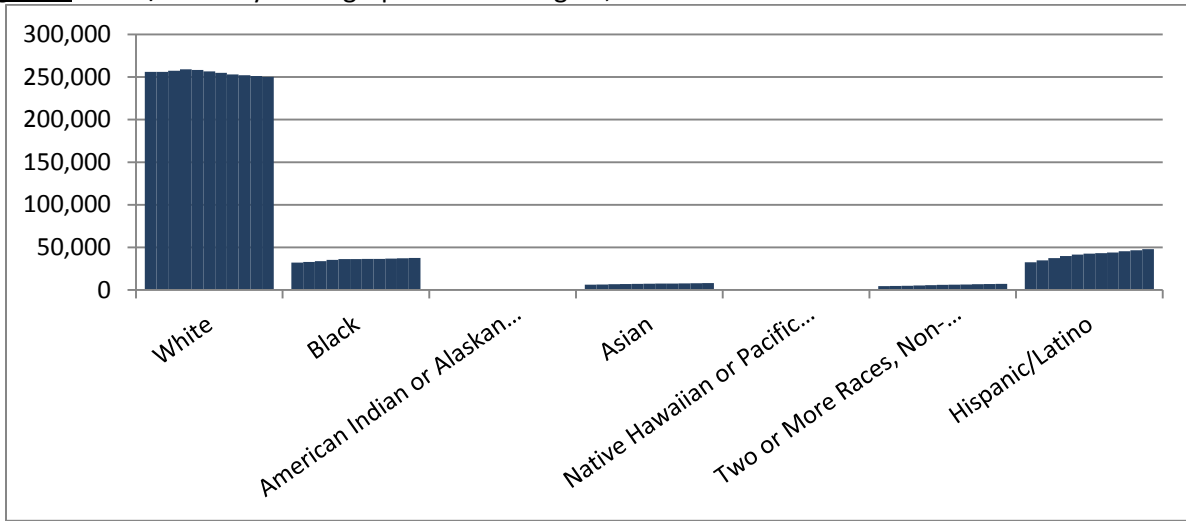
In 2013, those 40-59 years old (28%) and those under 20 years old (27%) represented a slightly larger proportion of the population as compared to those 20 to 39 years old (24%); see Figure 2. Figure 3 presents age demographics of the RVC region across a 10-year span. These data illustrate a persistent dip in rates of individuals between the ages of 20 to 39 years old as compared to those under the age of 20 and between 40 and 59 years of age.

Figure 2: Age Demographic of RVC Region, 2013
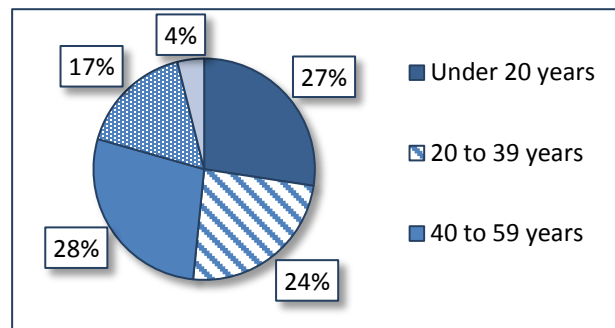
Figure 3: Age Demographic of RVC Region, 2004-2013

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative
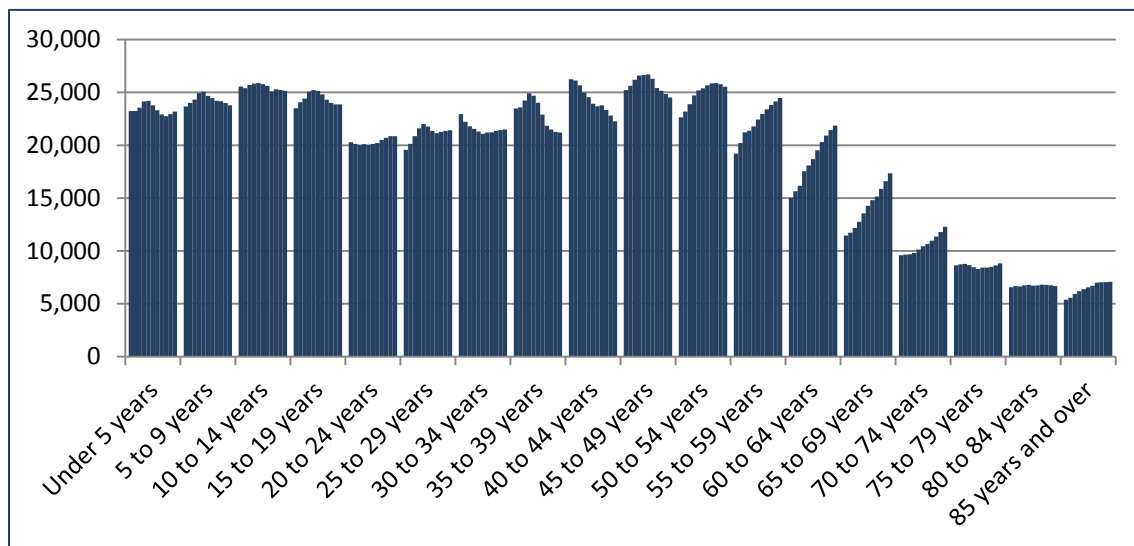
When looking at levels of educational attainment in the region (see Figure 4), data indicates that less than half (43%) of the population has attended college or earned a higher education degree. Approximately 17% have less than a high school diploma.

Figure 4: Education Attainment of RVC Region, 2013
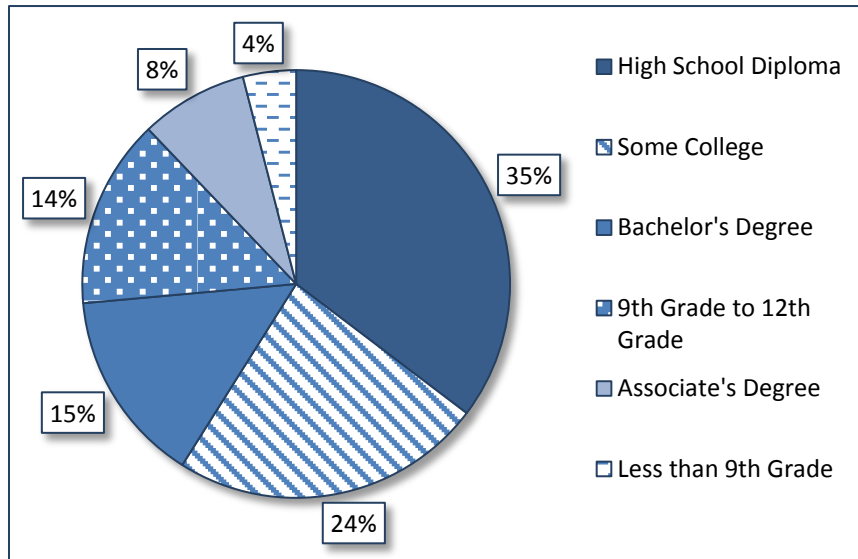
STUDENT PROFILE

RVC served 15,759 credit students and 5,537 non-credit students in the 2011-12 reporting year (unduplicated). The breakdown of the student body by gender was 38% male and 62% female. The breakdown of the student body by ethnicity was 78% whites and 22% minorities. The students' overall median age was 29.

As shown in Table 1, RVC served 1,009 associate's degree graduates and 527 certificate graduates in the 2011-12 reporting year. A total of 2,416 continuing students pursued but did not complete a credential during the reporting year, while another 9,408 students prepared for transfer to another institution. RVC also served 206 dual credit students, 2,193 basic education students, and 4,619 personal enrichment students. In the analysis, we exclude the credit production of personal enrichment students under the assumption that they do not attain workforce skills that will increase their earnings. Workforce and all other students comprised the remaining 918 students.

> **NOTE:**
> A Student Profile data brief is developed each Fall and Spring semester for credit-seeking students. The most recent Student Profile is housed on the Institutional Research page of the College website.

Altogether, RVC students completed 162,123 credit hour equivalents (or CHEs) during the 2011-12 reporting year. The average number of CHEs per student (excluding personal enrichment students) was 9.4.

Table 1: RVC Enrollment by Student Type, 2013

Category	Headcount	Total CHEs	Average CHEs
Associate's degree graduates	1009	16,916	16.8
Certificate graduates	527	7,691	14.6
Continuing students	2,416	17,423	7.2
Transfer track students	9,408	102,227	10.9
Dual credit students	206	2,549	12.4
Basic education students	2,193	9,903	4.5
Personal enrichment students	4,619	4,917	1.1
Workforce and all other students	918	498	0.5
Total/average	**21,296**	**162,123**	**9.4**

FACILITIES ENHANCEMENTS

In 1965, the 217-acre tract of land on Mulford Road, known as Spring Brook Farm, was designated as the campus for the college; classes were originally offered in the downtown armory. The old farmhouse became the administration building and still contains the president's office. Temporary buildings were used for classes and student services and were fully used through 2003. The first three permanent buildings were completed in 1969. In 1971, the educational resources center, student center and physical education center were completed and the building on Falcon Road was purchased to house the aviation maintenance technology program. The Bell School Road facility was purchased in 1982. The technology center was completed in 1988, and was built to address economic recession issues such as downsizing and plant closure by equipping workers with additional skills.

In 1999, the college purchased and renovated the Rockford School District's vocational-technical center on Samuelson Road, later to be names The Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE). In 2001, the college purchased a house on Spring Brook Road, adjacent to the college. The RVC Foundation along with the marketing and communications offices are now located in that facility. The new and expanded Bengt Sjostrom Theater (aka Starlight Theater) was completed in 2003 to house RVC's Starlight Theatre. In 2004, a new Support Services Building was constructed and two phases of remodeling were completed in the Student Center with the Student Center Atrium addition opening in the following year (i.e., 2005). Building renovations continued with the Educational Resource Center in 2007 and the Physical Education Center in 2009.   The Jacobs Center for Science and Math (JCSM) held classes for the first time during the Fall 2011 semester. In 2011 the Learning & Opportunity Center, a leased facility, was opened in downtown Rockford.

Current facilities efforts include remodeling of two classroom buildings – CLI planning began in 2011 with occupancy scheduled for Fall 2016 and CLII planning began in 2013 with occupancy scheduled for Fall 2018. Planning for a designated arts building and venues started in 2013 and continues, as does

visioning for renovations to the SCCE and a facility to support the expansion of the Aviation Maintenance program.

ENDOWMENT ENHANCEMENTS

The College is supported in its efforts by the RVC Foundation, a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation established in 1979. The Foundation is responsible for encouraging and administering private gifts to enhance the College's ability to serve the public. The Foundation recognizes that College funds are limited and supplemental private gifts are needed to provide rewarding, stimulating, and challenging educational experiences. Gifts to the Foundation either directly or indirectly improve the quality of educational instruction, provide better equipment and facilities, and make it possible for more students to obtain an education.

Since 1999, the RVC Foundation has raised more than $12 million in cash and pledges for scholarships, grants to faculty and staff for innovative projects and programs outside the College budget, equipment, campus beautification, and capital projects. Of that, over $1.3 million has been awarded to students through the Foundation scholarship program. In addition, the Foundation has allocated over $748,000 in grants to faculty and staff to enhance classroom instruction, experiential learning, and professional development for RVC instructors and staff.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

The program review process, Academic Plan, and Strategic Enrollment Management Plan have guided academic program enhancements at the College since the last comprehensive evaluation visit. For example, through a process of systematic program review, developmental math engaged in and implemented a redesign of its program in the fall of 2009. This effort focused on promoting student success through course delivery in 8-week modules rather than 16-week semester courses.   In reviewing data, the faculty noted that students in these developmental courses were often successful in the first eight weeks of a course, but struggled in the second half, often due to personal reasons. These students would then have to repeat the entire course. By dividing a 16-week semester into two, eight-week modules, students were able to complete course requirements in smaller chunks, generally improving successful completion of the developmental math sequence.   The redesign also provided a structure of support and concept reinforcement through an online homework system and a spiral curricular model, as well as a highly organized and consistent scope and sequence of content, instruction, and expectations.

The 2008-2012 Academic Plan was developed in the summer and fall of 2008 by an Academic Planning Committee comprised of faculty and administrators from both the academic and student development areas. The 2012 -2015 Academic Plan is a revision and continuation of the previous plan. Generally, updates are provided to the faculty twice a year to show progress in accomplishing actions steps in the plan and to highlight program enhancements. While academic planning at RVC is directly connected to the College mission statement and Key Performance Indicators, it is also linked to the broader higher education context and contains a cross walk to demonstrate support of IBHE Public Agenda Goals, ICCB initiatives and the HLC Criteria for Accreditation.

OTHER ACCREDITATIONS

Accreditation provides assurance that programs meet established standards of quality. Specialized accreditation evaluates quality of specific programs and is often provided through professional organizations. Data collected from RVC departments and programs are provided to report on the status of specialized accreditation. Table 2 provides the review cycle, current status, and time of next review for specialized accreditation of RVC's programs.

Table 2: Specialized Accreditation of RVC Programs

Accrediting Body	RVC Programs	Accreditation Cycle	Status	Next Review
Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology	Surgical Technology	10-year cycle	Accredited	2022
American Welding Society	Welding Technology	Annual self-audit; site visit every 3rd year	Accredited facility	2014
Commission on Dental Accreditation	Dental Hygiene	7-year cycle self-study with annual updates	Accredited	2017
Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care	Respiratory Care	10-year cycle self-study with annual updates	Accredited	2022
Federal Aviation Administration	Aviation Technology	Semi-annual site visit determined by FAA	Operations approved	Visits determined by FAA
Bureau of Apprenticeship Training (USDOL/ETA/OATELS-BAT)	Electrician Apprenticeship	Facility accreditation, curriculum modified via advisory committees	Accredited	Ongoing through advisory committees
	Ironworkers Apprenticeship		Accredited	
	Sheet Metal Workers Apprenticeship		Accredited	
Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Board of Nursing	Associate Degree in Nursing	State directed by National Standards with annual follow-up (based on national licensure exam pass rate > 75%)	Continued process; approved	Summer, annual
	LPN Bridge Program			
	LPN Program			
Illinois Department of Public Health	Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.)	None; mandatory reporting after completion of each C.N.A. cohort	Continued process; approved	Each 8 or 16 weeks per cohort
National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation	Automotive Technology	Curriculum reviewed every 5 years; instructors need 20 hours in CEs	Certified	2016
Automotive Service Excellence	Automotive Technology	Instructors certified every 5 years	Certified	Ongoing
Office of the State Fire Marshall	Fire Science	Curriculum meets required guidelines of State Fire Marshall's office		
Accrediting Council for Collegiate Graphic Communications	Graphic Arts	6-year cycle	Accredited	2018

STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2000-2001, the College developed Strategic Initiatives and Performance Outcomes. In 2002, the College, sensitive to the needs of the district, continued to strive to "make a difference through teaching, learning, and leading," An inclusive group of faculty, staff, and administration worked to identify the programs that were successful, and those that needed to be restructured to meet the needs of a changing community.   By establishing a planning team, the College attempted to break down communication silos, and involve internal and external stakeholders in setting a direction for change. Open forums were conducted, and a Strategic Master Plan was developed under three main focus areas – maximizing student success, strengthening basic processes, and building partnerships. This plan guided the allocation of resources for 2003 and attempted to emphasize core values of mutual respect, excellence, diversity, collaboration, innovation, and public trust.

In 2004-2005, the planning processes changed with the arrival of a new college president. At this time a Planning Officer was named, and initiatives were developed under strategic focus areas aligned to the roles and areas of responsibility of the College's Leadership Team. Early on in this process, the Board of Trustees conducted a SWOT analysis, and plans were reviewed through College forums, the Leadership Team, and President's Council, which was comprised of administrators, faculty, and staff. In this process the focus areas and initiatives changed regularly, sometimes annually, in an effort to be responsive to community and College needs.

A glaring need to tie planning not only to the budget but to data, became evident, and a group of leadership team members went to a special planning seminar on data driven decision making. Upon their return from the seminar, they incorporated DDDM (Data-Driven Decision Making) into the processes of planning and decision making at the College. Seminars were conducted, and new plans were developed based on data. Eventually, an institutional research department was formed, to assist faculty, staff, and administration in outcomes assessment, and in decisions generated from program reviews, and other planning done at all levels of the College. Goals were tied to the Academic Plan, the financial planning model, the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Public Agenda goals.

The following details key initiatives from plans developed from 2008-12; monitoring updates of progress in addressing these initiatives were given to the Board of Trustees quarterly:

2008
- Launch a student and retention committee
- Implement strategic enrollment management
- Develop alternative delivery systems for courses
- Develop and implement an assessment plan
- Evaluate and revise developmental education
- Initiate partnerships with K-12
- Develop a community-wide literacy program
- Meet regional economic development interests with programs and partnerships
- Revise and expand the facilities master plan

2009
- Engaging the college community in a comprehensive academic plan
- Engage faculty in assessing student achievement and address recommendations of HLC
- Review and revise developmental curricula
- Support the expansion of an honors program
- Review the strategic enrollment management plan
- Renovate the Physical Ed Center
- Renovate the two classroom buildings
- Plan for a science and math building
- Develop and implement a risk management and emergency management plan
- Develop Ffrst year experience programs
- Publish the strategic enrollment management plan for RVC
- Provide student services at the Stenstrom Center
- Ensure the success of HEARRR (Higher Education Association of the Rock River Region)
- Begin a staff development program
- Revise the administrative policy manual
- Negotiate an FOP contract
- Use data to guide decision making
- Link current goals to strategic focus areas
- Bridge adult ed to developmental studies
- Implement alternative methods to deliver ESL and GED

2010
- Develop a multi-year major gifts fundraising plan
- Train in emergency awareness
- Implement the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan with a 5% growth in students
- Increase retention
- Offer developmental programs for faculty and staff to expand skills
- Develop diversity hiring efforts
- Implement the adjunct faculty institute
- Implement the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for benchmarks of college success
- Alter the focus of institutional research
- Reorganize EIGERlab due to merger and establish it as a profit center
- Clarify the role of the assessment coordinator, IT and IR in Data Driven Decision Making
- Implement the comprehensive academic plan
- Enhance and expand P-16 partnerships
- Develop a strategic plan for athletics
- Tailor and market short-term certificate programs for the unemployed
- Assess IT's capacity to meet college needs
- Complete and prioritize components of the IT Tactical Plan
- Implement the Facilities Master Plan

2011
- Offer quality educational programs that meet workforce needs
- Seek additional dual credit partnerships
- Seek HLC approval for on-line degrees
- Engage in on-going assessment
- Assess student achievement of RVC's diversity, student learning outcomes, through co-curricular and curricular programs
- Implement a major gifts initiative for the Science and Math center
- Complete construction of the Science and Math center
- Plan for AIC (arts instruction center)
- Implement next phase of emergency preparedness
- Implement strategies for SEM (Strategic enrollment management)
- Implement strategies to enhance first year student success
- Establish goals for a downtown site
- Review and create new policies for job eval, wage and hour, and administrative programs
- Create a leadership development program
- Recruit and hire diverse faculty and staff
- Complete successful contract negotiations with IFT and FOP
- Coordinate IR with Planning
- Tailor and market short term certificate programs
- Shorten time for DWP(Dislocated Worker) Clients to get orientation and to classes
- Create a one-stop for manufacturing and business programs; increase effectiveness of small business programs
- Partner with Rockford Area Economic Development Center

2012
- Beginning the self-study process
- Complete all data for the self-study
- Define and make public RVC's goals for student persistence and completion
- Develop a plan for an environmental scan
- Explore options for new health career programs
- Initiate strategies that support student achievement
- Identify strategies that support performance based funding
- Finalize the 2012-15 revised academic plan
- Continue curriculum alignment with area high schools
- Finalize a comprehensive capital campaign to raise multi-millions for various projects
- Complete the design for the AIC
- Choose project architect for CL-1 and 2 renovation
- Use environmental scan to create new academic programming
- Determine annual enrollment goals
- Develop and promote new programs & certificates that meet community needs
- Develop strategies to increase completion for select AAS degree seekers
- Evaluate the success of the LOC
- Finalize the revised 2012-15 Strategic enrollment management plan
- Develop a plan for staff professional development needs
- Implement a plan for selecting grants aligned to strategic planning
- Determine job placement rates and create support structure for career programs
- Incorporate outreach in the revised Academic Plan

In 2012, the College further refined the planning process, by assigning planning to the Executive Director of Institutional Research, who, along with College leadership in Data-driven Decision Making (DDDM) meetings, modified the plans to include goals, intents (focus areas) and initiatives. The current College Strategic Plan covers the time period of 2013-15. The Board reviews progress on the plan on a quarterly

basis. The current plan included the following goals:

1. Foster student's attainment of their academic goals and prepare them for life-long learning to succeed in an ever-changing world.
2. Enhance College and community partners
3. Ensure institutional vitality through continuous improvement
4. Maintain the College's strong regional identity as an institution that provides quality education, workforce development, and cultural enrichment
5. Promote an inclusive and diverse community that enhances the College's climate and workforce.

A Board & Leadership Team retreat was held in the fall of 2013 to refine the Board's vision and to incorporate that vision into the College's planning focus. Another retreat to continue with this process is currently planned for January of 2014.

ACCREDITATION HISTORY

RVC was first accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1971, with the stipulation that another accreditation visit would be conducted within three to five years. In May 1974 the on-site visit was conducted resulting in the college being granted full accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution on June 25, 1974. A comprehensive self-study and an on-site evaluation were conducted in November 1983, and continued accreditation was granted on June 22, 1984. After the February 1994 site evaluation, RVC was granted continued accreditation for ten years on August 5, 1994, with the next comprehensive study scheduled for 2003-2004 and a stipulation to complete a comprehensive assessment plan by March 1, 1995. This requirement was met by RVC in July 1995.

The last comprehensive evaluation visit occurred April 19-21, 2004. A focus visit and follow up reports were required as a result of that site visit (See Part II: Responses to Prior Review of this document for details), and accreditation was continued for another ten-year period.

In July 2010, RVC submitted a Substantive Change Application seeking approval to offer distance education degrees. After a February 2011 focus visit related to distance delivery, RVC was approved to offer up to 20% of its total degree programs through distance education.

GOALS OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

Attaining continued accreditation is certainly a primary goal of the self-study process; however, RVC will also use the process to engage in continuous improvement. The self-study will review changes made on our campus over the past ten years, but will also be a source of information for future planning and decision making processes. The goals of the self-study are as follow:
- Ensure that every college employee has the opportunity to participate in self-study and continuous improvement processes.
- Gain a better understanding of RVC students and the College community and identify ways to

better serve them.
- Identify strengths to build upon and challenges to meet.
- Receive continued accreditation.

SELF-STUDY PROCESS

RVC officially began with an introduction to accreditation and the self-study process at a [Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees](#) (September 6, 2011) followed by a College-wide kick off presented by Karen Solomon in September of 2011. Dr. Jack Becherer, former President and Dr. Diane Nyhammer, former Chief Academic Officer and Provost identified Ms. Susan Busenbark, Vice President of Liberal Arts and Sciences to lead the College in this effort.

The HLC Accreditation Steering Committee was formed such that two members of the committee would serve as co-chairs for criteria subcommittees. Subcommittees were formed with membership that was representative of faculty and staff from across the College, but also with attention to roles within the College that might best inform the self-study process. In addition to opportunities to participate on criteria subcommittees, all faculty and staff were provided opportunities to participate in review and feedback of the process through various development day activities (see Timeline for Self-study Process below). Updates were also provided at meetings and study sessions of the Board of Trustees, as well as to various faculty and staff groups and committees.

HLC ACCREDITATION STEERING COMMITTEE
Co-chairs.
- Ms. Susan Busenbark, Vice President of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- Dr. Lisa Mehlig, Executive Director of Institutional Research, Co-chair of Criterion 5 Committee

Members.
- Ms. Sharon Cooper, Faculty of Business, CIS, and Engineering (Business), Co-chair of Criterion 4 Committee
- Mr. Ron Geary, Dean of Social Sciences, Co-chair of Criterion 3 Committee
- Ms. Amy (Morgan) Feliciano, Administrative Assistant to Vice President of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Ms. Theresa Paulette Gilbert, Faculty of Communication (Composition and Literature), Co-chair of Criterion 3 Committee
- Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President, Co-chair of Criterion 2 Committee
- Mr. Michael Mastroianni, formerly Vice President of Career & Technical Education & Outreach, Interim President, Co-chair of Criterion 5 Committee
- Ms. Kathy McCarty, Administrative Assistant to Chief Academic Officer/Academic Affairs
- Dr. Lamata Mitchell, Dean of Communication, Co-chair of Criterion 1 Committee
- Dr. Diane Nyhammer, former Chief Academic Officer and Provost, Co-chair of Criterion 2 Committee
- Ms. Pam Owens, Executive Director of Foundation and College Advancement, Co-chair of Criterion 1 Committee
- Dr. Patrick Peyer, Dean of Enrollment Management, Student Retention & Success, Co-chair of Criterion 4 Committee

HLC Self-study Criterion Committees

Criterion 1: Mission.
- Ms. Ebony Caldwell, former Coordinator of Intercultural Student Services
- Ms. Cynthia Haggard, former Director of Financial Services
- Ms. Tammy Lewis, Program Director, Community Outreach
- Ms. Stacy McCaskill, Faculty of Business, CIS, and Engineering (Business)
- Ms. Maureen Taylor, Director of Community Education
- Mr. Maurice West, former Career Counselor of Dislocated Worker Program

Criterion 2: Ethical and Responsible Conduct.
- Mr. Jim Conley, Faculty of Business, CIS, and Engineering (CIS), Academic Chair of CIS
- Mr. Brent Eckert, Technical Service Coordinator, Library
- Mr. Gerald GeRue, Faculty of Business, CIS, and Engineering (Business), Academic Chair of Business
- Ms. Julie Hernandez, Faculty of Social Sciences (Psychology)
- Ms. Elizabeth (Pearl) Kinney, Faculty of Sciences (Chemistry), Academic Chair of Chemistry
- Ms. Jacki Minnihan, Director of Business Services
- Mr. Brian Wagner, Faculty of Social Sciences (Philosophy)
- Ms. Mary Tuite, former member of Board of Trustees

Criterion 3: Academic Programs – Quality, Resources, and Support.
- Ms. Katie Boughton, former Administrative Assistant in Academic Affairs
- Ms. Barbara Calvette, Faculty of Nursing
- Ms. Mary Carlson, Faculty of Nursing
- Ms. Suzanne Dooley, Director of the Learning and Opportunities Center (LOC)
- Dr. Tom Lombardo, Faculty of Business, CIS, and Engineering (Engineering), Instructional Designer of Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE)
- Ms. Amanda Lonsway, Academic Advisor
- Mr. Rob Mawyer, Faculty of Communication (Composition and Literature); member of Faculty Professional Development Committee
- Ms. Jacki Moss, Faculty of Respiratory Care
- Ms. Amanda Smith, Director of Adult Education
- Mr. Greg Wear, former Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Mr. Clarissa Wilkerson, former Faculty of Business, CIS, and Engineering (Accounting)

Criterion 4: Academic Programs – Evaluation and Improvement.
- Dr. Anita Bravo, Faculty of Social Sciences (History)
- Dr. Amy Diaz, Associate Vice President of Student Development
- Ms. Paula Grueder, Curriculum Coordinator
- Ms. Abby Jenkins, former Volleyball Coach
- Ms. Lois Lundgren, Associate Dean of Nursing
- Mr. Vince Madama, former Associate Dean of Mathematics, Human Services, and Fitness, Wellness, and Sport

- Ms. Michelle Rothmeyer, Registrar
- Mr. Ron Schultz, Associate Dean of Allied Health and Technical Programs
- Ms. Heather Snider, Institutional Research and Effectiveness Specialist

Criterion 5: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness.
- Mr. David Buchen, Grant Coordinator
- Mr. Jeremy Chamberlain, Faculty in Mathematics
- Ms. Shurice Hunter, Director of Compensation, Benefits, and Employee Relations
- Ms. Coni Johnson, Programmer Analyst in Information Technology
- Dr. Evan McHugh, former Associate Dean of Sciences
- Mr. Sam Overton, Vice President of Administrative Services
- Ms. Lynn Perkins, Director of Enrollment Management and Judicial Affairs
- Mr. Randy Schaeffer, member of Board of Trustees
- Ms. Cyndi Stonesifer, Director of Financial Aid

TIMELINE FOR THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Timeline chart:

Fall 2011
- ✓ Board of Trustees presentation (September 6)
- ✓ Self-Study Kickoff with staff liaison, Karen Solomon (September 30)

Spring 2012
- ✓ Faculty Development Day activities (January 13)
- ✓ Staff and faculty Development Day activities with links to Core Components (April 5)
- ✓ Board of Trustees Study Session presentation (May 22)

Summer 2012
- ✓ Student Learning Outcomes faculty discussions (August 31 + July 24)
- ✓ Criterion 4 Draft
- ✓ Criterion 5 Draft

Fall 2012
- ✓ Staff and faculty Development Day activities with links to Core Components (September 4)
- ✓ Board of Trustees Teaching and Learning Committee presentation (September 14)
- Criterion 1, 2, 3 Drafts (December 21)

Spring 2013
- ✓ Review drafts
- ✓ Faculty Development Day (January 11)
- ✓ Adjunct Development Day (January 12)
- ✓ Staff and faculty Development Day activities with links to Core Components (March 28)

Fall 2013
- Awareness and Information Campaign
- ✓ Review of completed self-study draft (September)
- Update Institutional Profile
- ***Submit self-study (December)

Spring 2014
- Site Visit Preparations (January – March)
- *** Site Visit (March 31 – April 2)

FORMAT OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

The RVC Institutional Report will be organized around the five criteria and core components. Part I provides an overview of the College. In Part II, the College's responses to prior accreditation review are summarized. Part III contains five chapters, each of which responds to one of the self-study criteria. Each chapter opens with a brief summary, supported by evidence and recommendations from the institution's self-study. Each chapter will describe how the college demonstrates compliance with the core components and criteria, support the assertions with data, draw conclusions, and develop recommendations.

REQUEST FOR ACCREDITATION

The self-study report demonstrates that RVC satisfies all accreditation requirements. The College has responded to the Higher Learning Commission's concerns, advice, and suggestions as articulated in the site visit report of 2004 and subsequent monitoring reports. RVC has documented that it meets the *Federal Compliance Requirements* and provides evidence and supporting documentation establishing a pattern of meeting/addressing the five criteria for accreditation. As a result, RVC requests continued accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Associations of Colleges and Schools.

PART II: RESPONSES TO PRIOR REVIEW

ISSUES AND CONCERNS FROM THE 2004 EVALUATION VISIT

Challenges. The visiting team indicated that RVC had not been sufficiently responsive to the following challenges noted in the 1994 site visit. Specifically, little was done to addresses these identified challenges until the year prior to or of the 2004 site visit.

- **Assessment:** The College's response was deemed inadequate. The visiting team noted that while RVC responded adequately to the request for an assessment plan, that plan was presented a year later than requested and very little was done to enact the plan. Furthermore, until the spring of 2004, little assessment was conducted beyond the course assessment level. The College's continued efforts in assessment are detailed throughout this report.

- **Course Syllabi:** The 1994 site visit noted that a significant number of course syllabi omitted important information and provided the College with a list of such items to include in subsequent course syllabi development. Efforts to address this issue systematically across the institution were not addressed until the spring of 2003 when two guidelines were created – a template for master course syllabi to be used when a course is initially approved and a set of guidelines for faculty to use when creating the course syllabi to be given to students. The College regularly reviews and systematically refines guidelines for the development of master course syllabi. Templates and guidance documents are accessible through the College website and intranet (i.e., the Quarry), and presented in the Faculty Handbook (p. 28).   Furthermore, since Fall of 2012, the College has conducted audits of Master Course Syllabi (MCS). In this process, instructor syllabi are randomly selected from across the college and audited against Master Course Syllabi. The purpose is to determine whether the instructor syllabi contain the required components and match the MCS where necessary (e.g., course description, course objectives, and required readings).

Federal Compliance. The visiting team indicated that RVC fulfilled federal compliance requirements. However, the following were identified as reportable problems the College needed to address:

- **WIA Funds:** The visiting team noted that WIA funds were being spent without following the College bid process and that reimbursement of these funds was being claimed before items were received. Furthermore, the College's accounting records did not support reimbursement claims. The incident identified was a unique incidence in which the College purchased equipment as sole sourced per grant specifications. Only after the purchase, was the College notified that the purchase should have been bid out. Since this incident, WIA funds have been spent in a manner consistent with the College bid process and funds are being claimed after receipt of items. Also, RVC accounting records document and support the reimbursement claims.

- **Student Complaints**: While the visiting team noted that reported student complaints were resolved, they identified a lack of a student complaint log. The visiting team recommended that RVC implement a consistent student log of complaints to document that such complaints were being appropriately addressed. The College's Judicial Affairs office has maintained a student complaint log since the 2007-2008 calendar year. Information documented in this log includes

the date, complaint, and resolution; a related annual report provides information about frequency of complaints by charge and disaggregates this information by the gender and ethnicity of the student.

Accreditation Criteria. The visiting team reviewed the College against five criteria. The following findings and recommendations were identified:

- **Criterion 1 – Mission**: No issues were identified.

- **Criterion 2 - Effective Organization of Resources to Accomplish Purpose**: The visiting team noted that institutional attention was needed in classroom maintenance, specifically improvement of cleanliness, and comprehensive scheduling analysis to ensure maximized classroom use at all hours. Institutional attention and follow-up focus visit by the Commission was recommended for two additional areas – stability of leadership, noting as problematic the combining or leaving open of key executive and top administrative positions, and fiscal responsibility (i.e., balancing budget).

- **Criterion 3 – Accomplishes Educational and Other Purposes**: The visiting team noted that institutional attention was needed in the funding for professional development, given that the $200 specified for this purpose per contract at the time was considered insufficient.

  Institutional attention and Commission follow-up through progress reports were also recommended for assessment of student learning outcomes. The visiting team noted limited progress across levels of assessment and in using data to drive curricular change. Furthermore, assessment efforts were viewed as being driven by external forces rather than a desire from within the College to improve institutional effectiveness.

- **Criterion 4 - Accomplishes Purposes and Strengthens Educational Effectiveness**: Institutional attention was identified as needed for three areas. In the first, planning, that the scope of partnership in the planning process was not sufficiently broad. Second, institutional research needed to be more responsive to the planning process and institutional effectiveness, more connected to student learning outcomes, and improve clarity of where and how data could be accessed. In the last area, construction of new facilities, it was noted that such efforts needed to be guided by the primary principle of student educational needs and that the next planned building (i.e., the fine arts complex) had limited general classroom space.

- **Criterion 5 - Integrity in Practices and Relationships**: Two areas were identified by the visiting team as in need of institutional attention – policies and procedures and fiscal responsibility.   In addressing policies and procedures, the College was advised to maintain current manuals and ensure they were readily accessible. Notes provided on fiscal responsibility include ensuring that practices and reporting meet ethical standards and are clearly communicated to the public.

PROGRESS REPORTS ON ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of the 2004 site visit, progress reports were required on the College's efforts to address assessment of student learning at all levels and as a comprehensive process. A synopsis of those reports

is provided below.

June 30, 2005. A progress report was submitted to the Commission on June 28, 2005. In that report the college outlined assessment activities which had continued since the site visit. There were two major areas of emphasis:
- Development of an infrastructure to support learning outcomes assessment that included a conceptual model, an institutional planning model that addressed assessment, as well as a leadership model for assessment, resource allocation, and professional development and training.
- Integration of assessment results in unit and college-wide plans for curriculum, instruction, and resource allocation.

In November 2005, the College was notified that the Commission accepted the report with stipulations. In the report, the Commission outlined some of the actions taken by the College related to student learning outcomes and noted evidence of the "impact of assessment results on teaching and learning" including:
- Assessment results provided rationales for some budgetary decisions and equipment purchases
- Course sequences, pre-requisites and requirements were being reviewed for their match with expectations in reading and writing competencies
- Common assessment methods for some disciplines had resulted in greater consistency in course content and grading criteria.

The Commission recommended that RVC should demonstrate in its June 30, 2006, progress report evidence of:
- Formal reports on program assessment
- Programmatic changes resulting from assessment
- Evidence that the assessment of student learning outcomes is informing decision making at the institution.

Additionally, in the staff comments section, the Commission found fault with the College's plan to link program assessment with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Program Review timelines.   The report noted that "assessing student learning outcomes at the program level and program reviews are not the same" and thus the "staff finds little evidence of momentum to establish an assessment culture at the program and institutional levels."

Furthermore, the report specifically asked that RVC should:
- Provide evidence "that the college has moved to program assessments that demonstrate student learning in line with the objectives of the program, and the mission and values of the college"
- Demonstrate "assessment processes in student learning, in program assessment, and progress in linking student assessment outcomes to planning, budgeting and general resource allocation"

June 30, 2006. A second report was submitted in June of 2006. In this report, RVC provided indications of a strengthened assessment infrastructure, reports, minutes, analysis, activities, interaction with planning, integration with program reviews, resource allocation, professional development, expanded

faculty involvement and control, institutional commitment, and accountability.

Despite considerable progress, the Higher Learning Commission continued to express concerns. Their concerns included lack of the following: data, analysis, documentation indicating formal use of institutional data to review and modify programs, measurable goals, a five-year program review schedule, evidence that programmatic changes resulted from assessment, and formal written reports to all the campus.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE 2004 EVALUATION VISIT

March 26-27, 2007. An HLC evaluation team conducted a focus visit to review issues and concerns identified in the 2004 evaluation visit, including leadership stability, fiscal stability, and assessment. Results of this visit indicate no further Commission attention was required in the areas of leadership stability and fiscal stability. However, a follow-up monitoring report on the status of assessment was recommended. This monitoring report was to address the extent the following:

- Extensive progress in program and course assessment using direct measures.
- Evidence of systematic analysis of data leading to changes in courses and curricula.
- Development of strategies for improvement with changes based on analysis along with evidence of impact on strategic planning.
- Evidence of consideration of assessment data in the college budget.

What had been missing at RVC prior to the focus visit was a clear college definition of assessment, college expectations, and, most importantly, a formal college assessment program. The publication of the Assessment Handbook on October 25, 2006, established all three. In the handbook, six assessment categories are identified: degree, program, course, class, student learning (general education), and institutional. Given the hard work of numerous college employees and the experiences of the Vice President of Academic Affairs at that time, a useful document and an effective program emerged. The program was all encompassing and faculty driven. Along with this formal structure, a tool was purchased (TracDat) to coordinate and integrate assessment goals and findings resulting in a very simple model of assessment implementation – development and submission of plans; use of TracDat for documenting, data gathering, and analysis; and completion of reports. Additional efforts in assessment are documented in Chapter 4, 4.B of this document.

PART III: RESPONSES TO CRITERIA

CHAPTER 1

CRITERIA 1: MISSION

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Criterion 1 Summary

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) identifies a common mission for the State's community colleges. According to this mission, community colleges are intended to "prepare people for college, for transfer to other colleges and universities, and for good paying jobs that demand high skills," as well as "provide adult, literacy, and continuing education and services" (http://www.iccb.state.il.us/thesystem.html).

> **Mission:**
> Rock Valley College is an educational leader in providing quality, accessible, lifelong learning opportunities, cultural enrichment, and support for economic and technological development.

The mission statement of the College addresses the breadth of learning opportunities outlined by the State's mission for community colleges. Through the following supporting evidence and documentation, the College will demonstrate that its mission is clearly and publicly articulated and that it guides the institution's operations.

> **Core Component**
> 1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1.A.1: The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and adopted by the governing board.

The College's current mission statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 13, 2001. Over the years, the mission statement has evolved to ensure that it is both relevant to and reflective of RVC's operations. The College first articulated its focus in 1985 with four goals. In 1992, a new mission statement and goals were identified, and in 2000 the College implemented a strategic planning process, which began with a thorough review of the mission and goals. That review process, undertaken by administrators, faculty, staff, and students, led directly to the development of the core values statements. The committee originally tasked with reviewing those statements represented each of the College's core constituencies, thus ensuring that all groups have a voice in articulating RVC's philosophy and vision. The resulting mission document, which contains vision, mission, and core value statements, continues to guide the efforts of the College. It has been reviewed and referenced in the development of strategic planning documents. As a result of the self-study, however, it has been noted that RVC does not have a formal, systematic process of regular review of the mission document. To address this gap, beginning in January 2014, the HLC Steering Committee initiated a Mission Review Committee. One faculty member and one staff member were identified to serve as co-chairs of this committee. Their

charge is to form a committee representative of the College community (i.e., to include representation from different employee groups, students, Board of Trustees, and community members), review existing mission documents and refine as necessary, and to establish a timeline for on-going review and affirmation of the mission document.

1.A.2: The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Academic Programs. Consistent with its stated mission, RVC provides academic programs through credit and non-credit course offerings that provide various pathways for community members to obtain, "quality, accessible, lifelong learning opportunities."
- General Education at the College is designed to offer the RVC community with learning opportunities to "develop the knowledge, skills, and habits reflected in the lives of educated persons and basic to all professions so that RVC students are capable of leading rewarding and responsible lives as productive, global citizens" (College Catalog, p. 3).
    - Transfer degrees including the Associate of Arts (A.A.), the Associate of Science (A.S.), the Associate in Engineering Sciences (A.E.S.), and the Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.). Descriptions of these degrees are provided on page 32 of the Course Catalog.

        It should be noted that at the time of submission of this document, the A.A.T. in Secondary Mathematics, the only A.A.T. degree currently offered at RVC, was in process for withdrawal. The decision to withdraw this degree offering was based on the lack of transferability of courses required within the degree program. Also, when one of the required math courses moved to a four-credit course in an effort to improve transfer of this degree to Northern Illinois University (NIU), the credit hour requirements moved to 66 credit hours, which would have required additional ICCB approval. It was deemed that improving the transferability of the specific course was a greater overall benefit to more students than the A.A.T. provided for secondary math education majors.

    - Career Technical Education (CTE) including an Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree and several certificate programs "in areas where job-entry training and educational requirements usually can be met in less than two years" (College Catalog, pp. 44). A comprehensive list of these certificate programs can be found on pages 45-46 of the College Catalog.

- Community Outreach at the College offers the RVC community, "a variety of informal programs that are cultural and recreational, as well as educational" (College Catalog, p. 150).
    - Community Education Outreach including Continuing Education, Community Education (including Whiz Kids program), Center for Learning and Retirement (CLR), and Traffic Safety

    - Business Outreach including Business and Professional Institute (BPI), Office of Employment and Grants (including Dislocated Workers Program)

    - The EIGERlab which "serves as a one-stop resource for entrepreneurs and innovators" (College Catalog, p. 150), including a Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)

and Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

- o Starlight and Studio Theaters

RVC understands that the educational needs of each community member are unique and that many have little to no prior experience with college. To this end, a new, single port of entry (i.e., Get Started @ RVC) for those interested in credit or non-credit offerings reinforces the College's efforts to help students and community members navigate through the various learning opportunities offered.

Data in the Student Profile section of Part I of this document demonstrate an enrollment profile that addresses credit and non-credit course offerings and is consistent with the College's mission document.
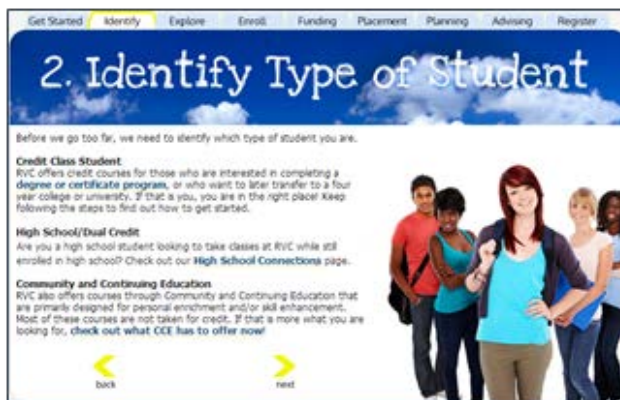
Student Support Services: The College also provides several student support services, including, but not limited to the following:

- Academic Advising
- Career Services
- Personal and Success Counseling
- Disability Support Services
- Intercultural Student Services

- Testing Center
- Tutoring Center
- Writing Center
- Math Lab
- Student Life

These student support services are detailed in the Course Catalog (beginning on page 23) and on the College's website.

In addition to these student support services, the Estelle M. Black Library, housed on the College's main campus, supports the academic needs of the RVC students, faculty, and the larger District community. Any resident of the District 511 community can acquire a community patron card at no cost and use the library's resources. As such, the library serves community members who have limited or no access to adequate public library materials. For example, one regional high school teacher regularly brings students to the library so that they can access materials for research papers. As of 2011-2012, the library registered 641 community patrons, 124 of whom were new patrons that year. These community patrons borrowed 1,311 items (approximately 7% of the library's total circulation) as compared to 777 items (approximately 4%) borrowed by the faculty members.

1.A.3: The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

RVC annually implements its Financial Planning Model. In this process, budget officers meet with their supervisors and Financial Services staff to discuss projected budget needs. Through this process, campus leadership is able to prioritize and align needs to strategic initiatives and ultimately the College mission. Details of how the institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the

mission are detailed in the section of this document addressing Criterion 5.C.1.

> **Core Component**
> 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

1.B.1: The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

The College's mission statement is publicly available in the following locations:
- RVC website
- College Catalog
- Student Handbook
- Faculty Handbook
- back of employee business cards

Additionally, the mission statement is found on pp. 12-13 of the Employee Handbook which is housed on the College's intranet (i.e., The Quarry).

The College mission is aligned to its vision statement and is defined through the core values statements published in conjunction with the mission statement in the locations identified above. Additionally, the College mission statement is further articulated through strategic planning documents (e.g., College Strategic Plan, Academic Plan, and Strategic Enrollment Management Plan).

1.B.2: The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

As stated previously (see 1.A.1), the mission document was last affirmed over a decade ago. Nonetheless, the mission, vision, and core values statements continue to accurately represent the College's purpose and efforts. Evidence presented in 1.A.2 supports the extent of RVCs emphasis on the various aspects of its mission. Furthermore, the College's strategic planning documents outline the continued efforts and persistent focus on such aspects of the mission as instruction, economic development, and cultural purpose. Additional information on the history of strategic planning at the College can be found in the Strategic Planning section in Part I of this document.

1.B.3: The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The mission document states the College's commitment to "life-long learning opportunities," consistent with the scope of Illinois community colleges outlined by the State's mission for such institutions; see Figure 1.1.

As such, the mission document and documents that further define or articulate the mission (e.g., those mentioned in 1.B.1) position the College in that unique space inhabited by community colleges across

the State and nation --that is, RVC intends to be the community's first and best option for higher learning, career skills training, and life-long, personal enrichment.

Figure 1.1: Relationship between State and RVC Mission

State Community College Mission

Prepare people for
- College
- Transfer to other colleges and universities
- Good paying jobs that demand high skills

Provide
- Adult education and services
- Literacy education and services
- Continuing education and services

RVC Mission Document

Prepare students for
- Successful transfer
- Competitive employment
- Professional and personal growth

Provide
- Life-long learning

Core Component
1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1.C.1: The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

RVC addresses its role in a multicultural society both as an employer and as an institution of higher learning. Indeed, the mission document directly addresses this imperative. The Mission Statement, for example, asserts that RVC's programs and services "[p]rovide leadership in developing a nurturing culture that honors and respects each individual." Additionally, the Diversity Core Value states, "We promote, celebrate, and accept diversity, including cultural and ethnic diversity, diversity of thought, and diverse views of others." Documents supporting the mission document, such as the College Strategic Plan, further detail RVC's priority in addressing its role as an employer in a multicultural society. Goal 5 of this document states that the College will, "promote an inclusive and diverse community that enhances the College climate and workforce," and initiative 5.A states that through student and staff recruitment and retention efforts, RVC will, "build a College community that reflects the diversity of the region served and prepares district residents to live and work in a global society."

Addressing the College's role as an employer in a multicultural society. As stated in the College's *Equal Opportunity Statement* (Administrative Policy Manual , policy #6977, February 26, 2013; Employee Handbook, p. 40),   RVC will, "provide equal opportunity in its admissions, employment and educational programs and activities consistent with federal and state law." Notification of the Equal Opportunity Statement and the Americans with Disabilities Act are also found on p. 16 of the Employee Handbook

and on the Employment Opportunities page of the RVC website.

RVC has separate procedures in place for the hiring of faculty and non-faculty continuous positions. In the Search Committee Responsibilities (p. 6) of the hiring procedure documentation for faculty positions, search committee members are guided to be, "mindful of the obligation to address affirmative action guidelines" in the search process. Additionally, the chair of each search committee is required to submit to Human Resources a list of candidates for interview to be certified for EEO purposes. The hiring procedure for non-faculty continuous positions states within the interview process described that, "[i]f the [candidate] pool is not diverse the Committee will be asked to select additional applicants."

Furthermore, search committee training is required of all search committee members, regardless of the type of position they are seeking to fill. In this training, general search committee guidelines are provided; see Figure 1.2. Additionally, guidelines pertaining to the prohibition of pre-employment medical requirements by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), such as avoiding questions that elicit responses regarding physical or medical condition and how well a person with a disability would be able to perform on the job. While not formally documented in the hiring procedures or the search committee training, all supervisors and search committee chairs are asked to develop a diverse, representative search committee.

Figure 1.2: Search Committee Guidelines from RVC Training Materials

SEARCH COMMITTEE GUIDELINES
☐ Absolutely no discrimination
☐ Be careful of your statements i.e., no statements such as: we want only tall people, this candidate is too old, we don't want this religious group, etc.
☐ Never ask questions that may disproportionately screen out some applicants
☐ All questions should be job-related
☐ All search committees should strive for a diverse applicant pool

As a part of the self-study process, employee data were reviewed to determine the degree to which the demographics of faculty and staff at RVC were proportionate to the community and the student body. Results indicate that the demographics of the faculty and staff are not proportionate, especially when looking at race and ethnicity factors. Table 1.1 indicates the average proportion across racial categories from 2009 to 2013, illustrating that the proportion of white faculty and staff is notably higher than that of students and the region. Minority representation in Hispanic/Latino faculty and staff is disproportionately low as is representation of Black/African American faculty. Looking at detailed data within this multiyear span shows that strategies implemented to recruit, hire, and retain minority candidates have not positively impacted the representativeness of the faculty and staff. These findings informed the development of Goal 5 and Initiative 5.A of the College Strategic Plan (identified above) and related planned action.

Table 1.1: Racial Proportion of Faculty and Staff as Compared to Student and Region Demographics

	Faculty & Staff	Faculty	Staff	Students	Region
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	--
Black/African American	6%	4%	9%	10%	11%
Hispanic/Latino	2%	2%	3%	14%	13%
White	89%	91%	88%	71%	72%

--These data were not distinguished in the regional demographic data used for this report.

Addressing the College's role as an institution of higher learning in a multicultural society. In addition to expectations established through Goal 5 of the College Strategic Plan, RVC's area strategic planning documents (e.g., Academic Plan and Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan) demonstrate the College's efforts to address its role as an institution of higher learning in a multicultural society. For example, Goal 1 of the current SEM Plan states that RVC will, "expand access and opportunity for all prospective students leading to successful enrollment of a diversified student body." Additionally, the current Academic Plan contains the following initiatives:

- **1.A**: Enhance bridges to higher education and careers for district residents who are currently underserved or underrepresented
- **2.E**: Focus on the core value of diversity and build programs to create a more inclusive environment
- **3.A**: Evaluate, secure, and use appropriate and accessible technologies, including assistive technologies, to enhance the learning environment
- **6.A**: Sustain and enhance RVC's contribution to the cultural life of the community

RVC has identified several Key Performance Indicators (KPI) aligned to both the Public Agenda of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the College's Strategic Plan. The College's KPI are identified into five categories, one of which is *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success*. The operational definition of this category includes the need to raise success of students throughout the educational pipeline, but also addresses the need to eliminate achievement gaps. To this end, KPI within this category (e.g., persistence, retention, graduation, and transfer rates) are analyzed in terms of successful effort to eliminate achievement gaps, providing the College with insight as to the effectiveness of its efforts to be an institution of higher learning in a multicultural society.

The College also addresses this role by establishing expectations for a multicultural learning environment. One source of these expectations is defined through the institutional student learning outcomes (SLO). As a part of this self-study process, revision of the SLO was recommended (see 3.A.2 and 4.B.2 of this document for more details). In both the prior and newly revised version of the institutional SLO, promoting the multicultural knowledge and skills of RVC students has been highlighted.

1.C.2: The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

In addition to the processes documented above in 1.C.1, the College supports co-curricular and curricular activities that reflect its commitment to human diversity. For example, the Intercultural Student Services office supports the diverse needs of international, multicultural, first generation, and student-athlete populations, among others, through valuable, student-centered programming. Student Life supports a variety of clubs and activities (e.g., Black history and cultural events and Hispanic heritage month) that reflect diversity on campus.

RVC also has a committee, Promoting an Inclusive Community (PAIC), comprised of faculty, staff and administrators that is designated to leading RVC in "enhancing and sustaining an institutional culture of equity and social justice that fosters diversity and inclusion."   The PAIC committee has four goals – advocacy, institutional and program assessment, programming and development, and to serve as a resource. Through its efforts, PAIC has identified itself as the group on campus that serves as a clearing house for organizational efforts related to diversity, promotes conversation, fosters faculty and staff development, and supports initiatives to create a climate of acceptance for diversity in all its manifestations.

> **A faculty-developed statement that many PAIC committee members modify/use on their course syllabi:**
>
> *As a member of Rock Valley College's PAIC committee, I am dedicated to fostering an inclusive campus community. I actively resist and will respond to discriminatory acts or speech based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or status as a protected veteran in our classroom or on our campus. If you experience discrimination in our classroom, on our campus, or in our community, I am an ally who will partner with you to respond. Please do not hesitate to speak with me about such issues.*

In 2012-2013, PAIC with funding support from the RVC Foundation initiated the Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Academy (MCTA). Based on funding allocated, space in MCTA was available for a maximum of 10 faculty participants; however, in each year of the Academy to date, 11 faculty expressed interest and accommodations were made to include them all.

MCTA is designed so that faculty participants meet throughout the academic year to discuss issues of diversity and multiculturalism as they pertain to the participant's pedagogy and academic discipline. These discussions are facilitated by content experts. In 2012-2013, guests from outside of the College were predominantly used as content experts, but it was soon realized that RVC faculty, staff, and students had similar content expertise. As such, in 2013-2014, those providing content expertise were solely RVC faculty, staff, and students. In conjunction with these discussions, participants are asked to apply lessons learned

> *Over the past few years, thanks to the work of the PAIC committee and MCTA, I have become much more systematically attuned to the issues of implicit bias, white privilege, and issues of class, gender and disability. At appropriate moments, I bring up any and all of these issues in my class, in the most respectful and pedagogically effective way.*
>
> *--reflection of a MCTA participant*

through the revision of a course they regularly have taught and to demonstrate how those changes would be assessed. MCTA is designed so that faculty previously participating in the academy may serve as facilitators for subsequent cohort groups. Table 1.2 outlines the representation of faculty

participants of MCTA in its first two years.

Table 1.2: Participation in the Multicultural Transformation Academy (MCTA)

Year	# of Faculty Participants	Programs/Disciplines Represented	Support	Content Expertise
2012-2013	11	• Composition & Literature • Spanish • Philosophy • Humanities • Sociology • Business • Nursing	2 administrators	• Guests from Northern Illinois University and YWCA • RVC faculty, staff, and students
2013-2014	11	• Composition & Literature • History • Philosophy • Communications • Respiratory Care • Sociology	• 2 administrators • 1 faculty facilitator • 2 MCTA alumni facilitators	RVC faculty, staff, and students

Core Component
1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1.D.1: Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

RVC's mission documents explicitly acknowledge the College's obligation to the community it serves. The Public Trust Core Value states that RVC honors the trust of the public and upholds it through "quality service, integrity of actions, and efficient use of resources." Many of the College's actions and decisions as an educational institution reveal the extent to which RVC addresses its obligation to and serves the public.

For example, the College recognizes that given the low educational attainment of its service region, many come to RVC as first-generation college students. Furthermore, having a "downtown presence" among several other businesses and community service programs was desired by city leadership. In response to the College's need to better serve students throughout its District and the desire for a RVC presence in downtown Rockford, the Learning and Opportunity Center (LOC) was opened in the Fall of 2010 to address the needs of first-generation students in a location more accessible to community members in downtown Rockford and on the western side of the College's service area. In addition to offering a variety of courses, the LOC provides student support services (e.g., career and academic advising, tutoring, mentoring, and student life) and success workshops (e.g., financial aid, time and stress management, interviewing, and career planning). Since opening, the LOC has served over 1,000 students; 85% have been first-generation college students. The College has subsidized the operational costs at the LOC by approximately $250,000 per year in order to provide credit, non-credit, and GED course offerings to students who may otherwise not attend RVC.

RVC also is committed to promoting higher education for its community members, whether that higher

education is at RVC or other institutions of higher learning. In collaboration with regional high schools, RVC hosts College Night annually in October. College Night is a large recruitment fair that involves over 140 colleges, universities, technical and vocational schools. This event is designed for high school students, parents of prospective students, current college students looking to transfer, and adults looking to return to school; it is essentially open to the public. In addition to providing opportunities for community members to explore educational and career goals, College Night also includes informational sessions on financial aid. While College Night provides an opportunity for community members to take a tour of the RVC campus and learn about the College's educational opportunities, RVC views this event as an opportunity to help community members explore higher education and career options in a single setting with various experts on hand to answer questions. As such, College Night is essential to RVC's role as an educational institution that addresses and serves public need.

Additionally, Recruitment and Admissions at RVC has developed high school and middle school outreach initiatives to promote higher education in general rather than RVC in particular. Through these initiatives, Recruitment and Admissions staff have developed a curriculum to be delivered in the high school or middle school. This curriculum addresses college and career readiness, general getting started steps for college going, and financial aid.

RVC continually invests in these quality services and programs because each, on some level, signifies a public obligation or good. Thus, RVC honors the public trust by investing in programs and initiatives that serve the best interests of the community over the best interests of the institution itself.

1.D.2: The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

RVC is a public community college. As such, it does not generate financial returns for investors or contribute to a related or parent organization. As has been described in prior sections of this chapter, the educational responsibilities identified and defined in the mission and related documents are consistent with the mission and public agenda for community colleges identified by the State.

1.D.3: The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

As the College's mission document states, RVC, "foster[s] innovative, collaborative relationships to advance a seamless educational system, an appreciation of the arts, economic, and technical development." The institution addresses this in a number of ways, including the following:

Engage in Community Outreach Activity. RVC recognizes through its mission document that a key activity is to provide lifelong learning opportunities, cultural enrichment, and support to regional economic need. As stated previously in 1.A.2 of this document, the College addresses this in various ways (e.g., Business and Professional Institute (BPI), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Whiz Kids, Center for Learning and Retirement (CLR), and Starlight and Studio Theaters.

Establishing Formal Partnerships to Address a Common Issue/Concern. The College recognizes that at the foundation of many needs of the community lie complex issues that require the collaboration of regional entities. To best serve the needs of the community, therefore, RVC has and will continue to

foster partnerships with such regional entities.

Participating in Critical Conversations. Being a part of critical conversations that address the issues and concerns of the community is essential to being responsive to its needs. To this end, administration, faculty, and staff of the College hold positions on a number of governing boards and committees of various community organizations that include, but are not limited to, Transform Rockford, YMCA, Rockford Health Council, Chamber of Commerce, District 205 Academies, and Regional College Readiness Collaboration with Northern Illinois University and seven other community colleges in Northern Illinois. By having RVC representation at these various conversations, the College is able to not only partake in decision-making that impacts the community, it also gains insight into issues that the institution itself may more systematically address.

RVC also hosts conversations with various community stakeholders to glean specific insight into the College's programs and their continued effectiveness in addressing regional need. One example of such conversations is found in the College's use of advisory committees for its CTE programs. These advisory committees are designed to engage faculty from each of the programs in conversation with community members directly working or providing service within a given field (e.g., the advisory committee for the nursing committee has community representatives from regional hospitals, as well as other health care providers). A recent review of the advisory committees found that participation involved more faculty than community professionals and that communication was perceived as being one-way by those community professionals.

Monitoring Regional Economic Need. As mentioned previously, RVC has identified several Key Performance Indicators (KPI) aligned to both the Public Agenda of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the College's Strategic Plan. One of the five KPI categories is *Addressing Regional Economic Need*, which addresses the College's effort to support State and regional economic development. KPI Summary Reports for this category include the monitoring of labor market data for the region, as well as reporting efforts and results of community and regional employer surveys.

In conjunction with this KPI, RVC contracted with Economic Modeling Specialist, Inc. (EMSI) in the Spring of 2013 to conduct an Economic Impact Study (EIS). The purpose of this study was to determine how the economy of our District benefits from the presence of the College. In general, the College community expresses that RVC is an asset to the community; however, the degree to which this was true was not empirically known. The results of the investment analysis of this study indicated that for every dollar students invest in RVC, they receive a cumulative $5.20 in higher future income over the course of their working careers and that taxpayers see a rate of return of 6.7% on their investment in the College. Furthermore, the economic growth analysis of the study indicated that the accumulated credits achieved by former RVC students over the past 30 years have translated to $486.4 million in added regional income in 2011-12 due to the higher earnings of students and increased output of businesses.

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative

CRITERIA 1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:
- The College has a well-published, clearly defined mission document that is consistent with the mission for community colleges as defined by the State.

- The RVC mission document is further articulated and supported by additional public documents, including the College Catalog; Student, Faculty and Employee Handbooks; and strategic planning documents.

- Credit and non-credit learning opportunities and support services are aligned to and address the breadth of the College's mission statement.

Challenges:
- While consistent with the State's defined purpose for community colleges, the mission document has not recently been reviewed or refined. Furthermore, RVC lacks a formal procedure for regular review and affirmation of its mission document.

- RVC has procedures in place to foster the development of a diverse workforce; however, data indicates that hiring practices have not increased the number of minority hires and that the employee demographics are not consistent with regional and/or student demographics.

As a result of the self-study:
- The criterion subcommittee recommended that the mission document be reviewed and, as needed, be refined. In January of 2014, the HLC Steering Committee initiated a Mission Review Committee by identifying one faculty and one staff member as co-chairs. The co-chairs are charged with forming a committee representative of the College community (i.e., to include representation from different employee groups, students, Board of Trustees, and community members), reviewing existing mission documents (i.e., Vision, Mission, and Core Value statements) and refining as necessary, and establishing a timeline for on-going review and affirmation of the mission document.

- The self-study process led to the development of a new College Strategic Plan. Based on this subcommittee's findings, College leadership determined that adding goals and initiatives to that plan that address the having and maintaining a diverse workforce was critical to taking next steps to address this challenge. Thus, the review of disaggregated staffing data informed the development of the following:

  o **Goal 5:** Promote an inclusive and diverse community that enhances the College climate and workforce

  o **Initiative 5.A:** Through student and staff recruitment and retention efforts, build a College community that reflects the diversity of the region served and prepares district residents to live and work in a global society

  To address this strategic initiative, Human Resources has initiated an evaluation of practices for retaining a diverse work force that have demonstrated success at other colleges and plans to conduct an audit of the search committee process this fiscal year.

CHAPTER 2

CRITERIA 2: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT
The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Criterion 2 Summary

As stated in the Criterion 1 Summary in Chapter 1 of this document, the College, like other community colleges in Illinois, was established to serve a public purpose in providing post-secondary educational opportunities. As stated in the HLC Guiding Values, "What the students buy, with money, time, and effort, is not merely a good, like a credential, but experiences that have the potential to transform lives, or to harm them." Given this "solemn responsibility," the College must act transparently in a manner consistent with its mission.

Critical to the College operating with integrity is governance that is, "freely, independently, and rigorously focused on the welfare of the institution and its students" (HLC Guiding Values). Certainly the faculty at RVC play a significant role in this governance through their oversight of academic matters. Furthermore, it is critical for the College to demonstrate that the governing board (i.e., the RVC Board of Trustees), places the well-being of the institution, "above the interests of its own members and the interests of any other entity" (HLC Guiding Values). Recent contract negotiations have led to climate changes at RVC; particularly problematic is the extent to which it is perceived that the governing board is focused on the well-being of the institution and the students it serves rather than the interests of individual board members in serving their electorate. Through the following supporting evidence, the College will demonstrate that it acts with integrity and that it does so in an ethical and responsible manner, as well as address the perceptions underlying current campus climate and morale.

> **Core Component**
> 2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

RVC operates with integrity through careful development, review, and implementation of College procedures and policies. When existing RVC policies and procedures are found to be inadequate, those policies are expanded and clarified.

Financial. RVC establishes policies to operate with integrity in its financial functions. These policies are contained in Section 3, Finance and Operations, of the Administrative Policy Manual. Several of these policies, which have been added or revised since the last self-study, provide the foundation for the College's financial functions, including the following:
- 6429, 5/22/07 – Capital Asset and Depreciation
- 5953, 3/24/09 – Fund Transfer Agreement
- Index 3:80.050, 3/24/09 – Cash Handling

- 5838, 3/24/09 -- Purchasing
- 6594, 4/28/09 – Identity Theft Prevention
- 6666, 11/17/09 (last revised) – Banking and Investment
- Index 3:80.101, 3/24/09 – Operating Budget Schedule and Requisition Routing
- #6610, 3/26/09 – Accounting

Processes used to implement these policies and address the financial functions of the College have resulted in fiscally responsible budgeting grounded in sound practice which has been recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Complied Statue require all community colleges annually submit and publish audited financial statements, which present the financial position of the College. GFOA awards the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting as its highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. RVC has received this award each year since the submission of the 2007 fiscal year audited financial statement. GFOA also presents a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to governmental units meeting specified criteria in publishing a budget document as a policy document, operations guide, financial plan, and communication device. RVC has received each year since the submission of the 2009 fiscal year audited financial statement.

<u>Academic</u>. Details of how the College operates with integrity in academic functions are provided in the section of this document addressing core component 2.E.

<u>Personnel</u>. RVC establishes and follows fair and ethical personnel policies and processes. The College provides administrators, faculty, staff, and students with policies and procedures that inform them of their rights and responsibilities.

- **Governing Board Policy:** College personnel policies are updated and reviewed as necessary. As part of continuous improvement efforts, the College combined the employee grievance policy and complaint policy into one streamlined policy titled the *Problem Resolution Procedure*, after recognizing lack of clarity in the previous overlapping policies. Since 2010, a number of personnel-related policies have been updated and revised, such as the following:
  - #6962, 12/18/12 – Jury Duty Policy Revision
  - #6942, 10/23/12 – Smoking Compliance Policy
  - #6941, 10/23/12 – Registered Sex Offenders Compliance Policy
  - #6926, 8/28/12 – Abused Neglected Child Reporting Policy
  - #6925, 8/28/12 – Sexual & Other Harassment Policy – Students
  - #6924, 8/28/12 – Sexual & Other Harassment Policy – Employees
  - #6903, 5/22/12 – Retired Faculty Serving as Adjunct Instructors
  - #6900, 5/22/12 – FY13 ESP & PSA Administrative Salaries
  - #6861, 2/28/12 – Oral English Proficiency-Instructors
  - #6877, 5/22/12 – Problem Resolution Policy

  Other personnel policies have been added or updated based on ICCB requirements or federal compliance. For example, based on an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) review in 2010, the College identified the need to update Title IX policies for students and employees, which were subsequently approved by the Board on August 29, 2012.

- **Administration, Faculty, and Staff Procedures:** Ethical processes for College employees are

detailed in the Board policy and the Employee Handbook. Two policies that address this are the Ethics Ordinance Policy ([Employee Handbook](#), p.41-42; [Administrative Policy Manual](#), 2:30.090) and the Employee Business Ethics and Conduct ([Employee Handbook](#), p. 43; [Administrative Policy Manual](#), 2:30.080). Furthermore, professional expectations among faculty and staff are detailed in the [Employee Handbook](#) (p. 14).

A number of college committees such as the Leadership Team, CAO Council, Deans' Council, Academic Council, Curriculum Committee, and Contract Review Committee have ensured that necessary procedures are reviewed, developed, and followed. A thorough review of all Academic Affairs and Student Development policies was conducted in 2012-13, leading to the posting of an [Academic Affairs and Student Development Policy and Procedure Manual](#) on the College's intranet, the Quarry.

The full-time faculty (Illinois Federation of Teachers) and the members of campus safety (Fraternal Order of Police) are unionized, and so conditions of employment for these employees are articulated through each group's contract. In order to provide other employee groups a way to relay information to Administration and the Board, two other employee groups were formed: ESP (Educational Support Personnel) and PSA (Professional Staff Association). ESP is comprised of all full-time and continuous part-time non-exempt timecard employees. PSA is comprised of all full-time and continuous part-time exempt employees, except those deemed by the President to be part of Leadership. Each group has an executive committee that consists of a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, and each also has a council or board that includes area/building representatives. Each group meets regularly throughout the year in order to identify issues likely to affect members and propose strategies to optimize member employment at the college. The president of each group addresses the Board at least once a year, providing updates on issues and concerns of its membership. Employees are also encouraged to have a representative from their group present during the complaint/grievance process.

The Human Resources (HR) department ensures ethical and fair practices are followed through collective bargaining agreements, formal complaint processes, clearly outlined hiring practices (link), and through training or professional development for College supervisors and those serving on search committees. In 2008, the search process for faculty was revised to clarify the roles and responsibilities of various committee members and to ensure consistent processes across academic divisions. The search processes are available on the Quarry, and HR staff provides support throughout the process and routinely evaluates applicant pools for diversity. The Human Resources office also communicates employees' responsibilities and obligations under relevant laws (e.g., Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), sexual harassment, and the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act).

However, through the self-study process, the College identified the need for more comprehensive training for hiring and HR support for employees in some areas of the College such as Adult Education, the Business and Professional Institute (BPI), and Continuing Education (CE). Oversight and supervision of instructors in these programs were found to be inconsistent.

In addition, while continuous part-time (CPT) staff members have been receiving the Employee Handbook, it was noted that temporary part time (TPT) employees have not, nor have they been receiving any information on general RVC policies. Some departments have their own

departmental handbook; however, consistent information is not provided in all department-developed handbooks or manuals. It was decided that TPT employees should sign off that they understand general policies relative to their employment, and that they are responsible for reading the employee handbook to be aware of their responsibilities and applicable state and federal law.

RVC follows fair and ethical processes for faculty; these processes are guided, in part, by the faculty's Collective Bargaining Agreement.   For example, the Evaluation Policy is outlined in Section 5.9 of the contract and covers both tenured and probationary faculty members. The purpose of the evaluation is to help promote effective teaching, assure accountability and provide a basis for tenure decisions. Constructive feedback from peers, colleagues, and students is used with the goal of improving performance, as well as advancing professional development. The Faculty Association leadership works with College administrators to address any concerns that arise with individual faculty. Furthermore, the Contract Review Committee (CRC), a joint committee of faculty and administrative leadership, meets regularly to clarify contract language and to evaluate faculty requests for additional stipends or CHEs (credit hour equivalent) for special projects. The CRC also, on occasion, develops Memoranda of Agreement to address questions not covered by the contract.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, negotiations leading to the current faculty contract (i.e., 2012-2015 Rock Valley College Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement) were particularly contentious. Similarly, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) contract negotiations were lengthy and contentious; these negotiations were finally concluded with the November 2013 Board approval of the current contract. While no violations of fair and ethical practice have occurred during these negotiations, employee perceptions emerged that have led to a climate of frustration and distrust. However, employees have recognized the need to rebuild a healthy atmosphere and positive working relationship between and among employee groups and trustees. While this is still a work in process, employees have recognized the importance of open communication and of being informed about College matters, including the budget. Faculty and staff attendance at Board meetings has generally increased, and employees have been involved in seeking solutions to ongoing challenges. For example, faculty, staff, and administrators have participated in two ad hoc committees created after faculty negotiations were completed: The Cost Containment Committee and the Healthcare/Wellness Committee.

Although policies have been updated and reviewed, it was determined during the self-study process that the policy gaps existed. For example, the College identified the lack of a conflict of interest policy for trustees. As a result, the Human Resources Board Committee began working to develop policies to address this and other gaps along with a general review of the existing manual of governing policies. In reviewing peer institutions' conflict of interest policies and in consultation with the College attorney, a conflict of interest policy for trustees has been developed and adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Also, the self-study process revealed that the organization and structure of the policy manual was not user-friendly. This, along with the gaps identified, has led to a comprehensive review and revision of this manual. While policies are being added to address the gaps, the organization and structure are being overhauled to improve the ability of users to locate and reference policy. This restructuring of the Board Policy Manual is projected to be completed in January of 2014. Additional policy gaps or revisions identified as part of the restructuring process will then be addressed.

RVC provides timely and accurate public information about it programs, requirements, faculty and staff, cost to students, control, and accreditation relationships through its website, the College catalog, and marketing materials. However, it was noted during the self-study that while this information is readily available on the College website, it may not always be easily evident as to where to find it. Recognizing the importance of the College website in providing prospective students and community members with such pertinent information, the College has identified the need to revise the web site, improving access to and organization of information, as well as enhancing mobile access. Planning for this redesign began in Fall of 2013. To date, changes that have already been made include adding a language converter to the website, creating and activating an e-schedule and related how-to tutorial, and launching a mobile application that allows for access to general RVC information. Several planning sessions have also been held to provide visioning, determine project scope, and develop a request for proposals for an outside web design service. The proposed timeline for this project is provided in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Web Redesign Timeline
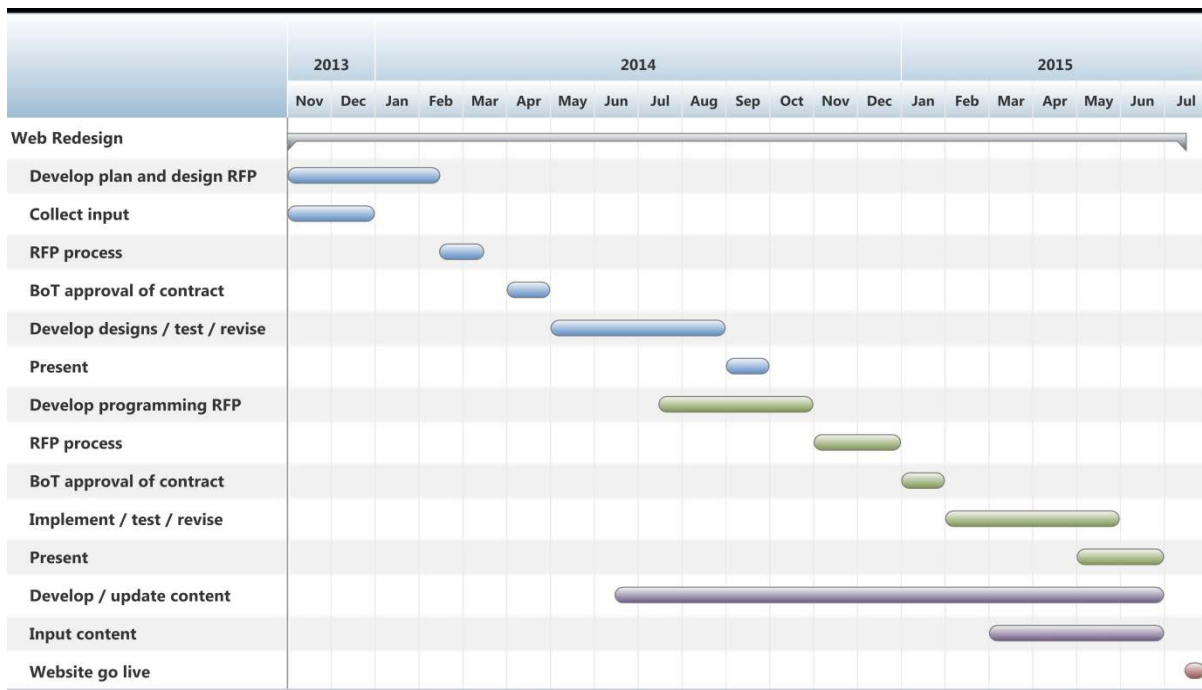
Much of the information about programs, requirements faculty and staff, cost to students, control, and

designated for specific groups (i.e., current students, prospective students, and community). Nonetheless specific location information for each is provided below.

Programs. Degree and certificate programs information can be found through the Academics link on the College home page and in the College Catalog (Degree Programs, pp. 32-42; Career & Technical Education Programs, pp. 44-88).

Continuing and Community Education, Center for Learning and Retirement, and Whiz Kids offerings can be found through the Community link on the College home page in in the Community and Continuing Education Catalog. Traffic Safety, Dislocated Worker Program (DWP), and Theater program information are also accessible through the Community link; Business and Professional Institute (BPI) and Truck Driver Training program information is accessible through the Business link of the College home page.

Adult Literacy, Adult Bridge, English as Second Language (ESL), and General Education Development (GED) and Basic Skills program information can be found through Adult Education and Community links of the RVC website. In addition to program information, registration, cost, and contact information are provided.

Requirements. As a community college, RVC has an open enrollment policy. However, information about enrollment at the College can be found through the Admissions and the Getting Started at RVC links on the College homepage, as well as in the College Catalog (pp. 12-14).

While RVC has an open enrollment policy, students interested in enrolling in credit courses must complete placement exams to determine initial placement in English, reading, and mathematics. Information about placement testing can be found through several paths on the College website, including the Getting Started at RVC link, Featured Links on the homepage, and the Testing Center page.

Some of the Career & Technical Education programs have specific admissions requirements. For example, the electrician apprentice program specifies that prospective students must go through a selection process established by the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC) Local Union 364 (College Catalog, p. 86; Electrician Apprenticeship webpage) Similarly, the nursing program specifies that prospective students must have a B average in biological sciences including BIO 185 or BIO 281/282 and BIO 274, within five years; a B average in prerequisite GPA and cumulative GPA; and a score of proficient or higher on the *Test of Essential Academic Skills* (TEAS) (College Catalog, p. 74; Nursing webpage). If applicable, specific admissions requirements can be found on the program page of the College website or College Catalog.

Faculty and Staff. A faculty and staff directory is accessible through the Faculty link on the RVC website which can be accessed through Featured Links, Academics, Current Students, and Prospective Students areas on the home page. Contact information (i.e., email and sometimes phone number) is provided along with the person's title and department/division. The default view of this directory information is in alphabetical order by last name, but links at the top of the director page allow for changing to a listing

by department, as well as a list of department/division main numbers.

Faculty and staff information is also included in the College Catalog (pp. 154-161). In the catalog, brief biographical information is provided for administrators (i.e., members of the College leadership team), academic deans, and faculty. No contact information is provided along with this information.

Cost to Students. Tuition and fees information can be found through the Admissions page of the RVC website and in the College Catalog (pp. 16-17). Students are also provided easy access to information about Financial Aid through both the College website and the College Catalog (pp. 17-18).

In compliance with federal regulation and guidelines, the College website offers a Net Price Calculator to help students determine the cost of attending RVC; this link can be accessed through Featured Links and Prospective Students on the home page, as well as through the Financial Aid page. Also, Career & Technical

Figure 2.2: Sample of Gainful Employment Information

Gainful Employment Program Requirements

Name & Number of Certificate Program: Media Production Specialist (#3950)		
Information		
	2010-11	2011-12
1. Length of Program in Months (based on FT status)	17	17
2. Cost of programs (tuition/fees only)	$3,190.00	$3,190.00
3. Additional Fees (program-specific)	$0.00	$0.00
4. Estimated cost of books and supplies (program-specific)	$350.00	$350.00
5. SOC Code		27-2012.01
6. Completers	n/a	n/a

Education Programs provide gainful employment information, such as that presented in Figure 2.2, to help weigh the costs of attending and completing programs at RVC with earning potential.

Control. Information about governance and leadership at RVC can be found through the About RVC page of the College website through Board of Trustees and Leadership Team menu links.

Accreditation. The College's accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission, as well as other accrediting bodies with which it has a relationship, can be found through the Accreditation menu link on the About RVC page of the College website. Program specific accreditation for the College's Career & Technical Education Programs can be found on related program pages of the website (e.g., information about Dental Hygiene accreditation and affiliation with the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)).

Accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission is identified in the College Catalog (p. 5); however, program specific accreditation is not available on through the catalog, but primary contact information is shared, which often includes a link to the program information on the College website.

Accreditation status is also reported to the Board of Trustees and the College community through the Accountability Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report is published on the website.

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative

> **Core Component**
> 2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

2.C.1: The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Deliberations of the RVC Board of Trustees are held in open meetings and related closed session meetings, pursuant to the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120). Historically the Board has met once or twice a month. As mentioned previously in this document, agenda and minutes are posted and made available to the public through the Board of Trustees page of the College's website.

The minutes of open, regular meetings reflect the deliberations and priorities of the governing board, particularly the general presentations at each of the meetings.   As a part of the self-study processes, minutes from regular meetings held between January 2008 and October 2013 were reviewed.   General presentations at these meetings are summarized in Table 2.1. In addition to the general presentations noted in Table 2.1, faculty (tenure, sabbatical and sabbatical reports, faculty of the year, and other awards and recognitions) and students (honors, awards, and representation of the College at the State or national level) are regularly recognized, and standard operational and effectiveness reports are shared (e.g., financial vital signs, enrollment, Key Performance Indicators).

Table 2.1: General Presentations at Board of Trustee Regular Meetings, 2008-2013

Calendar Year →	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Facilities/Infrastructure						
Jacobs Center for Science and Mathematics (JSCM) development	✓	✓	✓			
i-Fiber Broad Band					✓	
Parking Lot Reconstruction	✓					
Budget/Finance						
RVC Foundation/Major Gifts Initiative			✓	✓		
Tentative budget for Next FY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Budget Audit/Audit Report		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proposed Tuition Increase		✓				

Calendar Year →	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Student Support/Development						
ALAS Report on High School Student Leadership Conference						✓
Textbook Cost Containment	✓	✓			✓	
Direct Loan Program		✓				
Learning and Opportunity Center (LOC)					✓	
Success Grant					✓	
Student Government Association (SGA) Accomplishments/Activity Fee Budget Allocation Report	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
First Year Experience (FYE)	✓	✓				
Upward Bound Program	✓					
Academics						
Academic Calendar			✓	✓		
Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE)				✓		
Adjunct Faculty Institute	✓			✓		
BPI/Truck Driving Training program				✓		
Channel 20 shared with District 205					✓	
Creating a Degree Site at SCCE		✓				
Redesign of Developmental Math	✓			✓		
Running Start dual-credit program	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Summer Manufacturing Training Academy					✓	
Community Outreach/Partnership						
Art Exhibition	✓					
Higher Education Alliance for the Rock River Region (HEARRR)	✓					
Starlight Theater		✓			✓	✓
Employee Relations/Management						
Educational Support Personnel (ESP) Annual Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Healthcare/Wellness		✓			✓	✓
HR annual grievance/complaint report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Presidential Search Firm						✓
Professional Support Association (PSA) Annual Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning/Reporting						
Academic Plan		✓		✓	✓	
Annual Security Report (Cleary Act Report)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Athletic Task Force/Athletic Strategic Plan			✓	✓	✓	
Information Technology (IT) status update/strategic plan			✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing and Communications Plan/overview of Public Relations at RVC	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Media Preferences Study	✓		✓			
Staff Professional Development Plan		✓				
Strategic Enrollment Management Report/Plan and Enrollment Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Focus Areas		✓				
Web site redesign	✓	✓				

The Board of Trustees also has met as a whole or in subcommittee for information and deliberation purposes. In 2008, Strategic Meetings were held in March and September that further reflect the deliberations and priorities of the Board. In the March 2008 meeting, Strategic Planning was the topic. This meeting initiated several strategic efforts, including the development of an Academic Plan and a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. In the remaining additional meeting, Board members broke out into committees (i.e., Finance & Facilities, Human Resources, and Teaching & Learning) and then reconvened as a whole group to share insights and information. Similarly, the Board held committee meetings in September of 2009, November of 2009, and March 2010. Topics discussed at these meetings include those identified in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Discussion Topics at Board Subcommittee Meetings, 2008-2010

	Finance and Facilities	Teaching and Learning	Human Resources
2008	• Audit • Classroom space during CLI and CLII renovations	• Faculty communication with Board • Proposed changes to Academic Calendar • Intensive ESL and GED programs • Running Start dual-credit program with Belvidere District 100	• Update of Administrative Policy Manual project • Complaint Policy for ESP and PSA • Enrollment in new health care plan
2009	• Audit • Science and Math Classroom Building • Textbook cost containment • Emergency preparedness compliance and training • Information Technology • Facilities Master Plan	• Academic Plan • Distance Learning • First Year Experience • Integration of assessment, measures of institutional effectiveness, and data-driven decision making	• Proposed Compensation Policy • Communicable Disease Procedures • Professional Staff Development Plan • Strategic Hiring
2010	• Audit Planning • FY11 Budget • Facilities rennovations • Site selection for LOC • Science and Math Classroom Bulding (JCSM) • Risk management	• Academic Plan • Rockford Alliance for College Readiness	• ESP/PSA participation in professional development • Recruitment summary

In 2011, the Board of Trustees held Special Meetings once a month in addition to the monthly Regular Meeting. Typically, these special meetings were held in the second week of the month while the regular meeting was held in the fourth week of the month. Initially, topics such as the Academic Plan were presented in the Special Meetings, but as the year progressed, most of the Special Meetings were used to address contract negotiations in closed session.

In the Spring of 2012, the Board of Trustees adjusted its meeting structure so that the full Board met once each month and that committees of the Board also met once a month in addition to the meeting of the full Board. The intent of the committee structure was to provide Board members with an opportunity to have a deeper understanding of areas of the College operations. To this end, four committees were formed: Human Resources Board Committee, Facilities Board Committee, Finance Board Committee, and Teaching & Learning Board Committee. In the Spring of 2013 an Ad Hoc Board Committee was established to examine marketing and enrollment; this committee was scheduled to meet until December of 2013 but announced at the October Regular Meeting that it would conclude its business as of November 2013. Subsequently, topics of discussion addressed at the Ad Hoc Board Committee meetings would be included in the agenda of the Teaching & Learning Board Committee.

As mentioned in section 2.A of this document, the collective bargaining negotiations with the Faculty Association and the Fraternal Order of Police were/have been particularly contentious. From these negotiations, a perception has emerged that of its duties and responsibilities as outlined in College policies, the primary interest and focus of the Board is on fiscal management. Documentation in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 suggests that while much time may have been devoted to the conversation around fiscal matters relevant to contract negotiations, particularly during 2010 and 2011, a balance of topics relevant to governing the interests of the institution were part of the Board's deliberations.

2.C.2: The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Operating under the Open Meetings Act, the Board of Trustees considers the interest of members of the College community through communications and petitions at each meeting. While individuals do not express the need or interest to address the Board at every meeting, review of minutes indicate that communications and petitions do reflect those topics of most interest and concern.   Table 2.3 summarizes those topics in recent years.

Table 2.3: Topics of Communications and Petitions at Regular Board Meetings, 2008-2013

2008	No communications and petitions.
2009	Elimination of football program
2010	Reinstatement of football program Negotiations with Illinois Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) Council

2011	• Notice to Bargain with RVC Faculty Association
	• Notice of Demand to Bargain from Illinois Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) Council
	• College bulletin board policies
	• Various comments related to Collective Bargaining Agreement with RVC faculty
	   o Faculty response to Trustee blog in local paper
	   o Value of RVC employees
	   o Faculty commitment to students
	   o Faculty's declaration of no confidence in Board of Trustees
	   o Decision to not host regional math contest unless fair contract is agreed to before event
	   o Differences between running private corporation and educational institution
	   o Importance of retaining valued faculty
	   o Request for resignation of a trustee
	   o Student support of faculty
	   o Importance of informed populace, encouraging trustee dissemination of information to all
	   o Importance of public service performed by faculty
	   o High expectations and standards of RVC faculty
	   o How faculty support student transfer success
	   o Student body's desire for both parties to come fair resolution as soon as possible

Table 2.3: Topics of Communications and Petitions at Regular Board Meetings, 2008-2013 *(cont.)*

2012	- Various comments related to Collective Bargaining Agreement with RVC faculty - Student support of faculty - Importance of fair wage for faculty effort - Viable negotiation solution - Trustees need to have students' best interest at heart - Various comments related to Arts Instructional Center(AIC)/Arts Venue - History of AIC - Ramifications of various options - Support of building AIC/stand-alone arts center - Importance of arts - Need for manufacturing programs/vocational training (Note: presented as an alternative use for capital funds) - Partnership opportunities to expand downtown presence with College use of Sullivan Theater - Student support for AIC - Building of AIC on main campus - Need for acoustically sound music space - Support of Jeanne Gang design of AIC - Support of RVC orchestral program - Impact of AIC on students and community - Wage and benefit compensation for Educational Support Personnel (ESP) - Identifying and supporting ways to create jobs and put people to work
2013	- Various comments related to Arts Instructional Center(AIC)/Arts Venue - Building AIC with educational functions in mind - Encouraging trustees to work toward decision on performance venue(s) - Creation of educational campus of arts in downtown Rockford - Invitation to trustees to faculty-sponsored reception after Commencement - Needs of local aerospace industries/working with Spartan College to establish local presence - Adding/re-establishing men's and women's soccer as a RVC sport - Presidential search - Reduction of hours of part-time workers due to Affordable Care Act (ACA)

2.C.3: The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

To ensure some level of independence from undue external influence, RVC maintains the Foundation as a separate entity. Similarly, the many community and business partnerships maintained by the College are designed primarily for educational purposes, suggesting that the College enters work with integrity to advance its mission. Businesses wishing to conduct operational business with RVC are engaged in a bid process outlined in College policy; information to initiate this process is available on the College website and can be accessed through the Business link at the top of the home page.

As outlined in the Administrative Policy Manual, the ethical conduct of the Board of Trustees is guided by Employees Ethics Act (Public Act 93-615, effective November 19, 2003, as amended by Public Act 91-617, effective December 9, 2003), which regulates, "….ethical conduct, political activities, and the solicitation and acceptance of gifts by State officials and employees."   Prohibited Political Activities and Gift Ban regulations are detailed in the Administrative Policy Manual; however, ethical conduct is not and regulations around construction are referenced back to the provisions of the Employees Ethics Act. Furthermore, as was mentioned in section 2.A of this document, the need for a conflict of interest statement for Trustees was identified and addressed as a result of the self-study process.

An additional, related concern emerging from the self-study is that especially in recent years, insufficient or inconsistent understanding of the role of a trustee have been expressed by various Trustees. Of specific concern, is having a better understanding of and distinction between Trustees' role as elected officials and that of, "….providing District residents a quality, fully accredited, comprehensive community college" (Administrative Policy Manual).   One area of concern for the College moving forward is that Trustees separate political ideologies, which constitute an external influence, from those decisions that would advance the best interests of the College.   As one trustee stated, "If trustees look out for the school and the students, then they will be looking out for the public trust." Admittedly, trustees will be better able to act on the interest of the public as they gain experience as Board members. Nonetheless, as a result of the self-study it has been determined that, in addition to drafting and adopting a conflict of interest statement, the College and its Board of Trustees needs to develop at least an outline of consistent, explicit orientation of new members and newly reorganized Boards.

College policy indicates it is the responsibility of the Board to "[e]nsure the continuity of its governance capability through retraining, redevelopment, and the orientation of new members." However, the minimum expectation for what this entails is not outlined. Adding such information to the College policies would help new trustees and newly redeveloped boards build consistent understanding of their role as trustees and the complexity of RVC as an institution of higher learning.

2.C.4: The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Day-to-day management. Per the Administrative Policy Manual, the Board delegates the day-to-day management of the institution to the College President. The President, in turn, delegates these responsibilities to the Leadership Team and across areas of the College, as identified through the College organizational hierarchy. Day-to-day management is guided by College policy and procedure, such as that outlined in the Academic Affairs and Student Development Policy and Procedure Manual, as well as by the College Strategic Plan and other strategic planning documents (e.g., Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and Facilities Master Plan).

However, the perception on campus in recent years has been that the Board has not always properly delegated management tasks to administration. For example, since the unionization of faculty at RVC, contracts have been negotiated by faculty and administrative teams. However, in the middle of the recent faculty contract negotiations, the Board removed administrative team members from the bargaining process, leaving faculty to bargain with a group consisting of the College's attorney and members of the Board. While no evidence indicates that the Board intended to subvert the administration's management function, this change in the negotiating team led to a general perception of a lack of faith on the part of the Board in its administration to act in the College's best interest;

furthermore, it fundamentally intensified the already heightened atmosphere of the negotiation. These perceptions will be taken into consideration and addressed in negotiation workshops to prepare teams for the next round of negotiations of the faculty contract.

Academic matters. The oversight of academic matters has been delegated by the Board of Trustees and the College President to Academic Affairs (i.e., Chief Academic Officer, Academic Vice Presidents, Academic Deans, Academic Chairs and faculty). Indeed, the self-study process revealed that the Board took no direct action to shape the academic undertaking of the College or to influence the teaching role of faculty. However, as evidenced in information about general presentations to the Board presented in section 2.C.1 of this document, the Board is interested in and monitors academic matters.

Academic Affairs are guided in their daily management of academic matters for the College by the Academic Affairs and Student Development Policy and Procedure Manual, the College Strategic Plan and the Academic Plan, and the 2012-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement of the Faculty Association. Several groups and committees serve to oversee this effort, including Academic Council, Curriculum Committee, Assessment Committee, and the Contract Review Committee.

Core Component
2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

The 2012-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement directly addresses freedom of expression and pursuit of truth in teaching in Article V, Section 5.1, stating the following:

> **5.1 Academic Freedom & Responsibilities**
> The Board declares its commitment to sustain the principles of academic freedom, which are essential to teaching and research. The basic tenets of academic freedom for all faculty members are:
>
> A. Freedom in research and publication where these activities do not interfere with adequate performance of academic duties.
>
> B. Freedom in the classroom to discuss topics relevant to their discipline.
>
> C. Retention of all rights as citizens to free speech and publication. Such rights are not subject to institutional censorship or disciplines.
>
> As scholars and educational professionals, faculty members should be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the College and for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

In addition, Article V, Section 5.4 of the 2012-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement includes guidelines on Intellectual Property produced by faculty members of the College. RVC follows federal Copyright law which stipulates that the work of authorship immediately becomes the property of the author who created the work. The contract also states that if an employee creates an original work such as a textbook, composition, play, video or any other publication and does so on his/her own time using his/her own resources, the employee shall be considered the author and not the employer.

> **5.4 Intellectual Property**
> The purpose of this document is to encourage all employees to engage in creative and scholarly activity. The following shall be considered a written agreement between Rock Valley College and its assigns and all employees creating work for copyright and other items that are considered intellectual property.
>
> Federal Copyright law states that copyright protection subsists from the time the work is created in fixed form. The copyright in the work of authorship immediately becomes the property of the author who created the work. Only the author or those deriving their rights through the author can rightfully claim copyright.
>
> All materials that pertain to classroom instruction such as class syllabi, tests, handout materials, web design and lectures created by faculty, shall be the sole ownership of the faculty who created them. A faculty member may sell, lease, assign, or transfer any rights to his/her instructional materials.
>
> If an employee creates an original work such as a textbook, composition, play, video or any other publication and does so on his/her own time using his/her own resources, the employee shall be considered the author and not the employer.
> Although the general rule is that a person who creates work is the author of the work, there is an exception for "works made for hire".
> 1. A work prepared by an employee within the scope of his or her employment; or
>
> 2. A work specially ordered or commissioned for use:
>   - as a contribution to a collective work
>   - as a part of a motion picture or other audiovisual work
>   - as a translation
>   - as a supplementary work
>   - as a compilation
>   - as an instructional text
>   - as a test
>   - as answer material for a test
>   - as an atlas

The Student Government Association (SGA) at RVC is an elected, representative body serving as the student voice on campus. SGA provides a forum for RVC students to voice their opinions, promotes student engagement, and strives to improve student success. As such, SGA recognizes the importance of freedom of expression for students. In fact, in the preamble of its constitution, SGA states its intent to promote "….the basic principles of freedom of expression…."(p. 2).

> **Core Component**
> 2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

2.E.1: The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Consistent with Board policy (#6201, 10/26/04 – Conducting Institutional Research) and regulations established by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) through the Protection of Human Research Subjects (45 CRF 46), RVC established an Institutional Research Board (IRB) and developed guidelines for research involving human subjects. On behalf of the College, the IRB undertakes the "legal and ethical responsibility to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects used in research efforts conducted at the College or by College faculty, staff, or students" (Research Involving the Use of Human Subjects, p. 1).   RVC's IRB is led by the Executive Director of Institutional Research and includes the Vice President of Student Development, at least two faculty representatives, and at least one community member not affiliated with RVC.

The Institutional Research (IR) office also provides support for faculty, staff, and students engaging in research. Staff in IR assist with all aspects of research, including, but not limited to, research design, data selection, measurement identification or design, and data analysis. By providing this support, IR is able to guide the College community to the IRB process when necessary, and also ensure the integrity of research efforts. For example, members of the College community are asked to have IR review surveys before they are administered. IR reviews the survey design to determine the degree to which items will collect appropriate, informative data, as well as make design suggestions and recommendations for sampling and administration.

2.E.2: Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

RVC provides guidelines for students in the ethical use of information resources through the Acceptable Use Policy, Computer Use Policy (on Terms and Conditions page of Website; Course Catalog, p. 26), and Copyright policy (College policy on Terms and Conditions page; guidance on Library page). In addition, library faculty provide students guidance in the ethical use of information resources. Indeed, their designation as faculty suggests an emphasis on their pedagogical function above and beyond that of support.

Note:
RVC offers a Student Policy Index on its website to provide prospective and current students quick references to the College's guidelines (e.g., ethical use of information resources), procedures, and policies (e.g., academic honesty and integrity).

For additional details regarding guidance students receive on responsible use of academic sources, see Criterion 3.D.5.

2.E.3: The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

"The faculty and administration expect that RVC students are enrolled in courses as serious and honorable scholars. Furthermore, students are expected to do their own original work, except when collaboration on projects is directed by faculty as part of the course or specific assignment. "Students are expected to observe the commonly accepted standards of academic honesty at all times" (College Catalog, p. 29). Acts of misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating by copying, dishonest collaboration, and fabrication), along with procedures for addressing them, are outlined in the Student Handbook (pp. 17-18). The procedures include action taken by the instructor, academic appeal and review, academic conduct hearing, and penalties. To centralize the reporting and process of academic misconduct, these incidents are reported to the College's Judicial Affairs Office.

CRITERIA 2 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:

1. Students and the District 511 community have access to College information through multiple platforms (e.g., electronic and paper versions of the College catalog).

2. The institution ensures the responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

3. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the institution operates with integrity.

Challenges:

1. Feedback during the self-study process suggests that the multiple platforms (i.e., web site, Quarry, College catalog, and various handbooks) can impede efficiency and effectiveness of communication when information within is not fully duplicated, consistent, and current.

2. Campus climate/morale has been damaged by recent contract negotiations and leadership changes.

3. RVC has no regular, systematic review of institutional policies and procedures. Such a review process is necessary to ensure currency and confirm that no gaps exist.

As a result of the self-study:

- Given that the College website is a critical tool for sharing information about RVC with the community, a redesign was deemed necessary to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication. Planning for this redesign has begun. Initial changes to date include the addition of a language converter to the website, creation and activation of an e-schedule and related how-to tutorial, and launch of a mobile application that allows for access to general RVC information.

- Faculty and staff have once again begun to come together to bring focus to the need for RVC to be our community's college. Focusing talents on efforts needed within our community (e.g., retraining regional un- and under-employed and assisting with reshaping high school curriculum) has helped to improved relations and boost morale within some areas of the College.

  Initiative 5.B of the College Strategic Plan was developed, in part, as a response to morale issues. To address this initiative, Leadership Team has developed an initial plan to improve organizational and communication streams that include attending future Faculty Council, Professional Staff Association (PSA), and Educational Support Personnel (ESP) meetings to establish regular opportunities to talk to College leadership on issues important to the College. Other action items (e.g., comprehensive job study, presidential advisory council, and supervisory training programs) have been proposed, but are awaiting approval and implementation when the next, non-interim president of RVC is appointed.

- Human Resources staff have been working with a committee to review institutional policies and procedures. As gaps have been identified, they are being addressed. For example, a conflict of interest policy was added to the Administrative Policy Manual; this policy was adopted at the July meeting of the Board of Trustees. As part of this review is a reorganizing of the policies, which is on course to be completed by January of 2014. Once the manual has been fully reorganized, the review will consider any additional potential policy gaps.

CHAPTER 3

CRITERIA 3: TEACHING AND LEARNING – QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT
The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Criterion 3 Summary

RVC is committed to providing the District 511 community with quality learning opportunities that are consistent with the HLC guiding value of focus on student learning. Per the College's core value of excellence, the institution asserts its intent to set high expectations and "promote excellence in teaching and learning" (Mission Document). The following supporting evidence and documentation demonstrate the ways in which RVC strives to consistently provide this high quality education.

> **Core Component**
> 3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

3.A.1: Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Currency of courses and programs. RVC offers over 30 degree programs that lead to an applied associate degree, nearly 60 course disciplines that can lead to a transfer degree, and more than 60 certificate and apprenticeship programs that provide specialized training; a listing of these is provided on the College website. These programs and the related courses remain current through regular program and course assessment, as well as through a program review process consistent with ICCB compliance guidelines. Program and course assessment and the program review process are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 of this document.

Courses within transfer degree programs also are aligned, as appropriate, with the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), which is a statewide transfer agreement. Faculty panels which have expertise in the major field of study review and approve these courses, establishing an appropriate level of performance for students. IAI is discussed further in Section 3.B.2.

Courses within CTE degree and certificate programs are responsive to changes in industry standards through their advisory committees and targeted accreditation. Each RVC CTE program has an advisory committee which consists of faculty and community members in related industries and educational institutions with a common purpose (e.g., high school counselors or other higher education faculty and staff). For example, in addition to members of their own faculty, the Advisory Committee for Nursing regularly includes representation from the following:

Employers
- Swedish American Hospital
- Rockford Health System
- OSF St. Anthony
- Long-term Care

Workforce Entities	• Workforce Connection
	• Stateline Nurses Network
	• Alpha Delta Neu
K-12 educational systems	• High school connections/CEANCI
	• Harlem High School
	• Guilford High School
	• Auburn High School
Community Organization	• Rockford Health Council
Adult Education	• GED Program
	• Dislocated Workers Program (DWP)
	• MELD
Higher Education	• Northern Illinois University
	• Olivet Nazarene
	• OSF School of Nursing
Other RVC Offices	• High School Connections
	• Career Services, Advising & Placement
	• Institutional Research

Through professional development, curriculum development, and assessment, faculty and academic affairs staff are also engaged in various conversations designed to appropriately situate educational experiences at RVC within the P-16 pipeline. These conversations include the Regional Readiness Collaboration, District-level Readiness Initiative, and Common Core Workshops; details are provided in the following:

Regional Readiness Collaboration	• 2 year Math Readiness project - align curriculum, investigate effective developmental practices, stress the importance of 4th year of high school math
	• Content area literacy skills workshops (CTE, math)
District-level Readiness Initiative	• English - grade norming sessions; classroom visits & email "pals," high school curriculum introduction, expectations for college writing
	• Math - high school and college instructors took placement test, calculator use in high school vs. college setting
	• Academy

Common Core Workshops	• locally convened Common Core workshop for high school math and English teachers
	• regional Common Core workshop at NIU for high school, community college and NIU instructors (English, math, science)
	• regional Common Core workshop for cc, and NIU Education instructors - with high school personnel in attendance to assist in preparing student teachers and education students

Appropriate levels of performance to degree or certificate awarded. RVC students pursuing a degree or certificate are responsible for fulfilling all graduation requirements, which are available on the College website and can be found in the Course Catalog (p. 33). As a part of the graduation requirements, students seeking transfer degrees are required to complete a minimum of 64 credit hours at the 100 level or above that meet the requirements of the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) as compared to the 60 semester credits commonly accepted as the minimum program length for associate degrees. The additional credit hours above the commonly accepted minimum reflect additional RVC requirements. For example, beginning in the Spring of 2013, all new students pursuing a transfer degree are required to complete STU 100 – Planning for Success prior to the students' completion of 30 credits. This one-credit hour course is, "designed to introduce and connect the student to the RVC community and to assist the student in the active development of academic and personal goals" (Course Catalog, p. 145). Consistent with national best practice, requiring STU 100 is an action item of RVCs strategic planning documents to address student persistence, retention, and completion.

Appropriate levels of student performance are also identified by external accreditation and/or industry standard exams of many of the College's CTE programs.   Several CTE programs culminate in industry licensure or certification exams, and many consistently have pass rates at or near 100% (e.g., Aviation Maintenance Technology, Dental Hygiene, and Respiratory Care). Program supervisors and faculty pay close attention to success rates on these exams and use them to inform program assessment efforts. For example, the Surgical Technology program is required to meet a 70% pass rate on industry certification exams to maintain professional accreditation. For several years, the program has struggled to meet this threshold (see licensing exam pass rates in the federal compliance section of this document). Pass rates and the sequencing of the curriculum were reviewed, and it was noted that the internship class during which practice exams were administered to prepare for the certification exam met infrequently. The program coordinator felt that students fell into regular habits during this class and that studying was minimal, so an on-line study tool focusing on certification exam content was implemented. Not only did the students in the program meet its required pass rate of 70% in 2013, they far exceeded it with a 93% pass rate.

3.A.2: The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

RVC operates within an assessment framework that recognizes and addresses four levels of assessment – institutional, program, course, and classroom. While institutional assessment is designed to provide consistency in general learning expectations for all RVC students (see 3.A.3), program and course objectives are designed to differentiate learning goals for the programs and disciplines of the College. In this way, a clear distinction is made between expectations for the various degrees and certificates awarded by RVC. The levels of assessment within RVC's assessment framework are further detailed in

Chapter 4.

Learning goals also are differentiated for degrees and certificates. While degree programs require completion of a comprehensive general education curriculum, certificate programs, In general, do not have a full spectrum of general education course requirements, but rather require specific courses (e.g., math, English, or science courses) based on industry need.   A number of certificates are offered either as part of a career education degree program or as stand-alone certificates. Students may earn more than one stand-alone certificate while pursuing a career degree. Specific grade requirements for the successful completion of stand-alone certificates are outlined in the College Catalog (p. 44). Academic areas that offer both degree and certificate programs have different learning outcomes for each. These outcomes may overlap and certificate outcomes may be subsumed by the degree. The Fire Science Goals and Related Outcomes Report exemplifies this distinction.

3.A.3: The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Consistency across modes of delivery and location. RVC offers programs at and courses on its main campus, as well as other satellite locations (e.g., Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE), Learning and Opportunity Center (LOC), and the Aviation Center) and in multiple methods of delivery (i.e., face-to-face, hybrid, and on-line). The institution ensures consistency in program quality and learning goals regardless of the course location, method of delivery, or format (i.e., regular or compressed semester) through a number of processes. These processes and the College's efforts with consistency were reviewed in 2010-2011 as a part of RVC's HLC Change Application for Distance Learning.

Included in the Academic Plan are the following action steps related to distance learning:

- Conduct comprehensive course-level assessment of student learning in hybrid, online, and face-to-face classes and make recommendations for improvement to curriculum and instruction;
- Establish a participatory governance system to provide a formal review process for new online and hybrid offerings (based on student interest and need) and develop a consistent process for training faculty to teach online;
- Provide ongoing professional development for faculty teaching hybrid and online courses;
- Engage in ongoing assessment of student learning in all core courses, including all modalities/delivery methods; and
- Develop training or provide professional development for academic administration, department chairs, and others for conducting knowledgeable observations and meaningful evaluations of faculty teaching online and hybrid courses.

Recently, the reconstituted Distance Learning Committee has been working to develop more robust processes for peer review of online courses, and deans are pursuing professional development opportunities related to the evaluation of online learning. In general, RVC assesses online courses using the same methods as used in face-to-face courses—through course-level assessment of student learning. If only one faculty member teaches a course online, however, the student learning data is not disaggregated based on delivery mode so as not to draw conclusions based on a single faculty member's

assessment results. The course-level assessment process is designed to help faculty identify areas for improvement in curriculum and instruction. In addition, both internal and external professional development is encouraged and financially supported so that faculty and academic administration have the tools and knowledge necessary for continuous improvement of online courses and programs. Course objectives are assessed in similar ways as face-to-face courses but include assessment of online discussions and interactions to ensure student participation. Furthermore, student success indicators (e.g., course completion/DFWI rates, persistence, and retention) are also disaggregated by method of delivery and location to monitor program quality and minimize the risk of establishing achievement gaps.

In Fall 2013, faculty completed a credit hour compliance audit to verify course consistency across modes of delivery (face-to-face, hybrid, and online) and course length (standard 16 week and compressed formats). Results of this audit are being analyzed and will be used to inform credit hour determination that is consistent across modes of course delivery and aligned with student outcomes. This process is scheduled to be completed by the end of this academic year.

Consistency of program quality. Program review and assessment guidelines are the same regardless of delivery mode and location. In order to comply with ICCB, programs are reviewed on a 5-year cycle. Institutional Research has developed standardized Program Review templates and data packet to ensure consistent review of academic programs. The templates include sections for summarizing, reviewing, analyzing course and program assessment. Course assessment is guided by a five-year plan, detailed timeline, and several forms and templates (e.g., *Master Course Syllabus Review and Mapping Template* and *Course Assessment Template)*. Faculty are encouraged to use the results of course assessment to inform program outcomes and document those changes in TracDat, as well as in their program review. However, use and documentation at this level remains inconsistent. A brown bag discussion was held to share methods for integrating course and program assessment. The session was well attended, but there is not much evidence that the methods have been put into practice. Future faculty development workshops will focus on this subject.

The faculty contract specifies instructor qualifications to ensure consistency of program quality. Faculty teaching in transfer programs must have a master's degree with a minimum of 18 hours in the recognized discipline. Faculty teaching specialized courses in career and technical education programs must have a bachelor's degree and demonstrable competency in the discipline, master's degree if required by program and/or accreditation standards, or four years of business or industrial experience in the recognized discipline. As detailed in 3.C.2, regular audits are conducted to monitor qualifications and inform modifications to hiring practices.

Consistency of learning goals.   RVC establishes a common expectation of learning for all of its degree and certificate programs through the institutional student learning outcomes (SLO). These SLO describe general knowledge and skills that all students at RVC should develop. During the self-study process, it was determined that the institutional SLO needed review to determine if they should be revised, and the Assessment Committee was asked to lead this effort. The Assessment Committee called two meetings in the summer of 2011 with academic deans and faculty from across disciplines and programs met with staff to conduct this initial review.   From these meetings, it was determined that the institutional SLO should be revised so that they could be more consistently interpreted and applied and ultimately were more measurable. Faculty worked with the Assessment Committee throughout 2012 to revise these SLO. The Assessment Committee has vetted the revisions with various faculty and student

groups in the fall of 2013. Faculty will begin mapping courses to the new SLO in January of 2014, demonstrating alignment between course objectives and institutional SLO on master course syllabi; updated master course syllabi will be implemented in the summer of 2014.

> **Note:**
> When the revised institutional student learning outcomes were being vetted in the Fall of 2013, a student suggested that it would be helpful to see the connection between institutional and course student learning outcomes. This suggestion led to the revised design of the master course syllabi to illustrate alignment/connectivity.

In addition to the institutional SLO, disciplines and programs have outcomes that identify more specific, programmatic learning outcomes for their students. Furthermore, the learning objectives to be addressed with successful completion of the course are identified on the master course syllabus of each course. Master course syllabi are collected in and can be accessed through TracDat.   Review of all master course syllabi are conducted in conjunction with the five-year course assessment process that is aligned with the program assessment and program review processes (see Core Component 4.B in Chapter 4 of this report for more information about this process).

> **Core Component**
> 3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

3.B.1: The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

The program of general education is guided by the General Education Statement of Philosophy, found in the College Catalog (p. 3).

> The General Education Program is designed to develop the knowledge, skills, and habits reflected in the lives of educated persons and basic to all professions so that RVC students are capable of leading rewarding and responsible lives as productive, global citizens.

In other words, RVC intends for its general education program to impart knowledge and concepts necessary for higher education, generally, and for responsible, active citizenship in a participatory democracy. Consistent with the College's mission document, the general education program offers students a quality, accessible learning opportunity that prepares them for successful transfer and competitive employment. The connection between RVC's general education program and its mission is discussed in greater detail in 1.A.2.

3.B.2: The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

RVC participates in a statewide articulation effort, the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). One of the main features of IAI is the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC), a list of general education courses

that have been articulated statewide and accepted for transfer by all participating colleges and universities in Illinois, including the following:

- Communications, 9 credits
- Mathematics, 3-6 credits
- Physical and Life Sciences, 7-8 credits
- Humanities and Fine Arts, 9 credits
- Social Sciences, 9 credits.

Courses approved by IAI governing panels to meet the above requirements are listed in the College Catalog (p.3) and through the Academic and Transfer Advising page of the College website. The GECC, along with all subsequent elective coursework, serves the College's institutional student learning outcomes (SLO). These SLOs indicate that all RVC students are being prepared to (1) communicate effectively, (2) integrate technology into all fields of knowledge and expression, (3) demonstrate competency in critical thinking, (4) respect and work effectively with persons of diverse backgrounds and abilities, (5) demonstrate the behaviors of ethical and socially responsible citizens, and (6) demonstrate personal wellness. The institutional SLO are well published on campus, appearing on course syllabi, posters, and promotional materials across campus, as well as in the College Catalog (p.3) and within the assessment pages of the College website. Furthermore, the one credit hour course, "Planning for Success" (STU 100), required for all students earning a transfer degree, addresses not only Student Learning Outcome (SLO) awareness, but the related skills and attitudes the college believes all students should possess.

Although the institutional student learning outcomes are widely publicized, familiarity with them among students, faculty, and staff on campus and interpretation of their intent has been inconsistent. Furthermore, while these outcomes capture the spirit of what both transfer- and career-oriented students need to be able to do consistently in order to succeed, finding clear means to measure these outcomes has been a persistent challenge.   As a result, the criterion subcommittee recommended that the Assessment Committee lead a review and possible revision of the institutional student learning outcomes.   This process for review and revision is further detailed in Section 4.B.1 of this document.

3.B.3: Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

The recenlty revised RVC institutional student learning outcomes describe the expected knowledge and skills required for all students successfully completing any and all RVC Degree Programs.   Upon completion of any degree program at RVC, students have completed coursework that meets the degree requirements which by design achieve these intended learning outcomes. Curriculum mapping to identify course alignment to the institutional student learning outcomes has begun through the course assessment process to support the assessment of student achievement as defined by engagement in three areas in this section. In response to persistent requests for more direction on how to determine whether or not an institutional student learning outcomes should be marked as being addressed within a given course, the Assessment Committee developed the SLO checklist that academic chairs and faculty could use when developing new courses, modifying new courses, or updating master course syllabi as part of the 5-year cycle of course and program assessment. Since the institutional student learning outcomes have been in revision, academic chairs and faculty were asked to hold on these alignment

efforts until the new outcomes were introduced. In January of 2014 on the College's development day, academic chairs and faculty were provided an extended work session in the afternoon. During this work session, the new institutional learning outcomes were introduced along with an updated method of mapping them to course objectives on the master course syllabi. This alignment and document revision is to be completed by the end of January of 2014 so that updated master course syllabi are ready for implementation beginning in Summer and Fall of 2014. Figure 3.1 shows a sample alignment from the newly revised master course syllabus.   More details of the revision of the institutional student learning outcomes and how they engage students in these learning efforts are detailed in Section 4.B.2 of this document.

Figure 3.1: Sample Alignment Between Institutional and Course Student Learning Outcomes (Principles of Management - MGT 270)

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:	Institutional Student Learning Outcomes			
Course Objectives	Analytic Reasoning	Communication	Global Awareness & Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
1 Demonstrate the principles of effective planning by developing and implementing a successful strategic plan.	x	x		
2 Exhibit principles of organizing by creating an organizational chart reflective of the student's plan.	x			
3 Demonstrate leadership skills as a team member of a group project.		x	x	x
4 Identify staffing issues and practice the art of delegation.			x	x
5 Practice control measures to ensure team performance.	x			

When selecting courses, students choose from a large diverse list of RVC courses from a variety of disciplines and/or program offerings that meet the degree requirement for their individual program of study. For degrees that are designed to enable students to transfer to bachelor degree programs, students choose the courses that meet requirements of the degree using the appropriate planning sheets (A.A. or A.S.) Furthermore, students working toward an applied associate degree programs complete a course of study defined by that degree program's suggested plan of study which are found with program related information in the College Catalog and on the website (e.g., Accounting A.A.S. plan of study), as well as being available through the Academic Advising. Through prerequisites and suggested plans of study, students are guided through a curriculum that introduces, reinforces, and guides towards mastery of the desired competencies.

3.B.4: The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

As evidenced in Sections 1.C.1 and 1.C.2 of this document, RVC addresses its role in a multicultural society and educational opportunities that recognize human and cultural diversity through curricular and co-curricular activity.

Diversity is addressed by the newly revised institutional student learning outcomes. Specifically, the Global Awareness and Responsibility outcome indicates that students will develop the knowledge and skills required to responsibly interact with social and natural communities, both locally and globally. Degree- and transfer-seeking students are required to complete general education courses that further provide foundation opportunities for students to develop knowledge, understanding, and skill to better prepare them for living and working in a diverse world. The listing of general education core courses further illustrates the variety of curricular opportunities for exploring and understanding the human and cultural diversity of the world. Several of these courses expose students to diverse experiences and perspectives while fulfilling Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) requirements as a non-western culture course, including the following:

- Non-western Literature Before 1800 (LIT 251)
- Non-western Literature Since 1800 (LIT 252)
- Contemporary African Literature (LIT 260)
- Introduction to Non-western Philosophy (PHL 151)
- World Religions (PHL 155)
- Introduction to Nonwestern Visual Art (ART 141)
- Introduction to Non-western Music (MUS 106)
- Latin American Cultural Expression (HUM 120)
- Introduction to Non-western Humanities (HUM 125)
- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (ANP 103)
- World Regional Geography (GEO 130)
- African History Survey to 1600 (HST 151)
- African History Survey Since 1600 (HST 152)
- History of Latin America I (HST 162)
- History of Latin America II (HST 163)
- History of the Middle East to 1453 (HST 172)
- History of the Middle East Since 1483 (HST 173)
- History of Eastern Civilization to 1500 (HST 182)
- History of Easter Civilization Since 1500 (HST 183)
- History of the World Until 1750 (HST 192)
- History of the World Since 1750 (HST 193)
- International Relations (PSC 269)
- Racial and Ethnic Relations (SOC 295)

Many certificate programs, especially those in the Allied Health field, include practica or internships to prepare students for employment in a diverse work environment. For example, Respiratory Care students complete a Patient Assessment (RSP 112) course. Expected outcomes of this course include students being able to review a patient's medical record for clinically significant information and describing the preparations and actions required for a successful patient encounter. In the first clinical

practice for this program (i.e., Clinical Practice I (RSP 131)), students are expected to not only describe the needs of patients in the health care setting, but also describe, "significant points relating to organizational, ethical, and legal concepts in health care" ([Master Course Syllabus](#)). In these courses, students are presented various patient cases to develop these competencies, providing them an opportunity to explore human and cultural diversity, as well as diversity of each medical case.

As described in section 1.C.2 of this document, the College also supports co-curricular activities that reflect its commitment to human diversity. For example, the [Intercultural Student Services](#) office supports the diverse needs of international, multicultural, first generation, and student-athlete populations, among others, through valuable, student-centered [programming](#). [Student Life](#) supports a variety of [clubs](#) and activities (e.g., [Black history and cultural events](#) and [Hispanic heritage month](#)) that reflect diversity on campus.

3.B.5: The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

RVC faculty contributions to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge enhance the quality, lifelong learning opportunities, cultural enrichment, and support for economic and technological development as stated in RVC's mission statement. The following examples illustrate such contributions:

- [Math faculty led State and national redesign of developmental math curriculum](#)

- Computers & Information Systems (CIS) faculty
    - [Supporting development of iTunesU content for the College](#)
    - [Developing My CIS@RVC to promote internship opportunity between students and regional employers](#)

- [Sustainability Education & Economic Development (SEED)](#)

- [TedX talk: Renewable Energy Integrators and the Reality Show](#)

- Regional Academic Competitions
    - [ICTM Regional Math Contest](#)
    - [RVC Regional Science Olympiad](#)

- [First Tuesday Lecture Series](#)

- Additional Lectures (presented with the coordination/support of faculty and students)
    - David Caskey Memorial Lecture Series
    - [Visiting Writer Series](#)

- [Fire Science program coordinator develop Rescue Access Tool](#) (in conjunction with RVC's SBDC and EIGERlab)

A number of RVC's faculty members engage in scholarly research and publications; however, no process

for systematically collecting information about these endeavors is currently in place. Establishing such a process will be incorporated into future Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE) planning.

RVC students also contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge in ways that provide opportunities for students "to develop the breadth of knowledge and the expressive skills essential to more complex and in-depth learning throughout life" (adapted from the Illinois Articulation Initiative, 2000. The following examples illustrate such contributions:

- Programming iOS Apple Mobile Devices - Students in this course learn to create iPad and iPhone apps in the areas of productivity, utility, education, and gaming. In addition, students work with local businesses and RVC faculty to test and publish apps to the Apple App Store. To date several apps have been created by RVC students since the first course offering in January 2013, including the following: Recently, one student successfully published the app developed as part of his Fall 2013 course. This app is currently available to download free at the Apple App Store. Starting next summer, a weekend boot-camp course will be offered, which will focus on deploying and marketing apps to the Apple App Store.

- Engineering and Technology Capstone Projects - Students enrolled in the RVC Engineering and Technology program work on team projects sponsored by regional corporate sponsors offer students opportunities to develop innovative solutions to a mechanical, electromechanical, or manufacturing problems.

- Freedom Field Capstone Projects – Students enrolled in RVC's Sustainable Energy Systems degree program participate in internship projects at the Freedom Field Renewable Energy site.

- Sustainable Energy Club – Students in this club engaged in collecting data on regional implementation of renewable energy technology

- What Can a Robot Do with That? - Students in Robotics and Automated Systems (EET 254) demonstrate results of robotic programming developed in class.

- Model UN

- Coordination and support of the Student of Color Summit

- Voices – Students enrolled in Journalism 139 produce this biannual literary magazine from submissions of current RVC students, alumni, faculty and staff

- Mass Communications
  o Student Documentary Showcase
  o Contest Submissions
    ▪ Mass Communication students often submit and exhibit in the Mosaic World Film Festival which is held in Rockford, IL.
    ▪ In 2013, student Thomas Doherty won an Honorable Mention at the Broadcast Education Film Festival;, he was competing against students in 4-year schools and graduate programs.
  o E-exhibit

- o [Public Service Announcements (PSA)](#) - Students in the Advanced Video Production course create PSA that are used by local agencies (e.g., American Red Cross and Noah's Ark, a local animal shelter).

- [Choral and Instrumental Performing Art](#)

- [Visual and Performing Art](#)

> **Core Component**
> 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

3.C.1: The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

As is the case with many community colleges, RVC is continually challenged with balancing full-time faculty and part-time adjunct ratios to provide consistent, as well as effective, high-quality programs that are also cost effective. The College uses several processes to determine sufficiency of numbers to carry out classroom roles of faculty, including program review, review of enrollment wait lists, and budget planning. During the program review process, disciplines and programs analyze multi-year data that examines issues of course load, including comparisons of full- and part-time faculty-to-course ratios. These data can be used to request additional faculty to carry out classroom roles within the results and recommendations of the program review. Such data can also be used in conjunction with enrollment wait-list data to determine where faculty positions should be added or shifted. For example, recent enrollment wait list data indicated a need for an additional full-time faculty member in composition, particularly Composition I (ENG 101). To address this need, a temporary, full-time person was hired. Course-load and enrollment wait list data will be monitored to determine if this position should move from temporary to permanent.

To address continuity, the College has consistently tried to maintain a full- to part-time faculty ratio that skews more toward full-time faculty. Employment data suggest, however, that RVC no longer has a higher percentage of full-time faculty teaching credit-bearing, baccalaureate and occupational courses (see Table 3.1). These data are currently being discussed by the Leadership Team to determine if this shift is specific to certain program or discipline areas, how it may be impacting course delivery, and to what extent it can and should be addressed in future-fiscal-year budget planning.

Table 3.1: Ratio of Full- to Part-time Faculty Headcount in Baccalaureate and Occupational Courses

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Full-time	133 (51.3%)	138 (50.9%)	147 (52.3%)	143 (47.6%)	147 (38.3%)	149 (36.4%)	147 (35.2%)	159 (34.8%)
Part-time	126 (48.6%)	133 (49.0%)	134 (47.6%)	157 (52.3%)	236 (61.6%)	260 (63.5%)	270 (64.7%)	278 (65.1%)

RVC has also developed and implemented the Adjunct Faculty Institute (AFI) to address continuity with part-time, adjunct faculty. To date, three cohorts have participated in the AFI with 14 part-time, adjunct faculty completing the 30-hour program of study and 8 currently enrolled. Of the 14 that have completed the program of study, 12 (86%) are still teaching courses at the College. Even with the AFI, however, RVC continues to face challenges in finding and maintaining qualified, skilled adjuncts in high-demand and STEM areas. Strategies to address this challenge will need to be identified and addressed in the next iteration of the Academic Plan.

In addition to their roles in the classroom, faculty also serve in non-classroom roles at the College through various committees, as well as advisory roles on a number of student clubs. Academic Counsel and Curriculum Committees are led by and predominantly comprised of faculty members. Membership composition is based on representation for each academic division. On other committees, such as PAIC and Assessment Committee, faculty serve in leadership and advisory roles. Faculty are invited to participate in these committees with efforts made to ensure their participation is representative from the various disciplines and programs of the College. Faculty on these committees also lead or support initiatives, including, but not limited to, mentoring or participating in PAIC's Multicultural Transformation Academy (MCTA) and participating in the Assessment Committee's Institutional Assessment Reading Days.

Per the current faculty contract (Section 5.11: Assessment of Student Learning), all faculty are required to participate in assessment efforts of the College and do so under the guidance and direction of their respective academic chairs. Most academic chairs distribute course and program assessment efforts among the faculty in their discipline or program, which helps increase the number of faculty generally involved in these efforts and establishes consistency as chair responsibilities are assumed by different individuals.   Additional information about faculty participation in assessment efforts is addressed in 4.B.2.

As stated previously, the most recent collective bargaining negotiations with RVC's faculty were particularly contentious. As a result of these negotiations, faculty implemented work-to-rule. Assessment outside of classroom assessment was viewed by many faculty as outside of their contractual obligations, and, therefore, there were insufficient numbers of faculty to adequately carry out course, program, and institutional levels of assessment.   Given that this occurred during the time subcommittees were engaging in self-study for accreditation, it also impacted the number of faculty actively participating. While faculty re-engaged in assessment and the self-study process at the culmination of contract negotiations, these decisions did illuminate challenges in developing an assessment culture that is based on effectiveness rather than compliance.   Nonetheless, faculty involvement in assessment and institutional effectiveness efforts since that time (e.g., the SLO revision process and credit hour determination) suggests that the College is moving in the right direction.

While Human Resources may publish hiring procedures for faculty, it is faculty who determine qualifications through their negotiation of those qualifications as part of their collective bargaining agreement and in defining expectations for various faculty positions when posted. Also, faculty committees form the hiring committees for full-time faculty positions to ensure that expected qualifications within a given discipline are met. Ultimately, academic deans and chairs are responsible for hiring full- and part-time, adjunct faculty, in support of the established qualifications for all

instructional staff.

3.C.2: All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

The qualifications to teach at the College are defined within Article VI, Condition of Employment of the current faculty contract and in accordance with generally accepted standards and practices. Figure 3.2 provides an excerpt from this contract that details the minimum requirements for faculty at the college.

The Human Resources office maintains hiring procedures, including those for faculty positions, and publishes them on the College's intranet, the Quarry. These procedures indicate that Human Resources will review the application and resume of each candidate for appropriate information and minimum qualifications. If candidates meet minimum qualifications, their applications will be forwarded to the appropriate hiring committee. This process provides multiple review opportunities to ensure that candidates seeking faculty positions meet the minimum requirements of the position and as stated in the current faculty contract.

> **Note:**
> Additional training is required for all faculty wishing to teach online courses. At this time, per the current faculty contract, part-time, adjuncts are not allowed to teach online courses.

Figure 3.2: Excerpt from Faculty Contract on Qualifications to Teach

> **6.1.1** **Minimum Requirements for Appointment to Faculty Status**
> **Case I: Faculty of University Parallel Courses**
> The minimum requirement for all faculty teaching university parallel courses shall be a master's degree with a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the recognized discipline. (Exceptions may occur for Ph.D. students not seeking a master degree.)
>
> A faculty member with the bachelor's degree may be considered for a full-time faculty appointment only under exceptional circumstances and with the recommendation of the division director, the appropriate Dean, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs in consultation with the appropriate academic chair. The faculty member will have two years to satisfy the requirements. The faculty member will follow all requirements of probationary faculty leading to tenure but are not eligible for tenure unless obtaining the master degree. Failure to complete the master degree in three years will result in dismissal.
>
> **Case II: Faculty in Specialized Courses in Curricula Leading to**
> **Employment, Faculty of Courses Numbered Less Than 100, and**
> **Non-teaching Faculty not Included in Case I.**
> The minimum requirements for faculty teaching specialized courses in curricula leading to employment, faculty teaching courses numbered less than 100, and non-teaching faculty members not included in Case I shall be:
> * the bachelor's degree and demonstrable competence in the faculty member's discipline.
> Or
> * master's degree if the program and/or accreditation standards require it;
> Or
> * four years of business or industrial experience in the recognized discipline and demonstrable competence in the faculty member's discipline.
>
> The faculty member will have two years to satisfy the requirements. The faculty member will follow all requirements of probationary faculty leading to tenure but are not eligible for tenure unless obtaining the appropriate degree. Failure to complete the appropriate degree in two years will result in dismissal.

Academic Affairs and Institutional Research have collaborated to conduct internal audits of full-time faculty and part-time, adjunct personnel files. These audits were based on a random sample of current full-time faculty and part-time, adjuncts from across the College. Transcripts within personnel files were reviewed to determine the degree to which the hiring process has resulted in faculty meeting the

minimum requirements as outlined in the current faculty contract and in compliance with this standard. Incidences where information with the personnel files was inconsistent with minimum requirements were addressed by the appropriate dean and academic chair (e.g., missing transcripts were requested or work experience was verified and documented and personnel files were updated). Results of a recent audit can be found in the most recent ICCB Recognition Report (pp. 21-24); a report of the Fall 2013 audit results is in development at the time of this writing.

The audit process has led to some procedural changes. For example, faculty hired based primarily on work experience must have that work experience confirmed and documented by the hiring supervisor and Human Resources. In this way, work experience identified in application materials is confirmed and documented within the personnel file. Academic Affairs is also currently working to develop more specific hiring expectations. While the contract language identifies basic levels of education required (e.g., master's degree with 18 hours in content area), a need to note specific course work expected within this requirement for each discipline, program, and position was identified.

Requirements for College Faculty Who Teach Dual Credit Courses Approved by the College. The process used to ensure faculty are properly qualified to teach dual credit classes is outlined in the High School Connections Credit Handbook. It is the responsibility of the high school to identify a qualified instructor and submit documents required for the College's academic discipline approval with the Application to Offer Dual Credit Course. The High School Connections Credit Handbook has been reviewed to ensure that it clearly stated that any instructor wishing to teach a College course in an area high school must meet the requirements, which are essentially the same requirements and qualifications to teach at the College. Furthermore, per the faculty contract (Section 6.8.4: Dual Credit Courses), full-time faculty are offered the opportunity to teach the dual credit course in the high school prior to offering the opportunity to qualified adjuncts.

Requirements for High School Teachers Who Teach Dual Credit Courses Approved by the College. Instructors for these courses are selected, employed, and evaluated by the College. High School teachers must have appropriate credentials and demonstrated teaching competencies at the college level. An audit of teacher qualification for dual credit courses was conducted as part of the most recent ICCB Recognition Report; results can be found in *1.c.A: State Laws and Regulations and Accreditation Standards* of that report.

3.C.3: Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

The College ensures that its faculty provides effective, high-quality programs through a regular evaluation process that is outlined in the faculty's collective bargaining agreement. Section 5.9 of the agreement provides an established procedure that guides the evaluation process for probationary faculty, the in-depth process for tenured faculty and the Student Evaluation of faculty process for both groups. New faculty become acquainted with this evaluation process through monthly group meetings with the VP of LAS as well as through meetings with the appropriate Deans and the tenure committee process as outlined in Section 5.2 of the contract. The Professional Development Report (Section 5.9, Appendix D & E) and classroom observation process (Appendix F) are established practices in all areas of the college offering credit bearing courses. In order to ensure consistency in the evaluation process, the academic vice presidents and Chief Academic Officer provide an additional review and comment process that allows the administration to determine overarching themes and common faculty development

needs. Adjuncts, including those who teach dual credit courses, are regularly evaluated by departmental chairs using the procedures described above.

Although RVC has established procedures used in evaluating faculty, as a result of the self-study process, the college has identified areas for improvement within the procedures. It was determined that the Student Evaluation of Faculty process would benefit from less time between student completion of the evaluation and the return to the faculty member. As a result, the process is currently under revision. The purchase of new software will allow for less cumbersome processing and a potentially quicker return time to faculty for inclusion in their practices. In addition, the Student Evaluation of Faculty Questionnaire is currently under revision to better reflect all modes of course delivery. An item still requiring action relates to the contractual language which prevents student comments provided during the evaluation process from being reviewed by Deans or other administrators.

3.C.4: The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

RVC has the necessary processes and resources needed to assure that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in the role as faculty members.   In order to maintain current practices within the discipline, professional development funding for faculty is specified through the collective bargaining process. As such, per the current faculty contract (8.2 and 8.3), each faculty member is entitled to $550 per academic year to fund their external professional development.

In addition to external development opportunities, RVC's Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE) provides resources for the professional development of all full-time faculty and part-time adjuncts.   The ATLE's Instructional Designer is a full-time faculty member with specialized training who receives release time to provide individual assistance to faculty members, workshops, a Faculty toolbox on the College LMS site, and a monthly Faculty newsletter. The ATLE also houses a library with professional titles available for loan and a Magna Commons subscription that provides on-demand development training accessible to all faculty.

Also per the current faculty contract (6.7.3), faculty are provided three development days per year with the time needed to explore a variety of topics related to College processes or discipline specific curriculum work. Examples from recent Development Days include: Life Science curriculum work, Developmental Reading curriculum consultant, Nursing curriculum work, Active Shooter training, LMS Showcases, and information related to teaching specific groups of students such as veterans, the disabled, and students of various ethnicities.   In addition, Developmental Math faculty attend specialized development sessions each semester.   While adjunct faculty are invited to attend all Development Day activities, two meetings devoted exclusively to adjunct needs are offered each year, and adjuncts may also choose to participate in the Adjunct Faculty Institute (AFI).   Topics discussed through the AFI include the following:

- Developing a Philosophy of Teaching
- Adult Learning Theory
- Developing an Effective Instructor Syllabus
- Extra Credit – Unearned Perk or Chance for Extended Learning?
- Using Technology in the Classroom

- Learning Management System (LMS) Training
- Students with Disabilities in Higher Education
- Active Learning

Although RVC has the above identified resources aimed at supporting the professional development of full-time faculty and part-time adjuncts, no process is currently in place to ensure that all faculty keep pace with changes in their chosen field of study. In addition, a perception among faculty persists that the on-campus training does not constitute professional development because the opportunities are not discipline specific.

3.C.5: Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Data from the 2012 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) indicate that students generally have positive relationships with their instructors. On a scale of 1 (unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation) to 7 (friendly, supportive, sense of belonging), the average RVC student rating of their relationships with instructors was 5.67, compared to 5.63 at large community colleges and 5.68 across the entire 2012 CCSSE cohort. Figure 3.3 shows the frequency with which students interact with faculty outside of class. Over 40% indicated that they receive prompt feedback, discuss grades or assignments, and communicate by email either often or very often.

Of some concern is the large percentage of students who report never working on activities other than coursework with their instructors (72.9%); however, this response is typical for students attending large community colleges, where 70.3% report never engaging in such activity. However, efforts to increase student and faculty engagement with student activities may have positive effects on student success.

Figure 3.3: Frequency of Student-Faculty Interaction
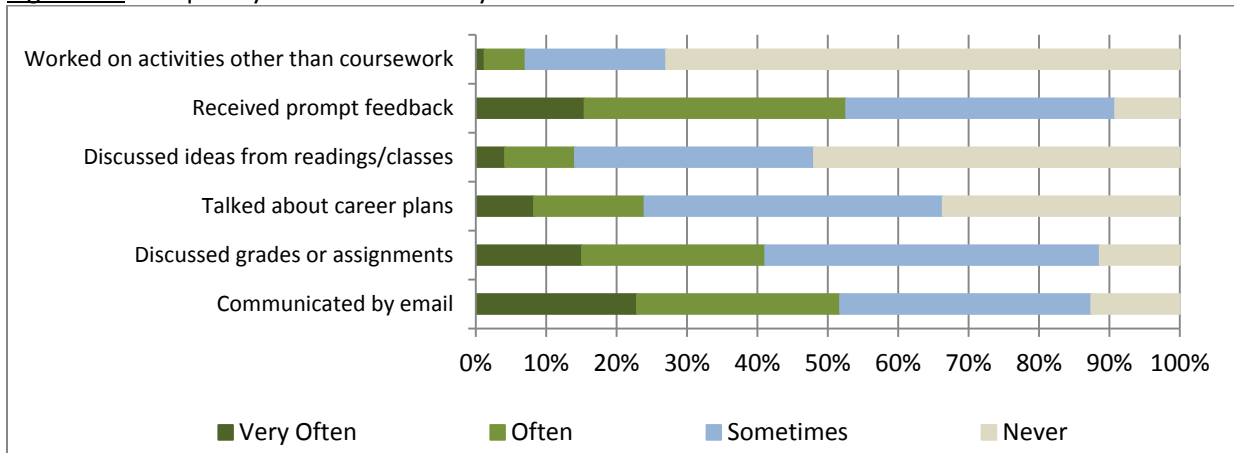
Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2012

While many faculty feel personal and professional responsibility to be accessible to students, strong student-faculty interactions can be partially attributed to College policies. Section 6.7.1 of the Collective

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative

[Bargaining Agreement](#) requires full-time faculty to hold regularly scheduled office hours at times convenient to students. Part-time, adjunct faculty also are required to hold office hours. With the learning management system, instructors can hold online office hours and respond to student inquiries with a variety of mobile devices. In addition, faculty contact information is a required component of the syllabus and is maintained in the Faculty Support Offices. The College does not have a consistent policy regarding the timeliness of responses to student inquiries; however, 52.5% of students report that they often or very often receive prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors (see Figure 3.3). Nonetheless, the need for a consistent policy will be further reviewed.

3.C.6: Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Staff members who provide student support services at RVC are hired using job descriptions that correspond with the level of education and experience needed to ensure successful experiences for students (e.g., [Academic and Transfer Advisor](#), [Tutor Supervisor](#), and [Instructional Librarian](#)).   Each year, staff set goals with immediate supervisors to ensure professional and personal development opportunities are included in planning processes. Those goals are tied to College strategic planning goals and initiatives.

All staff, including those providing student support services, participate in development days, on-campus half- and full-day professional development events. Additional opportunities for professional development and training are provided internally, such as training in the use of SARS Grid, scheduling software used by students to make appointments with a tutor, academic advisor, or math lab consultant, and book a group study room in the library. Staff have also participated in group and individual training in the use of the new learning management system.

Off-site development is provided as needed to maintain or increase skill sets related to position, departmental, and institutional duties. Recently, as a budget reduction measure, the College enacted a hold on non-faculty travel, which severely limited the degree to which student support staff could participate in professional conferences and other off-site development. In this past fiscal year, these travel limits have been lifted, so that staff members are able to again participate in off-site professional development opportunities as deemed appropriate by their supervisor.

Additionally, consultants with expertise in specific areas provide development in identified skills sets needed by support staff. A Six Sigma consultant has completed an assessment and improvement plan to increase service to students in Financial Aid, the Dislocated Workers Program, Adult Education, Human Resources, and the library. A nationally recognized expert in the area of Disability Support also worked with the College's disability services office to complete an audit of current staffing and services and to craft a plan for increased support services for the growing number of students with disabilities seeking post-secondary education.

3.D.1: The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

As noted in Section 1.A.2 of this document, RVC provides students with a wide variety of support services.   Results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) presented in Figure 3.4, however, indicate that many students are rarely or never using the support services available to them. Aside from skill labs (writing, math, etc.) and financial aid advising, less than a third of RVC students are using support services. Of particular concern are the low number of students using career services (i.e., career counseling and job placement), transfer assistance, and tutoring. The recently required STU 100: Planning for Success course should increase student use of support services. One objective of this course is for students to use RVC campus and computer resources. Future CCSSE results will be monitored for changes in the use of support services.

Figure 3.4: Frequency of Use for Student Services
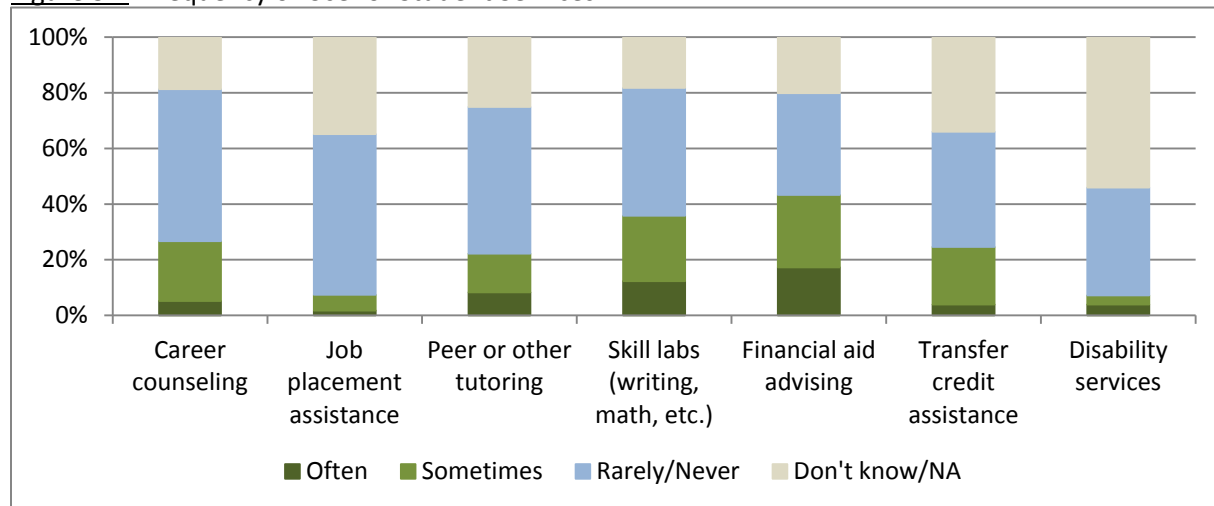
Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2012

CCSSE data presented in Figure 3.5 suggest that those students who use support services are generally satisfied with those services. Of the students who found these CCSSE satisfaction items applicable to them, 70% or more were very or somewhat satisfied with career counseling, tutoring, skill labs, financial aid advising, transfer credit assistance, and disability services. However, only 54% were very or somewhat satisfied with job placement assistance. Average satisfaction for this service (M = 1.70) did not differ significantly from the average for large community colleges (M = 1.79) or all colleges participating in CCSSE (M = 1.81). Moreover, dissatisfaction may be related to economic factors in the community and nation.

Figure 3.5: Satisfaction with Students Services
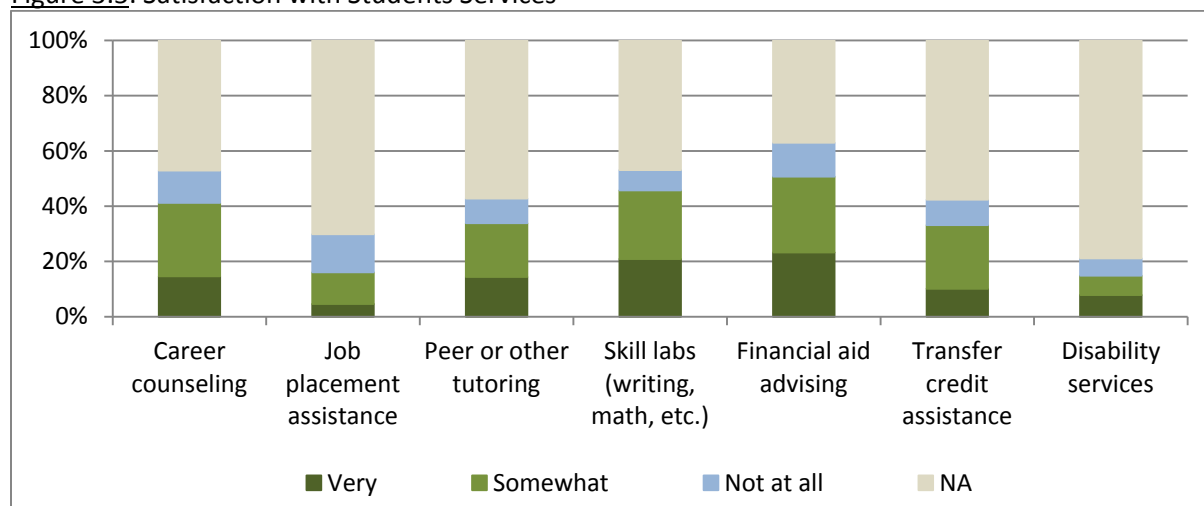
Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2012

Although RVC students indicate satisfaction with support services at the College, they are provided on a limited schedule outside of normal business hours. Furthermore, while most support services are available to support students enrolled exclusively online, direct support for student questions also is limited. Moving forward, action steps within the Academic and Strategic Enrollment Management plans should include exploring and identifying how the College could best extend support services to address the needs of online students and those enrolling primarily in night and weekend classes.

3.D.2: The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the student are adequately prepared.

RVC has as part of its mission statement and its culture a climate that "honors and respects each individual." As the community's college, RVC has provided learning support for students beginning early in its existence and has broadened that support through time. Students may take advantage of various support services throughout their time of enrollment. For example, face-to-face and online tutoring is available at no additional charge to students in most courses through the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) certified Tutoring Center. The Tutoring Center also provides specialized tutoring for English-language learners and help with study skills. Both the Writing Center and Math Lab are staffed by RVC full-time and/or part-time, adjunct instructors to assist students with academic needs in those content areas.

In addition to learning support services, the College has clearly documented procedures aimed at providing preparatory instruction and correct course placement. To this end, the website prominently displays the getting started steps a student would take in order to enroll in classes and provides information for students seeking online help prior to taking the placement test. RVC's mandatory testing and placement policies are regularly reviewed, and systematic validity studies to inform placement scores ensure that students are placed into classes for which they are adequately prepared.

RVC has a defined developmental course sequence in reading, composition, and mathematics for students identified as underprepared through scores on mandatory placement tests. These pre-100

level courses are designed to assist students in gaining the skills necessary to pursue their academic goals. Recently, developmental courses have been under review to determine if and how students may move more efficiently and successfully through the sequence. To this end, the recently redesigned developmental math sequence utilizes eight week modules that enable students to repeat only the portions of the course needing remediation rather than repeating an entire semester. Developmental Math course sequencing charts help students who do not meet the prerequisites for college level math courses better plan for degree or certificate attainment.   Reading and composition have been working to modify course expectations to provide a more clearly defined progression of skill development and are exploring delivery models (e.g., a stretch model in composition) that might offer similar success support as the developmental math modules. Although a strong developmental program has been in place at RVC for some time, the self-study identified a need to acquire more efficient systems to track student success indicators and time to goal completion for developmental students.

After determining course placement, students register for an Educational Planning Session (EPS). An EPS session is required for all new students before they can register for classes. The purpose of this session is to familiarize students with information needed to successfully transition to RVC, learn about degree options, and ultimately register for classes. Furthermore, all students intending to pursue an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree are now required to complete RVC's Planning for Success course (STU 100). This course is designed to introduce and connect students to the RVC community and to assist the students in the active development of academic and personal goals. In the course, students work with instructors to learn strategies for their transition into college and needed for college success. STU 100 discussions include academic preparation, self-awareness and RVC community resources.

3.D.3: The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

RVC academic and transfer advisors support students in degree and certificate programs. These counselors are available on the main campus during regular business hours, and they also support a drop-in, open academic advising lab. While limited, advising services are also available to RVC students at both the Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE) and the Learning and Opportunity Center (LOC).

Service limitations are due in part to the ratio of student to advisor, which is higher than best practice. The College has approximately 960 students per advisor, compared to the 441 to 1 ratio recommended by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). The high student-to-advisor ratio may be affecting the availability of advising support services to RVC students. According to CCSSE 2012 results, RVC students are significantly less likely to use academic advising/planning services than students at large community colleges and within the entire 2012 CCSSE cohort. Specifically, 47.6% of RVC students surveyed never use this service, while 35.7% of students attending large community colleges and 33.6% of the 2012 CCSSE cohort report never using this service. Figure 3.6 shows the frequency with which students use academic advising/planning at RVC compared to the two groups.

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Figure 3.6: Frequency of Use for Academic Advising/Planning
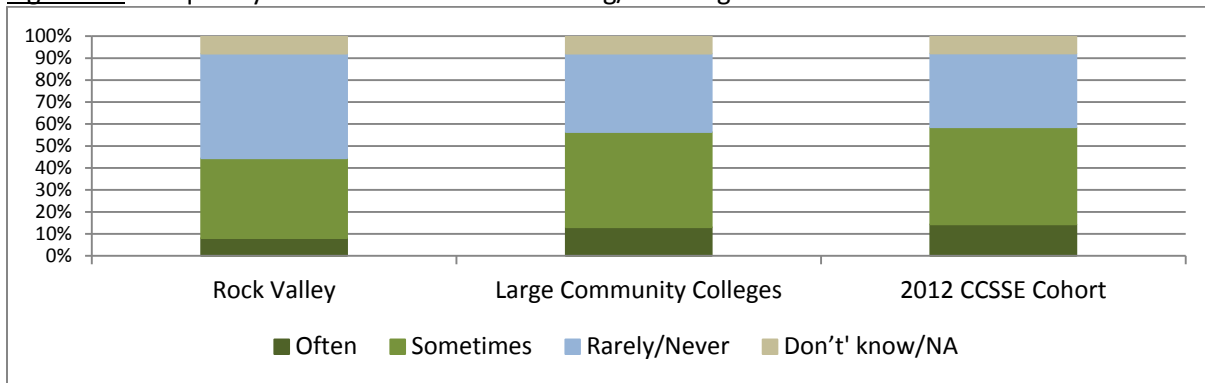
Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2012

Figure 3.7 shows the degree of satisfaction with academic advising/planning for RVC, large community colleges, and the entire 2012 CCSSE cohort. RVC students are significantly less satisfied with advising than their peers in the 2012 CCSSE cohort. At RVC, 64.6% of students surveyed indicated that they were somewhat or very satisfied, while 73.1% of the 2012 CCSSE cohort was somewhat or very satisfied with these services. However, levels of satisfaction at RVC are not significantly different that those at other large community colleges, where 70.8% of students report being somewhat or very satisfied with academic advising/planning. Perhaps, other large institutions experience the same service limitations as RVC. The College included a custom follow up question on the 2012 CCSSE, which indicated that 68.1% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the information they receive from academic advisors/counselors has been accurate and up-to-date.

Figure 3.7: Satisfaction with Academic Advising/Planning
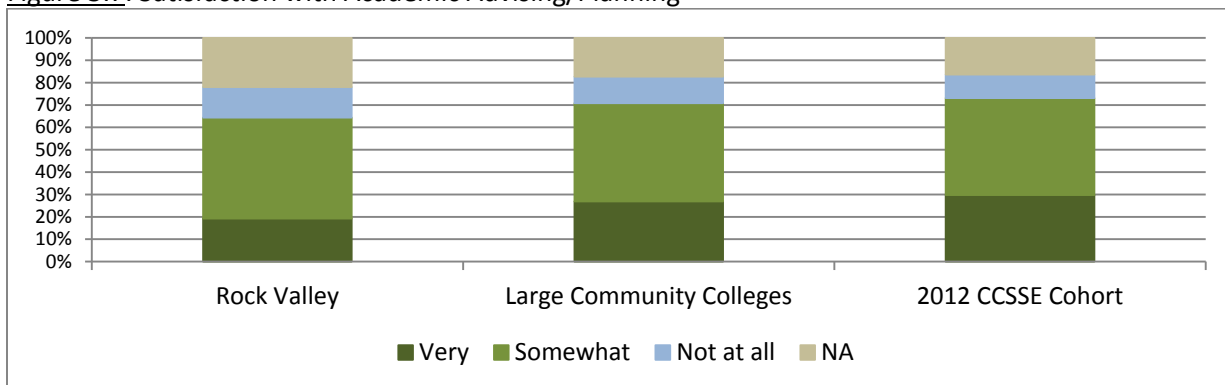
Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2012

RVC offers as many academic planning services as possible, given the high student-to-advisor ratio. In addition to advising appointments and an open lab, several tools are available to help students plan their programs of study. For example, the Student Academic Master Plan (STAMP) is part of the STU 100 curriculum to assist students with academic planning and also serves as a teaching tool to assist with realistic career planning. All students enrolled in STU 100 are required to complete their STAMP as part of the course. Students are also encouraged to update their plan as needed and bring it to future meetings with academic advisors.

In 2013, RVC also implemented Student Planning (i.e., e-advising), which provides pre-loaded electronic

degree plans, giving students the opportunity to map academic terms, course selections, and registration through degree completion. Student Planning also accounts for course pre-requisites and sequencing and provides sample degree plans. Student account activity is monitored by College academic advising staff either through one-on-one advising or through electronic monitoring and communication. All new RVC students are introduced to Student Planning through mandatory student educational planning sessions (EPS).

Students also are required to complete and input a student academic degree plan as a major course assignment within the STU100. STU100 faculty members provide an overview of Student Planning and require students to complete an appointment with an academic advisor to review their academic plan inputted into Student Planning. The appointments with the academic advisor also provide students with an opportunity to review academic, transfer, and career goals. RVC Student Planning and a companion how-to tutorial are available to students through the College's online services. Baseline data for course completion, persistence, and retention rates have been identified and will be used moving forward to determine impact on these key student success indicators.

3.D.4: The institution provides to student and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

RVC monitors its infrastructure and resources in order to provide optimal support for teaching and learning.   Students are provided with access to the College network at the time of enrollment, as are full-time faculty and part-time adjuncts upon their employment. That access includes an RVC email account, Online Services and access to EAGLE, the name given to RVC's learning management system (LMS). The college migrated to a new LMS powered by Instructure Canvas in Fall 2014 in part to make use of its cutting edge technology and ability to adapt to the needs of online teaching and learning. As a result of the self-study, it was determined that other students (i.e., Adult Education and some Continuing Education students) could benefit from access to the network accounts, particularly benefiting from access to EAGLE. Capacity to do so will be explored.

The Information Technology Strategic Plan guides continued growth in providing a sound technological infrastructure, and the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE) offers training, resources, and support to both full-time and part-time adjunct RVC faculty. Although programming exists through the ATLE to assist faculty in numerous areas, few faculty take advantage of the services. Exploring the use of alternative information sharing and delivery platforms, as well as incentives to increase use of ATLE services, has been identified as another action step.

State-of-the-art laboratories are available to students enrolled in the Life and Physical Sciences at both the main campus and the Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE). Additionally, students enrolled in the Nursing program (ADN and LPN) utilize labs on the main campus, while those enrolled in other allied health programs (i.e., Certified Nursing Assistants, Surgical Technology, Respiratory Therapy and Dental Hygiene) make use of the labs housed at SCCE. All of these labs allow students to prepare to engage in clinical practice sites throughout the College district.

The library on the main campus underwent significant renovation and was re-dedicated in August

2007. In addition to better space utilization, the renovation allowed RVC to incorporate a computer commons area on the main floor of the library as well as two teaching labs equipped with computers and Smart room technology. Library services are available at SCCE as requested by faculty and students with delivery service available for hard copy materials and online data bases.

Currently available performance spaces include the Starlight and Studio Theaters. The choral and instrumental programs use the Performing Arts Room located on the lower level of the Educational Resource Center for practice spaces and for some performances. In addition, performance venues in the downtown Rockford area are used to accommodate larger audiences while new performance areas to be built on the main campus are planned.

3.D.5: The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

The General Education Core Curriculum offers RVC students with several opportunities to develop skills in the effective use of research and information resources, including, composition (ENG 101 and ENG 103) and speech courses (SPH 131) as reflected in the course objectives below.

Composition I (ENG 101)	Students will
	• Use writing and reading to inquire, consider, and communicate about issues and topics at the college level.
	• Write in different kinds of rhetorical situations and attend to purpose, structure, audience, voice, consequences, and genre conventions.
	• Integrate their own ideas with those of others by summarizing, analyzing, and responding to the perspectives of others.
	• Employ flexible strategies for writing, drafting, revising, and consulting with others about their writing.
	• Control the mechanical features of their writing by attending to syntax, paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and MLA documentation style.
Composition II (ENG 103)	Students will
	• Use writing and reading to inquire, consider, and communicate about an academic topic.
	• Write in a specifically academic rhetorical situation by attending to the purpose, structure, audience, voice, consequences, and genre conventions of an academic research paper.
	• Employ flexible strategies for effective research, including identifying and narrowing topics of interest and evaluating primary and secondary sources.
	• Integrate their own ideas with those of others by summarizing, analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing the perspectives of others.
	• Employ flexible strategies for writing, drafting, revising, and consulting with others about their writing.
	• Control the mechanical features of their writing by attending to syntax, paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and MLA documentation style.
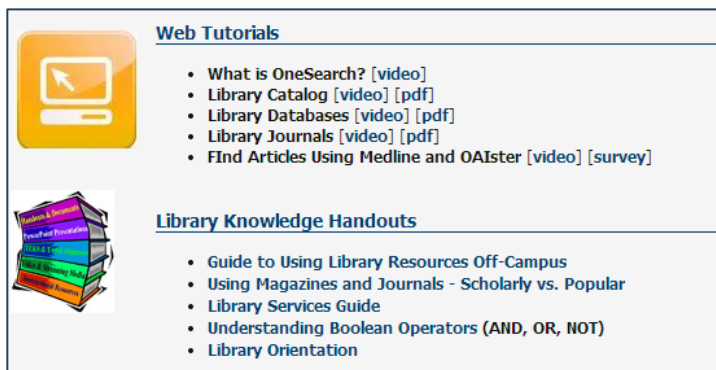
Fundamentals of Communication (SPH 131)	Students will
	• Demonstrate listening effectiveness in varied contexts
	• Deliver and develop an informative speech.
	• Defend and deliver a persuasive speech by developing a personal viewpoint.
	• Incorporate credible research in speeches both written and verbally.

In conjunction with the efforts in courses to promote these skills, the Estelle M. Black Library offers library instruction to assist students in classes that require writing a research paper. Some instructors take their classes to the Bibliographic Instruction Room (BIR) to learn how to locate resources appropriate for scholarly research. The BIR is an electronic classroom and training facility for RVC students, faculty, and staff. It contains 24 workstations and offers access to Voyager, the Library's online public access catalog and to the Internet.

Web Tutorials

- What is OneSearch? [video]
- Library Catalog [video] [pdf]
- Library Databases [video] [pdf]
- Library Journals [video] [pdf]
- FInd Articles Using Medline and OAIster [video] [survey]

Library Knowledge Handouts

- Guide to Using Library Resources Off-Campus
- Using Magazines and Journals - Scholarly vs. Popular
- Library Services Guide
- Understanding Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT)
- Library Orientation

In addition to face-to-face instruction in the BIR, several Library Research Guides and tutorials are available online. Research Guides cover the research process, general topics, specific academic disciplines and academic courses. User guides for the online catalog and resource databases (i.e., Academic Search Premier, Business Source Elite, and Literature Resource Center) also are available. Students seeking additional help with research assignments can visit the Writing Center or Tutoring Center.

Occasionally, students will conduct original research as part of a course with a service learning component or as a representative of a student club or organization. When such research requires human subjects (e.g., surveying students), students are required to go through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. The Office of Institutional Research supports these students by helping them refine research questions, develop surveys, and navigate the IRB process as appropriate.

3.E.1: Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

Co-curricular programs are aligned with the College's mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities and cultural enrichment. Students who involve themselves in Student Life programs will develop leadership skills, engage with their community, and become socially responsible citizens. Involvement opportunities include Campus Activities Board (CAB), Student Government Association (SGA), and a myriad of student clubs and organizations. CAB is a student organization that plans and implements social, recreational, cultural, and academic programs for the campus community. SGA is comprised of elected students entrusted to support and advocate for their peers through service and leadership. Student clubs and organizations provide friendship and leadership opportunities to students with common interests. Active student groups include the Association of Latin American Students (ALAS), Black Student Alliance (BSA), Enactus (formally Students in Free Enterprise), MEPA (Mathematics, Engineering & Physics Association), Model UN, Multicultural Club, and RVC Student Veterans Association. A full list of clubs and organizations can be found on Goose Groups, the College's online interactive space for student engagement.

> **RVC Mission**
> Rock Valley College is an educational leader in providing quality, accessible, lifelong learning opportunities, cultural enrichment, and support for economic and technological development.
>
> **Student Development Mission**
> The Student Development Division provides quality services and programs which support the mission of the College and enhance student learning, development, and success.
>
> **Student Life Mission**
> Student Life exists to connect, engage, and develop our students in a supportive environment through positive leadership and community building opportunities while serving as a bridge to their future accomplishments.

Student Life participated in the program review process during the self-study process. This review identified several strengths of the co-curricular program, including leadership development, diversity appreciation, educational experiences, and community service opportunities.

Leadership Development. Student Life has regularly hosted leadership training events for students to develop their leadership skills. Fall 2010, Fall 2011, and Fall 2012 included a Leadership Kick-off event to energize student club and organization members for the beginning of the new academic year. The 2010 and 2011 events included presentations by motivational speaker Jonathan Sprinkles, who has been voted National Speaker of the Year by the Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities (APCA). According to a feedback survey conducted after the event, 96.6% of respondents felt the information presented at the 2011 Leadership Kick-off would improve their leadership skills.

> **Student Testimonial**
> *Being a leader at Rock Valley College prepared me for the "four year college experience". It made me a more confident student, not afraid to ask questions and willing to step up and get involved at my new school, SIUC. Also, getting involved with RVC student life allowed me to become close friends with some of the movers and shakers of Rockford.*
>
> *- Nels Morris, SGA President, 2010-2011*

The details of these events can be found in the [2011-2012 Student Life Program Review](). In Fall 2013, Student Life experienced a turnover in the full-time professional staff. The manager resigned to pursue other career opportunities, and the administrative assistant retired. Part-time staff working at that time also completed their one-year contracts as paid, graduate interns. The new manager of student life started in late August of 2013, and given the need to re-staff, was unable to hold the large leadership event; however, the current staff is working toward rebuilding such offerings for student leaders.

Diversity Appreciation. Student organizations bring awareness to racial/ethnic, social, and spiritual diversity on campus (e.g., Association of Latin American Students, Black Student Alliance, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Islamic Awareness Association, Latter Day Saints Student Association, Multicultural Club, and Rock Out: The LGBT+ Community). With help from these and other student groups, Student Life sponsors diversity-focused events on a regular basis. Student Life annually organizes cultural events to correspond with Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, and Women's History month. In addition, the last few years included several opportunities for students to learn about and celebrate different cultures. Table 3.2 lists and describes some of these events.

Table 3.2: Diversity Event Offerings (examples from 2010-2013)

Date	Host(s)	Event	Description
September 2010	Student Life	Diversity Training	exploration of racism, discrimination, and prejudice led by a faculty member and community leader
September 2011	Student Life	Salsa with [Stan Peterson]()	discussions about diversity and leadership supported by salsa dancing
January 2012	Intercultural Student Services, Behavioral Intervention Team	MLK Birthday Celebration	birthday celebration speech excerpts, and pictures from the new MLK monument, and cake
March 2012	Stenstrom Center Student Development Office, Women's History Month Committee	Alternative Career Panel Discussion	panel discussion with successful women in male-dominated careers
April 2013	Rock Out: The LGBT+ Community	Breaking the Silence Dance	dance party with a DJ after the National Day of Silence
November 2013	Islamic Awareness Association, Student Government Association	Islamic Awareness Association Movie Night	showing of Bollywood movie featuring Muslim-Hindu tensions, effects of 9/11, and finding love with autism
November, annually	Multicultural Club	International Showcase	celebration of different cultures through food and performance

Educational Experiences. The College has a strong Model United Nations team, which most recently represented the Russian Federation at the 2013 National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference in Washington, D.C. The RVC team was one of the nine schools recognized as an Outstanding Delegation. This marks the third year in a row that RVC received this honor. In addition, two RVC students won Outstanding Delegation in a Committee in the International Conference on Population and Development

Beyond 2014.

Enactus, formerly known as Students in Free Enterprise is another student club that provides strong educational experiences for its members. According to their website, Enactus Rockford is a "community of student, academic and business leaders committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to transform lives and shape a better more sustainable world." The Global Small Business Incubator (GSBI), also a capstone course for the Business Division, is one Enactus project. The purpose of the GSBI is to help entrepreneurs develop, launch, and sustain successful social enterprises and participate in the global fair trade marketplace. Triple Quest Recycling is another Enactus project. This for-profit business provides microloans of used clothing to entrepreneurs in countries in need of economic development.

> **About Enactus**
>
> **En**trepreneurial – having the perspective to see an opportunity and the talent to create value from that opportunity
>
> **Act**ion – the willingness to do something and the commitment to see it through even when the outcome is not guaranteed
>
> **Us**- a group of people who see themselves connected in some important way; individuals that are part of a greater whole.

Several other student clubs and organizations are academic in nature and directly enhance students' educational experiences. Table 3.3 lists and describes some of the College's active academic groups. A full list is available on Goose Groups.

Table 3.3: Examples of Academic Clubs and Organizations

Club/Organization	Description*
History Club	A weekly meeting where people who love to learn about history come together and discuss events, societies, and ideas that have shaped history.
Mathematics, Engineering, Physics, & Astronomy Club (MEPA)	MEPA supports the pursuit of academic success by providing an interdisciplinary platform where its members both attend events and engage in activities relevant to the unique cooperation of mathematics, physics and engineering disciplines.
RVC Sustainable Energy Club	To promote awareness of sustainable energy opportunities and explore various activities related to the sustainable energy community.
Students for Better Breathing	To increase awareness and promote lung health.
That Club Than Which None Greater Can Be Conceived (That Club)	To educate those of the Rock Valley College community and the Rockford community and beyond on the impact philosophy has had and can have on us all.

*Descriptions are reproduced exactly as they appear in the Goose Groups directory.

In addition to clu- sponsored events, Student Life provides programming for personal and professional development. The 2009-2010 academic year included a Business Etiquette Dinner and Computer Bytes Seminar. Details of these events can be found in the 2011-2012 Student Life Program Review.

Occasionally, educational programming is tailored toward at-risk students. For example, in September 2011, Student Life and Intercultural Student Services hosted a Students of Color Summit. One purpose of the summit was to provide students of color with tools for academic, social, and personal success.

Community Service Opportunities. Many campus clubs and organizations coordinate community service opportunities. Table 3.4 provides several examples of community service.

Table 3.4: Examples of Community Service

Date	Club/Organization	Service Event	Description
April 2012	Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society	Day Without Shoes	Students participated in the National Day Without Shoes and held a shoe drive to benefit the Rockford Rescue Mission.
September 2012	Student Government Association	Voter Registration Day	Organized voter registration event.
October 2012	Justice Week Information Center	Intervarsity Christian Fellowship	Students raised money to combat trafficking of sex slaves.
November 2012	Association of Latin American Students	Saving Sandy	Collected and donated supplies to the Red Cross for victims of Hurricane Sandy.
January 2013	Campus Activities Board	Blood Drive	Invited the Rock River Valley Blood Center bus to campus for a blood drive.
October 2013	RVC Student Veterans Association	Halloween Party	Organized Halloween party for community children.
December 2013	Black Student Alliance	various holiday service projects	Students sang Christmas carols live on B103 radio, rang bells for the Salvation Army, and adopted a local family for the holidays.
Ongoing	Student Athletes	Golden Reader Program	RVC student athletes read to students at local elementary schools.

While Student Life works hard to offer programs that are aligned with the College's mission and enhance the educational experiences of students, areas in which co-curricular programming can improve remain. According to the 2011-2012 Student Life Program Review, most activities are aimed at traditional-aged students. A Spring 2012 survey of student leaders indicated that involved students are disproportionately full-time and traditional aged. Also, Black students were slightly underrepresented, while their White peers were slightly overrepresented. Figures 3.8 through 3.10 compare the demographic composition of the student leaders surveyed to the Spring 2012 Student Profile. Student Life should consider developing programs aimed at those nontraditional students who wish to be involved.

Figure 3.8: Age of Student Leaders Compared to Student Population
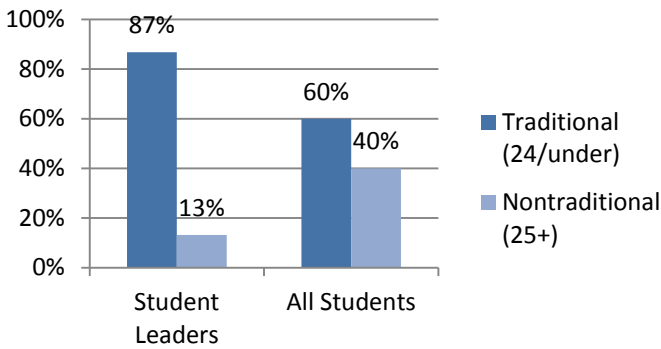
Figure 3.9: Enrollment Status of Student Leaders Compared to Student Population
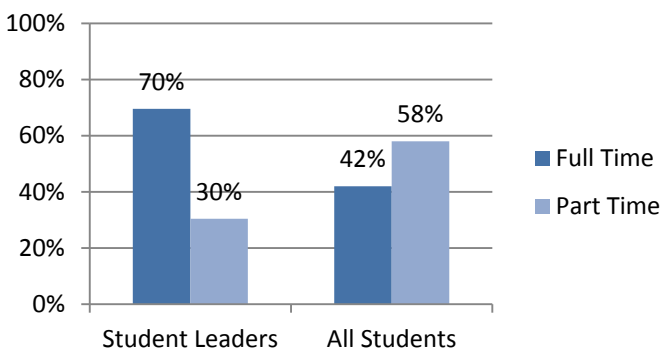
Figure 3.10: Race/Ethnicity of Student Leaders Compared to Student Population
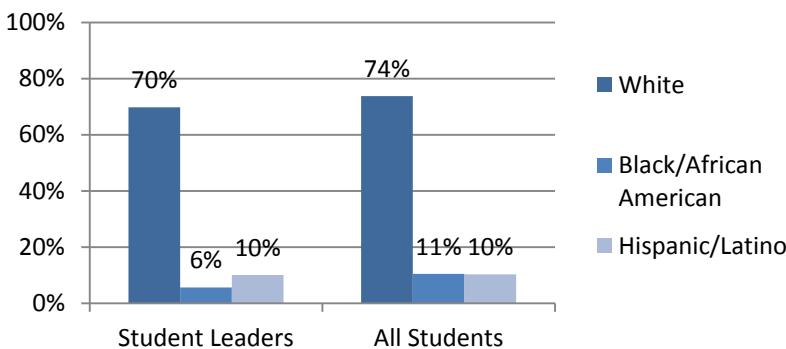
Multiple campuses also present a challenge to Student Life for co-curricular programming. Most events are held on the Main Campus, which excludes students who primarily attend classes at campus extensions (i.e., Stenstrom Center for Career Education and the Learning and Opportunity Center). Each extension has its own director for student development, which helps to alleviate this problem. Student Life experiences are extended to these campuses whenever possible; however, more inclusion is desired.

Turnover presents another challenge for Student Life. As a community college, the population of student leaders shifts approximately every two years, which can hinder the strength of the Campus Activities

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Board, Student Government Association, and student clubs and organizations. Consistency in staff is especially important when the student body continually changes. Unfortunately, the Student Life Division has experienced several staff transitions over years. Most recently, in Fall 2013, the division welcomed an entirely new professional staff including a full-time Manager, part-time Student Engagement and Leadership Advisor, and part-time Student Event Specialist.

3.E.2: The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

RVC provides various pathways for community members to obtain, "quality, accessible, lifelong learning opportunities" through credit (i.e., transfer degrees and career technical education certificates and degrees) and non-credit (e.g., community and continuing education and business outreach) course offerings, and through co-curricular opportunities (e.g., clubs and events). The College also offers the RVC community, "a variety of informal programs that are cultural and recreational, as well as educational." Details of how RVC demonstrates claims about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission are further detailed in sections 1.A.2, 3.B.1, and 3.E.1 of this document.

CRITERIA 3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:

1. RVC offers a comprehensive general education program that leads to successful transfer.

2. RVC awards a variety of certificate and degree programs that develop skills adaptable to changing environments. Many CTE programs have consistently high passing rates on licensure exams.

3. The College articulates common expectations for all students through its institutional student learning outcomes, as well as program a course specific learning goals.

4. RVC faculty and students regularly contribute to and share discovery of knowledge, creativity, innovation and artistic expression with others in the College community and beyond.

5. The College maintains processes to ensure that all instructors are appropriately credentialed.

6. The College provides a variety of supports for teaching and learning.

7. RVC offers students curricular and co-curricular opportunities that foster the knowledge and skills necessary for life-long learning.

Challenges:

1. The College lacks a formal, institutional-level process for collecting information pertaining to faculty efforts in scholarly research and publications.

2. RVC needs to develop strategies to more successfully recruit and maintain qualified, skilled adjuncts, especially in high-demand and STEM disciplines, as well as address consistency (e.g., across time and program/discipline) in their preparation and evaluation.

3. Student support services at the College are provided on a limited schedule outside of normal business hours.

4. Provide consistent co-curricular programming to support the learning needs of a continually changing community college student population.

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As a result of the self-study

- Faculty participated in a series of round table discussions and workshops that resulted in the refinement of the institutional student learning outcomes.   Additional details about this effort are addressed in the Conclusions and Recommendations of Criterion 4.

- Through a collaborative effort between the academic disciplines and Institutional Research improvements have been made to the process for student evaluation of faculty. This includes the purchase and implantation of Class Climate, which has led to a reduction in time between student completion of the evaluation of faculty and their return to faculty.   Next steps in this process include the revision of the evaluation form to improve consistency in the evaluation process, especially as it relates to the evaluation across methods of course delivery. Furthermore, in conjunction with divisions and faculty, the use of student evaluation of faculty to improve instruction and enhance student engagement with faculty will be explored.

- Providing additional Academic Advisors to decrease the ratio of advisor to student was prioritized in recent position planning and further endorsed by Board of Trustees, in part through recent work of the Ad Hoc Committee. As such, the College is planning to move forward to address on hiring. Nonetheless, further exploration and identification of ways in which the College could best extend support services to online students and those enrolling primarily in night and weekend courses should be built into the process and documentation of 2016-2018 versions of the Academic and Strategic Enrollment Management plans.

- A checklist was developed and distributed at the Adjunct Faculty Institute. This checklist provided adjunct faculty with resources available to them. They were encouraged to work with their respective Deans and Academic Chairs to access these resources. The implementation of this checklist will be reviewed to determine its perceived impact on more adequately preparing adjuncts for their role at the College, and additional processes will be developed with divisions to ensure consistent adjunct preparation and evaluation.

- The need to develop a process for collecting information pertaining to faculty efforts in scholarly research at an institutional level was identified. The development of this process will be included in future Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE) planning.

CHAPTER 4

CRITERIA 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING – EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT
The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Criterion 4 Summary

In addition to promoting excellence in teaching and learning (Mission Document, Excellence Core Value), RVC strives to be a progressive learning institution. Essential to this aim is operating within a continuous cycle of review and evaluation to deliver a progressive learning environment. The following supporting evidence and documentation demonstrate the ways in which RVC engages in evaluation and improvement to address the current and anticipated needs of District 511:

> **Core Component**
> 4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

4.A.1: The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

RVC engages in a systematic, College-wide program review process that is designed to support campus-level planning and decision-making; demonstrate accountability of programs; and identify opportunities to improve or discontinue programs to better meet the needs of the College community. Academic Affairs, in collaboration with Institutional Research, has developed program review materials and timelines to be consistent with the Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) Program Review Manual and Administrative Rules of the Illinois Community College Board (1501.303.d, p. 30). These materials, timelines, and the overall process are reviewed annually and amended as necessary.

The College's program review process was also reviewed as part of completing the ICCB Recognition Report (Section 4.B, pp. 65-75). Academic Affairs and Institutional Research reviewed program review materials, processes, and timelines to determine compliance with State policy and procedure, as well as the general effectiveness of the program review process. As a result, the *RVC Program Review Process Manual for Submission of Annual ICCB Program Review Summary Reports* was replaced with program review templates that provided a framework for data analysis and data-driven decision making, as well as consistent completion of the program review report, based on a series of guiding questions.   These templates are now provided in both paper and electronic forms (i.e., on the College website and on jump drives provided) at the annual program review roll-out meeting.

Academic program reviews are completed by chairs, who may in turn delegate elements to faculty peers with appropriate expertise to ensure a comprehensive review process. Non-academic program reviews are completed by area administrators and staff.   Academic Affairs and Institutional Research provide support in understanding of the program review process and documentation, as well as the critical analysis of data to discern program quality, need, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Data provided to support the program review has transitioned from that based on the individual request

to an identified list of data pulled together into a more formal, structured data packet. Data in this structured data packet are provided by Institutional Research and include multi-year comparisons of student demographics (e.g., average age, gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, and intent or goal at the College), student enrollment (e.g., unduplicated headcounts and credit hours overall and by course), and student success indicators (e.g., grade distribution and DWFI rates). ICCB Follow-up Survey (OFUS) results and labor market information are also provided for the program reviews of career and technical programs. When on file in the College's assessment archive (i.e., TracDat), reports of assessment plans and results are also provided to facilitate the program review process.

RVC recognizes the importance of sharing this information to the larger College community so that the program review process results in a living document to inform program quality and improvement rather than a report that is periodically completed for compliance. To this end, the College has used various mechanisms of sharing program review reports; however, the purpose of sharing has been informational rather decision-making. Previously, academic program review reports were shared through the President's Council, which was designed as an information-sharing group. Certificate program review reports were shared at Data-driven Decision Making (DDDM) a College leadership group, also as information sharing but with the potential to inform decision-making. In FY2011, President's Council was restructured to forums, so academic program review reports were no longer shared. In 2011-2012, the Assessment Committee recommended that academic program review be shared at Curriculum Committee. Results of 2012 program review indicated that, again, this sharing was conducted in an information manner that limited the decision-making potential of the process. As such, academic program reviews will be shared with DDDM, as well as Curriculum Committee. In addition to sharing the results of program review through such short presentations, key findings and resulting actions taken are reported along with accreditation outcomes in the Accountability Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Summary Report.

4.A.2: The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

RVC evaluates all credit that it transcripts. The guidelines used for this evaluation are communicated clearly to students through the College Catalog (p. 13) and website.   These guidelines are further detailed in 4.A.3.

4.A.3: The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Students wishing to transfer credit to RVC must submit official transcripts from their previous institutions along with a transcript evaluation request form to the Records and Registration office. RVC only accepts credits from regionally accredited institutions. Accreditation information is checked against the transcript key or at the Council for Higher Education Accreditation website before the transcript is evaluated. Only credits that apply to a student's desired degree or certificate are transferred and a maximum of 44 100-level and 200-level credits are accepted. Whenever possible, RVC course equivalents for 100 and 200 level credits are awarded. If that is not possible, up to 21 credits of electives may be granted. Junior/300-level credits will transfer on a course-by-course basis once equivalency is determined, and 400-level credits require permission from the appropriate dean if a potential equivalency is determined. RVC does not honor substitution and/or waivers made at another institution, unless approved by the appropriate Dean. Foreign transfer credit must be evaluated by Education Credential Evaluators (ECE).

When course equivalency is unknown, the Illinois Articulation Initiative or College Source catalogs are consulted. In cases where a clear equivalency cannot be established elective credit can be awarded if needed to meet degree requirements. In some cases the College may request course syllabi from students. If the Records and Registration office is still unable to find an equivalent RVC course, the appropriate Associate Dean makes the final decision on course equivalency. While Records and Registration staff understand extant protocols for accepting transfer credit, some Academic Chairs and Associate Deans lack sufficient guidance in making determinations, because such situations are often unique. In some instances, Chairs have access to a syllabus from another institution. In others, they have samples of student work from that class. The College recognized the need for better training for Academic Chairs, and a manual for this employee group was developed within the previous learning management system (LMS). This resource has yet to be moved to the new LMS platform, Canvas.

The College Catalog offers a policy on the acceptance of military credit. The evaluation of military transcripts is similar to the evaluation of transcripts from other postsecondary institutions such that course content must be similar to RVC course content in order for credit to transfer. Vocational elective credit may be awarded if an equivalent course cannot be identified. Review of a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214) may result in the award of four Physical Education (PE) credits; however, only three PE credits can be counted toward degree completion).

RVC accepts transfer grades of "D" only if the student's overall GPA is 2.0 or higher. Exceptions apply for courses with minimum course grade requirements described in the College Catalog. For example, students entering higher education after Summer 1999 must earn a "C" or better in ENG 101: Composition I and ENG 103: Composition II.

4.A.4: The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses and programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Prerequisites, rigor, and expectations for student learning. Faculty hold responsibility for prerequisites, rigor, and expectations for student learning. The Curriculum Committee governs the addition of courses and programs to the curriculum, as well as substantial changes. In addition, prerequisites, rigor, and learning expectations are reviewed as part of course assessment and program review. The 2012-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement specifies assessment of student learning as a faculty responsibility; see 3.C.1.

As part of the approval process, any new course or program must have the Form for New Course or Program Approval signed by the appropriate Chair, Associate Dean, Associate Vice President, and the Curriculum Committee Chair. The Curriculum Committee is then responsible for review and approval of that new course or program, including associated prerequisites, student learning outcomes, and means of assessment as stated on the Master Course Syllabus. All courses, including those offered for dual credit, are required to adhere to the prerequisites, course objectives, and assessment methods defined in the Master Course Syllabus.

Course prerequisites, rigor, and learning expectations are reviewed at least once every five years as part

of the course assessment process. Course assessment includes all sections of a given course, including those offered online, in compressed formats, and for dual credit. The course assessment process is detailed further in 4.B.1. In addition, a comprehensive credit hour audit was conducted in Fall 2013 to determine that rigor and expectations were consistent across course lengths (16 weeks or compressed) and delivery formats (face-to-face, online, hybrid, independent study, apprenticeship, and clinical). Consistent with the Credit Hour Compliance Plan, findings of this audit are now being analyzed.

Access to learning resources. The College provides access to learning resources for students studying at all locations. RVC offers students regular access to the Tutoring Center, Math Lab, Writing Center, and academic computing labs on its main campus. The Learning and Opportunity Center (LOC) and Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE) also provide tutoring services, academic computing labs, and library delivery service.   All students, including those enrolled exclusively online, in dual credit, or in the Aviation Maintenance Technology program at the Falcon Road facility have access to online learning resources through the Estelle M. Black Library and BrainFuse (24-hour online tutoring). The College also connects district residents with life-long learning resources through Community and Continuing Education.

Faculty qualifications. As defined by Section 6.1 of the 2012-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement and described in Section 3.A.3 of this document, the College has clearly identified instructor qualifications. Human Resources carefully monitors faculty qualifications, and Institutional Research regularly audits documentation of credentials and related experience. Qualifications to teach are consistent across programs, except where specialized credentials are required by program accreditors (e.g., Nursing).

Students taking dual credit courses on the RVC campus are integrated into classes with college students, so their instructors meet all contractual qualifications. Dual credit courses offered at area high schools must be approved by the College before they are offered. Any instructor wishing to teach a College course for dual credit in an area high school must meet the same requirements designated for College faculty. Full-time faculty members are given the opportunity to teach courses in the high schools prior to qualified adjuncts. According to the High School Connections Credit Handbook, high school teachers who teach dual credit courses must have appropriate credentials and demonstrate teaching competencies at the college level.

The College's High School Connections office, academic departments (i.e., associate deans and chairs), and the Human Resources department will continue shared efforts to review transcripts of any new dual credit instructors prior to hiring. In accordance with State Laws and Regulations and Accreditation Standards, staff in High School Connections will develop a roster of instructors to provide a quick reference for consistent monitoring of credentials and transcripts within each year and term. Although the majority of dual credit courses are offered on the College's campus with its full-time or adjunct faculty, a regular communication and evaluation process involving dual credit high school teachers, the chair and members of the academic department needs to be established. This process may include classroom observations at the high school.

4.A.5: The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

The College seeks and maintains appropriate accreditations for its programs – Apprenticeship programs, Automotive, Aviation Technology, Fire Science, Graphic Arts, Nursing and Allied Health programs, and

Welding). A table summarizing these specialized accreditations and their current status can be found in Table 2 of the Other Accreditations of the Introduction of this document.

4.A.6: The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

RVC programs prepare students to either transfer to four-year institutions or develop skills for employment. Students pursuing an Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Science (A.S.), Associate in Engineering Science (A.E.S), or Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) generally plan to transfer their credits to four-year colleges or universities and earn bachelor's degrees. The College has identified transfer rate as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and uses data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and various four-year institutions to evaluate transfer patterns and subsequent success.

Table 4.1 summarizes the number of RVC students transferring to top receiving institutions in Illinois. Half of the schools represented are public four -year institutions, three are private four -year institutions, and two are community colleges. Northern Illinois University, the closest public four -year institution, is consistently the top transfer destination for RVC students. Although most RVC students continue their education in Illinois, two University of Wisconsin campuses (Platteville and Whitewater) made the NSC top 15 list for subsequent enrollment. Additional data from the November 2013 Transfer Rate KPI Report indicate that RVC students tend to earn higher GPA's than transfers from other community colleges and native students at the four -year institutions for which data are available.

Table 4.1: Multi-year Comparison of Transfer Destinations for RVC Students

College	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
Northern Illinois University	207	155	214	170	153
Illinois State University	31	31	46	35	35
Kishwaukee College	24	30	25	34	NA
Judson University	12	24	15	25	32
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	11	13	20	27	18
Olivet Nazarene University	NA	4	7	NA	18
Rockford University	84	85	98	NA	18
Highland Community College	16	12	30	15	NA
Western Illinois University	23	13	20	19	13
U of I at Urbana/Champaign	6	11	9	10	13

Source: Illinois Board of Higher Education – Fall Enrollment Survey; NA = not available

Students pursuing a certificate or Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) generally intend to use their credentials to gain employment. Per ICCB, the College is required to administer the Occupational Follow-up Survey (OFUS) six months after program completion for selected Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs each year. Data collected during the follow-up study include objective for attending college, educational status, employment status, relationship of job to college program, hours worked per week, hourly salary, job satisfaction, location of employment (within or outside the college's

district), and satisfaction with RVC. The College has integrated the OFUS data into the planning process by including survey results in CTE Program Review data packets.

A few years ago, the OFUS response rates fell below the ICCB requirement of 50%, so the Office of Institutional Research redeveloped survey methodology and the College contracted with a third party to follow up with non-respondents. Recently, Career Services has decided to collect OFUS data from all CTE completers each year to build a more robust data set for internal use. In addition to studying job placement, Career Services assists students with finding jobs and internships on an individual basis and by coordinating internship and job fairs.

Some programs with specialized accreditation also collect job placement data by other means. For example, the Respiratory Care Program conducts an annual graduate survey to maintain accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care. Data collected with this survey include job title, length of employment, salary, and employer. The Surgical Technology Program also collects job placement information for its accreditor. Both programs use job placement data to monitor effectiveness in preparing graduates for the workforce.

CTE programs also monitor licensing exam pass rates to determine whether students are prepared for employment. Detailed information about pass rates and resulting program improvements can be found in the accompanying Federal Compliance document.

> **Core Component**
> 4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

4.B.1: The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Curricular Learning Goals. Figure 4.1 depicts the structure of academic assessment at RVC. Assessment for student learning is conducted at the institutional, program or discipline[1], course, and class levels for the purposes of decision making, accountability, validation, and improvement. Goals for student learning and effective processes of assessment exist at each of these levels and are archived in TracDat.

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[1] At RVC, program refers to a collection of classes that culminates in a degree or certificate (e.g., Associate of Applied Science in Building Construction Management or Sustainable Energy Systems Certificate) and discipline refers to a collection of classes within a department that does not offer a degree or certificate (e.g., Composition and Literature or Mathematics).

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative

Figure 4.1: Structure of Assessment
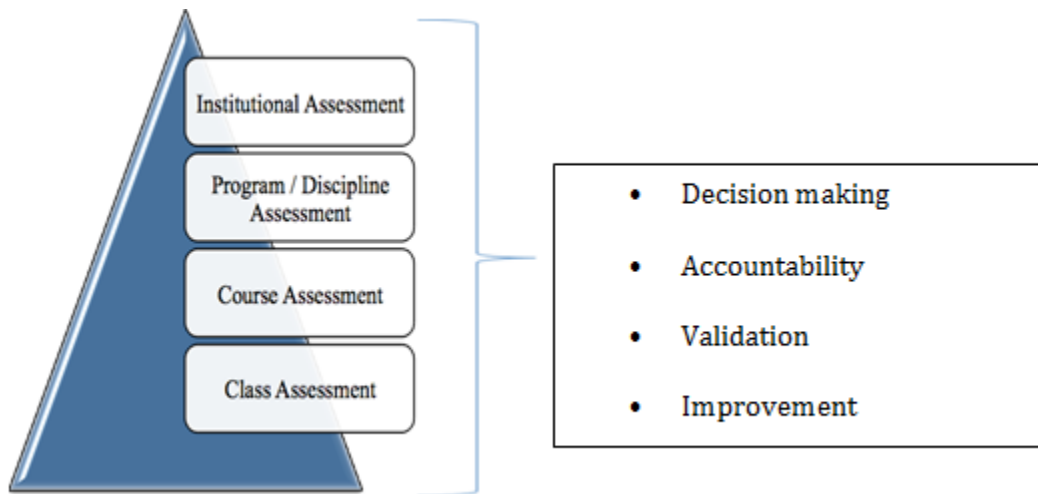
- **Institutional Level**. Institutional assessment refers to student learning and development across the College regardless of program or discipline of study. Assessment at this level includes, but is not limited to, measuring the institution's student learning outcomes (SLO), typically referred to as general education outcomes by most colleges. Table 4.2 lists the current SLO categories along with the corresponding subcomponents[2]. Institutional SLO are well publicized (e.g., classroom posters, College website, and College Catalog). Students pursuing an A.A. or A.S. learn about the SLO as part of the required STU 100: Planning for Success course. The SLO are also articulated on all Master Course Syllabi (MCS) and mapped to course objectives as part of course assessment. Master Course Syllabi are also archived in TracDat.

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[2] Revised SLO will be rolled out in Summer/Fall 2014.

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Table 4.2: Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

Communicate Effectively	Integrate technology into all fields of knowledge and expression
- Create and compose a variety of documents that are purposeful, well supported and well organized - To construct and deliver a clear, well-supported verbal presentation appropriate to the audience and situation - Demonstrate an ability to interact effectively and appropriately in a small group setting - Locate appropriate and relevant information - Demonstrate an ability to correctly apply a recognized style of academic documentation	- Identify technology appropriate for managing a task - Use technology effectively to perform a task - Evaluate the results of using technology
Demonstrate competency in critical thinking	Respect and work effectively with persons of diverse backgrounds and abilities
- Identify methods of reasoning - Examine accurate and reliable information - Analyze alternatives using valid evidence to support conclusions - Formulate appropriate solutions - Evaluate the effectiveness of thinking and problem solving methods	- Explain the impact of social, political, and economic factors on race and relations in our global society - Attend to diverse perspectives - Demonstrate the ability to work in diverse groups toward a common goal - Identify and explain diverse cultural customs, beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles
Demonstrate the behaviors of ethical and socially responsible citizens	Demonstrate personal wellness
- Evaluate ethical and social situations - Distinguish between fact and ethical decisions - Apply varied methods for guiding their decision-making processes - Demonstrate good citizenship	- Display ongoing intellectual exploration - Practice physical well-being - Demonstrate aesthetic responsiveness - Exhibit adaptability and flexibility

- **Program or Discipline Level**. Program and discipline assessment is designed to measure success for a specific program/discipline or degree/certificate. Program and discipline goals and related learning outcomes are documented in TracDat. Table 4.3 provides examples of program/discipline goals with related outcomes. Additional examples can be viewed in TracDat. To enrich curriculum alignment, program/discipline outcomes are mapped to course objectives during the course assessment process.

Table 4.3: Examples of Program and Discipline Learning Outcomes

Goal	Related Outcomes *Students will:*
Composition Discipline	
Students who successfully complete ENG 099 (if required), ENG 101, and ENG 103 with a "C" or better will demonstrate the skills required to successfully complete an associate degree and/or transfer to a bachelor's degree program.	• inquire into and communicate effectively about college-level issues and topics • write successfully in different kinds of rhetorical situations • use source material purposefully and effectively • employ a flexible and productive writing process • produce writing that adheres to standards of correctness depending upon the situation for writing
Developmental Reading	
Students will acquire the strategies and skills necessary to understand college level reading materials.	• summarize complex concepts, processes, or information presented in a text by paraphrasing them in simpler but still accurate terms • decode vocabulary in a variety of contexts • select effective strategies appropriate to content • apply a variety of study strategies
Fire Science A.A.S Degree	
Graduates who complete the Fire Science A.A.S. degree will demonstrate knowledge of practical, administrative, and incident command skills to establish a successful fire service related career or serve in a volunteer fire department.	• develop strategic plans to deploy tactical resources on an emergency scene • apply management theories to legal and ethical issues in the fire service • identify elements of the budget process used to develop fire department capital and operational budgets • identify local and national fire codes and apply them to prescribed enforcement procedures • provide clear, concise fire service information using prescribed forms • identify the elements of course development and apply them to fire department goals • describe the history and development of apparatus, tools and technologies used in the fire service • identify the various building construction types and their relationship to fire and emergency conditions

- **Course and Class Levels.** Assessment at this level is designed to measure success in all sections of a particular course, such as ENG 101, MTH 099, or SOC 190. Learning objectives specific to each course are articulated on the MCS. Per the MCS Template Instructions, course objectives are the same across course sections regardless of the instructor teaching the course and method of course delivery. Instructor syllabi are randomly selected for auditing to ensure compliance. Samples of course objectives can be found on the MCS archived in TracDat. Course objectives also guide class assessment, which is conducted in a faculty member's class to ascertain students' understanding of class material and assign grades.

Processes usd to assess student learning at the institutional, program/discipline, and course levels are described in section 4.B.2.

Co-curricular Learning Goals. At RVC, student learning occurs both in and out of the classroom. According to the Student Life webpage, one goal of this department is to "further student learning and

personal development by providing opportunities in student leadership." Student Life programming also focuses on social responsibility and civic engagement. The 2012 Student Life Program Review identified five service outcomes, three of which are characteristic of student learning goals (i.e., they describe what students will know or be able to do as a result of Student Life services or programs) and are identified below.

1. Involved students will be able to:
   - effectively plan events from start to finish;
   - identify, locate, and make use of college resources; and
   - navigate the paperwork with little or no direction.
2. Student leaders and club advisors will learn to apply basic leadership principles in their student clubs, peer interactions, and service to the college.
3. Involved students, faculty, and staff will know how to utilize our new online, interactive student engagement space.

Efforts to assess co-curricular learning will be further described in section 4.B.2.

4.B.2: The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Curricular Programs**.** The College has in place systematic processes for assessing student learning at the institutional, program/discipline, and course levels.

- **Institutional Assessment.** The Assessment Committee, which is comprised of faculty and staff members from academic affairs and student development, is responsible for assessing the institutional SLO. Each year, the committee manages at least one assessment project, including scope, standards, method(s), and timeline for implementation. Since 2007, several direct and indirect measures have been used to assess institutional SLO, including the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE), Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE), the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) VALUE Rubrics, and locally developed prompts and rubrics. Table 4.3 shows the specific SLO assessment studies implemented since 2007.

  The College has adopted a two-year cycle for administering nationally standardized assessments to inform student learning. In odd years, the CAAP Critical Thinking module is administered as a direct assessment of the College's Critical Thinking SLO. In even years, the CCSSE is administered as an indirect assessment of educational practices related to student learning.

Table 4.4: Institutional Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assessment Efforts, 2007-2013

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Spr	Fa	Spr	Fa	Spr	Fa	Spr	Fa	Spr	Fa	Spr	Fa	Spr	Fa
Communication														
CAAP: Writing Skills		X	100		200									
Local Rubric									P	P				
Local Prompt/VALUE Rubric											X			
Technology														
Critical Thinking														
CAAP: Critical Thinking		X	100		200	100			200	100			X	
Local Prompt / VALUE Rubric											X			
Diversity														
Local Survey			P											
PACE/SACE						X	X							
CCSSE							X				X			
Local Prompt/ Rubric									P					
Local Prompt / VALUE Rubric											X			
Ethics & Social Responsibility														
Personal Wellness														
SLO Review & Revision												X	X	X

NOTE: 100 = 100-level courses; 200 = 200-level courses; P = Pilot; X = Assessed

In addition, the College regularly assesses institutional SLO by evaluating student work samples with rubrics. During the 2010-2011 academic year, two pilot studies were conducted to examine the assessment of three of the College's six SLO's – communication, critical thinking, and diversity. The experiences and results of these pilot studies led to the decision to assess all three of these SLO in the 2011-2012 academic year by using a single writing prompt. Members of the Assessment Committee developed an assessment prompt, administration guidelines, and a common set of rubrics based on the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics. Materials were piloted in Fall 2011, writing samples were collected in Spring 2012, and the project concluded with faculty and peer reading days designed to evaluate student work and facilitate discussions about student learning. Results can be found in the July 2012 KPI Summary Report.

In 2012-2013, faculty were again asked to participate in the administration of a writing prompt designed to assess written communication, critical thinking, and diversity. Midway through the year, based on recommendations from the internal committee working on criterion three of the HLC Self Study, emphasis shifted from collecting writing samples to revising the College's SLO based on concern that the SLO were not well-defined or measurable. The SLO revision process extended from Summer 2012 through Fall 2013 and involved several faculty and staff members from Liberal Arts and Sciences, Career and Technical Education, Academic Affairs, and Student Development. Most of the drafting was done by the Assessment Committee and a small group of interested faculty during Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. A targeted survey was conducted in Summer 2013 to gather feedback about the proposed SLO, and faculty and staff had several

additional opportunities to provide feedback throughout Fall 2013. These opportunities included a session at the September Development Day, which was open to all college employees, and presentations at selected committee meetings (Academic Council, Chief Academic Officer Council, and Curriculum Committee). In addition, the proposed SLO were vetted with a group of student tutors.

In December 2013, the new institutional SLO were finalized and presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee of the Board of Trustees. Four new SLO replace the six previous SLO; however, the revision does not constitute an entire reinvention of the College's intended outcomes. Rather, the new SLO reorganize and better define the previous SLO such that they are clearer and more measurable. Figure 4.2 maps the new SLO categories to the previous SLO categories.

Figure 4.2: Student Learning Outcome Map
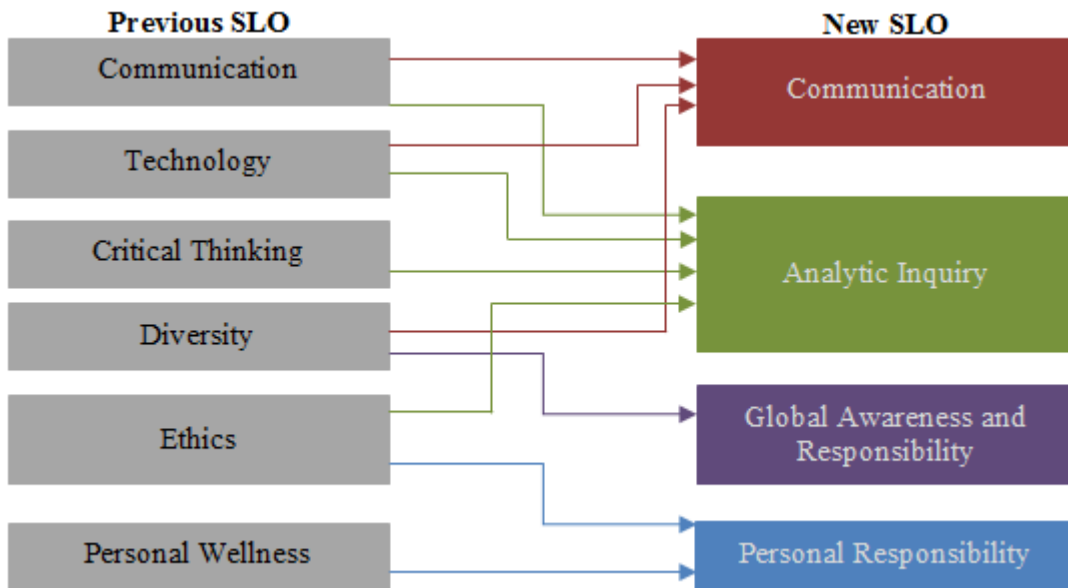
In Spring 2014, faculty will update MCS by mapping course objectives to the new institutional SLO. Students will begin seeing the new SLO on syllabi and displayed around campus in Summer and Fall 2014. Meanwhile, members of the Assessment Committee and other faculty volunteers will begin assessing the new outcomes. Members of the committee will align the new SLO to VALUE rubrics, and faculty will select assignments that can be evaluated using these rubrics. The SLO assessment philosophy moving forward is to use existing course assignments to inform assessment of institutional SLO so that faculty members are not expected to add assignments to their courses. This plan provides an opportunity to test the new SLO, while still gathering useful evidence of student learning at the institutional level. Figure 4.3 summarizes the SLO revision process and roll out from Summer 2012 through Fall 2014.

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Figure 4.3: Institutional SLO Revision Process
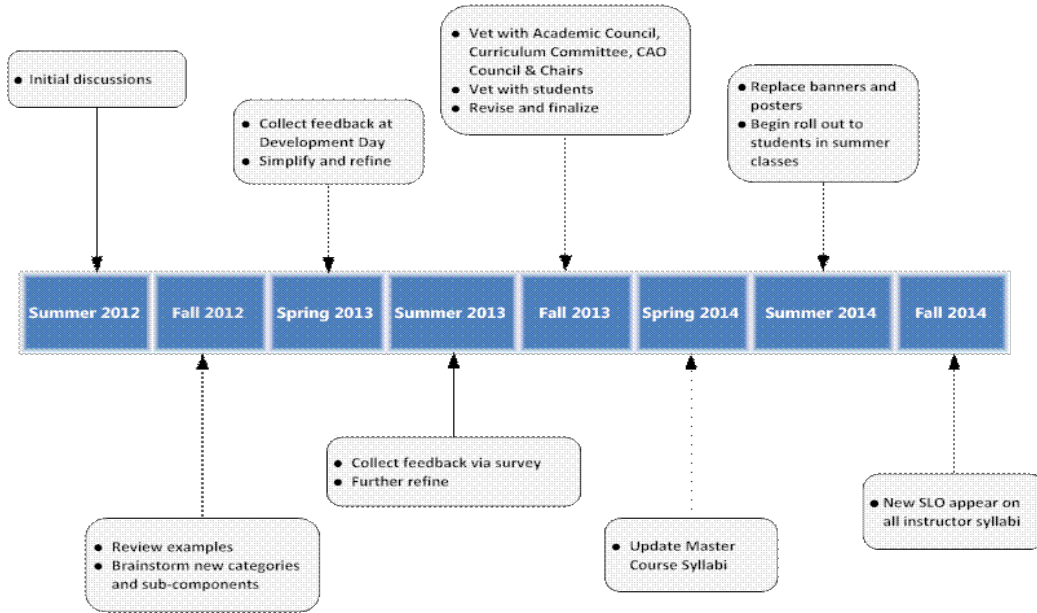
During the SLO revision process, institutional-level assessment included administration of the CAAP Critical Thinking module with 150 students tested in a set of randomly selected classes. Comparisons with national norms indicate that RVC sophomores, on average, score higher than their peers at other two-year public colleges. Detailed results from the Spring 2013 CAAP administration can be found in the July 2013 KPI Summary Report.

- **Program/Discipline Assessment.** For the last few years, faculty members have focused on course-level assessment and have been encouraged to use course assessment results to inform program/discipline assessment. Such inferences are possible, because course outcomes are mapped to program/discipline outcomes as part of the course assessment process. In calendar year 2012, the College is developed a 5-year cycle for program/discipline assessment so that each program/discipline outcome is assessed at least once during its ICCB Program Review cycle. If a program/discipline (e.g., Automotive) has more than five outcomes, then some years will require assessment of two or more of these outcomes. The annual procedure for program/discipline assessment is guided by the timeline developed in 2012 (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Program/Discipline Assessment Timeline (Calendar Year 2012)

Number	Task	2012												2013	
		February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February
1	Review program/discipline goals and outcomes; revise as needed													
2	Review proposed 5-year plan; revise as needed													
3	Identify assessment methods for 2012													
4	Conduct assessment													
5	Analyze assessment data													
5.1	Document results													
5.2	Identify next steps													

Program/discipline assessment plans and procedures have been articulated, but there are several ongoing challenges at this level. One challenge is to increase awareness of program/discipline goals within departments and across the College. Moreover, consistent implementation of assessment plans and completion of the assessment cycle to validate student learning are needed.

- **Course Assessment.** The College also has a five-year cycle for course assessment so that each course is assessed at least once during each program's ICCB Program Review cycle. The annual procedure for course assessment is guided by the timeline depicted in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Annual Course Assessment Timeline

Number	Task	Calendar Year 1												Calendar Year 2	
		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February
1	Review Master Course Syllabus														
1.1	Revise as needed														
1.2	Map course objectives to program/discipline outcomes														
1.3	Map course objectives to institutional learning outcomes														
2	Identify and document assessment methods														
3	Conduct spring term assessment														
4	Analyze mid-year assessment data														
4.1	Document results														
4.2	Identify next steps														
5	Conduct fall term assessment														
6	Analyze end-of-year assessment data														
6.1	Document results														
6.2	Identify next steps														

An internal review of the College's course assessment process and documentation was conducted and reported to the Board of Trustees in the January 2011 KPI Summary Report on Assessment of Student Learning. This review showed that prior to Fall 2010, less than 25% of academic assessment units were uniformly documenting course assessment centrally, even though most were consistently engaged in assessment efforts. Therefore, a commitment was made to improve course assessment by increasing documentation of assessment activity and assessment results. Specifically, course assessment documentation was to be archived centrally into the TracDat system to provide timely access to, as well as a historical record of, assessment information to inform decision making. As a result, documentation of assessment methods and results has improved, but there are still gaps in some areas.

One-hundred fifty-eight (158) credit courses were scheduled for assessment during calendar year 2011. By the end of the year, approximately one third of Master Course Syllabi for these

results has improved, but there are still gaps in some areas.

One-hundred fifty-eight (158) credit courses were scheduled for assessment during calendar year 2011. By the end of the year, approximately one third of Master Course Syllabi for these courses had been reviewed and mapped to program/discipline and institutional learning outcomes. In addition, 43% of these courses had documented assessment methods. Analysis and documentation of 2011 assessment results that were not completed were rolled over to 2012. The low levels of attention given to course assessment were related to contentious collective bargaining negotiations with RVC's faculty. As a result of these negotiations, faculty implemented work-to-rule, and course assessment was viewed by many faculty as outside of their contractual obligations.

During 2012, as a residual effect of negotiations, assessment documentation dipped to less than one third. Based on this data and requests from some faculty to have designated time to focus on assessment, time was devoted on the January 2013 Development Day to faculty working within their discipline/program on course assessment. Figure 4.6 shows the impact on reporting of course assessment resulting from this January Development Day activity. Approximately an additional 30% have completed or are in process of documenting various aspects of course assessment (i.e., master course syllabus review, documentation of assessment methods, and documentation of assessment results).

Figure 4.6: 2012 Documentation of Course Assessment
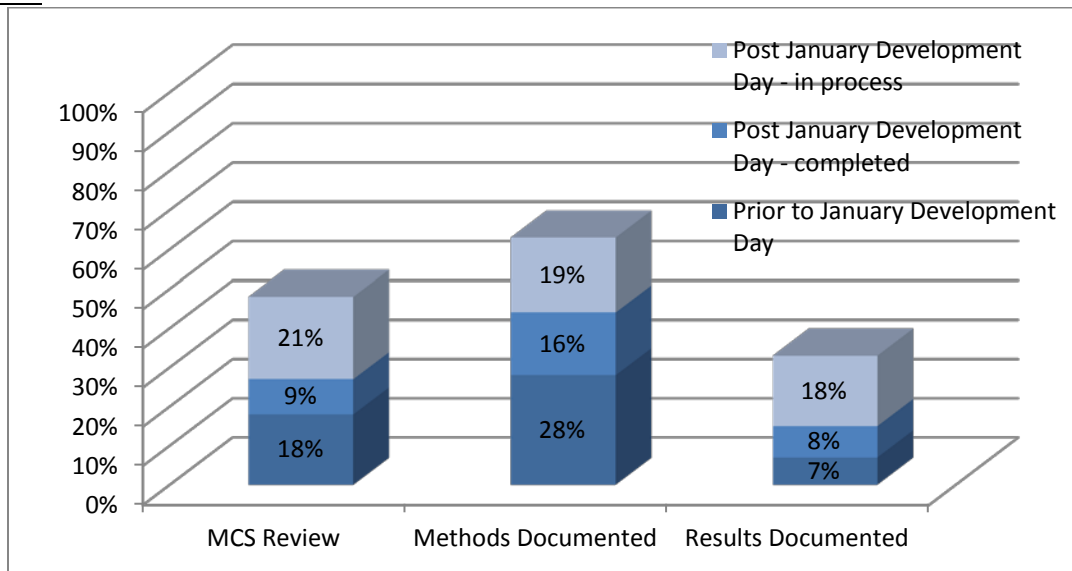
These data also indicate the following:
- Programs/disciplines are more likely to document their review of master course syllabi and to identify methods of course assessment than they are to document results.
- Generally, less than a third of programs/disciplines are documenting course assessment in conjunction with the course assessment timeline.
- Providing faculty with designated time to address course assessment does positively impact documentation.
Conversations from the January Development Day would also suggest that more

programs/disciplines are conducting course assessment than the documentation represents. Course assessment progress for 2013 is currently in development.

While many faculty members appear to be engaged in ongoing assessment (as evidenced by conversations and requests for information and assistance in analyzing data), the College continues to work on improving documentation by providing faculty with the tools, time, and support they need. Increasing documentation of course assessment and assessment activity is an important, necessary step in the iterative assessment process. Having such information archived centrally will support faculty in decision making by increasing their access to timely assessment data, providing a historical record of changes made based on assessment results, and ensuring meaningful assessment results are used, not simply recorded. The culture of assessment on campus has not yet reached the point where documentation of assessment is consistently completed. Further efforts are needed to develop this culture so that the process of course assessment is more directly tied to instruction and assessment within the classroom and the value of documentation is more consistently understood. Staff members in Intuitional Research have developed a series of reminders and status updates to keep assessment on track. In addition, two faculty members of the Assessment Committee receive stipends to assume leadership roles and assist their colleagues.

Co-curricular Programs. Co-curricular assessment of student learning is not as well-developed as assessment in curricular programs; however, RVC uses evidence from the co-curriculum to validate student learning when such evidence is available. For example, RVC assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its student athletes. The mission of the Athletics Department is to develop an intercollegiate athletic program that provides comprehensive support for student success and that promotes athletic competitiveness, academic achievement, and community connection. One initiative outlined in the Athletic Strategic Plan (AY2009-2012) is to "ensure adequate support for student athletes' academic achievement through ongoing assessment and evaluation."

Successes of the athletics program and student athletes are evaluated based on the Student Athlete Success (SAS) model. Goals of the SAS program include teaching student athletes to exhibit positive character traits and assisting student athletes to achieve their educational goals (see the Athletic Strategic Plan for a full list of SAS program goals). Components of the program include high school recruiting, orientation, summer bridge experience, first-year program, and second-year program.

SAS program assessment includes identified success indicators and direct and indirect methods of assessment. Methods include surveys, observation evaluations, written assignments, and pre and post-tests. In addition, the Athletics Department is working with the Office of Institutional Research to develop and regularly report out key performance indicators.

RVC also assesses co-curricular programming offered by Student Life. As evidenced by the department's most recent program review (May 2012), Student Life is building a culture of data-driven decision making. For example, Student Life has developed key performance indicators to determine which events are most successful. While Event Evaluation Forms focus on event attendance and budget, and feedback surveys focus on student satisfaction; evaluation of leadership programming has included assessment for student learning. For example, in 2010, a *Student Life Policy and Procedure Quiz* was administered to a group of students and advisors after club training. Overall, most individuals performed well on the quiz; however, a few questions yielded incorrect responses from one-third or more respondents. These questions were related to travel, co-sponsored activities, Budget Allocation Committee funding, and

insurance and public safety needs.

Student learning also was assessed as part of the 2011 Leadership Kick-off. Students were asked to self-report whether the information presented would improve their leadership and public speaking skills. Most (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that it would. Participants also were asked to identify three leadership concepts that they learned. In order of popularity, students identified listening, motivating others, the three leadership styles described by the keynote speaker (Visionary, Organizer, and Expert), and the importance of perceptions.

While some co-curricular programs are assessing the learning outcomes they claim for students, many do not have explicitly stated outcomes and/or are not engaged in assessment of student learning. The College will work to develop measurable learning outcomes for co-curricular programs where such outcomes are missing. Also, as part of ICCB Recognition Report, Athletics was identified as missing from the program review schedule for Student Support Services. Program Review for Athletics was added within the Student and Academic Support Services area for FY2014. This is the same year as the Fitness, Wellness, and Sport A.A.S. and certificates will be reviewed.

4.B.3: The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

The College's assessment processes facilitate systematic collection and documentation of assessment data, making possible the use of results for validating or enhancing student learning and making improvements to curriculum and instruction. If assessment data confirm that students achieve institutional, program/discipline, or course objectives, then the College uses the data to promote quality of learning and instruction. If the data indicate that students are not achieving stated objectives, then improvements are recommended. Types of improvement may include changes in materials, curriculum, pedagogy, or student support.

The College has several examples of services, programs, and learning opportunities being developed to improve learning as a result of information gained from assessment. Table 4.5 includes examples of how assessment results have been used to make improvements at each of the course, program/discipline, and institutional levels. Additional examples are included in the annual ICCB Program Review Summary Reports.

Table 4.5: Examples of Using Assessment Results for Improvement

Unit	Action Taken / Identified
Course Level	
BIO-103	Adopted a new book with accompanying online student learning tools.
BUS-279	Case studies added for practicing both problem and concept of cost capital.
CIS-181	Faculty plans to add exercises that build critical thinking.
DNT-102	Study guide revised with clearer definition of soft deposits. New assignment developed for Oral Physiotherapy Techniques.
EET-251	Increase coverage of C programming
RSP-122	Further integrate critical thinking skills into curriculum when applying alternate therapies to manage pulmonary disorders
NAD-101	Instruction was expanded to include a PowerPoint about home health care.
NRS-110	Students required to pass the Assessment Technologies Institute's skill test for blood pressure technique with 80% or more correct prior to being skill validated in the Nursing lab.
Program/Discipline Level	

Business	Added math pre-requisites to some courses
Computer Programing Certificates	Objectives and assignments in beginning programming courses have been aligned so that students coming through either Visual Basic or C++ have a common set of experiences.
Dental Hygiene	A lab was added to DNT 113 to reinforce didactic learning.
Developmental Math	16-week courses replaced with 8-week modules
Graphic Arts	Additional projects added to GAT 101, 178, and 241
Nursing	Continued revision of final exam questions to simulate NCLEX-RN
Speech	Increased instruction in full sentence outline, source citation, and thesis development
Surgical Technology	Implemented North Star Learning study tool to improve pass rates on certification exam
Web Information Technology	Project planning and a capstone project added to curriculum
Institutional Level	
Diversity	Creation of Promoting An Inclusive Community (PAIC, diversity committee), charged with providing professional development for all faculty and staff.
Communication, critical thinking, diversity	While data from the 2010-11 pilot studies were not sufficient to recommend changes to curriculum and instruction, the experiences led to the decision to assess all three of these using a single writing prompt.

In addition to guiding curricular and instructional improvements, the process used to assess institutional SLO's has generated valuable conversations about student learning. Specifically, SLO assessment reading days that involve faculty and staff from throughout the College provide forums for reaching a common understanding about student achievement and sharing ideas for enhancing student learning. The Composition and Literature department has used a similar process for assessing discipline and course learning outcomes with comparable success.

While many curricular and co-curricular units are closing the assessment loop by using results to inform decisions and implement change, levels of engagement in and documentation of effective assessment are inconsistent across the College. Moreover, assessment processes and results are not routinely shared across programs/disciplines or with the College as a whole. Such communication could broaden enhancements to student learning. These issues could be resolved by encouraging assessment for continuous improvement, increasing centralized documentation, and creating more opportunities for communication. The College has already taken steps toward such resolution, which include:

- Regular assessment status updates to Associate Deans and department chairs designed to strengthen accountability

- Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff

- Inclusion of assessment responsibilities in faculty contracts

- Implementation of TracDat as the College's assessment database

4.B.4: The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

The coordination of College-wide assessment activities falls within the responsibilities of the Office of Institutional Research (IR); however, substantial efforts are made to include faculty and other

instructional staff members in activities and decisions related to assessment. The College's Assessment Committee includes several faculty members, two who receive release time in exchange for additional assessment responsibilities. These faculty members also serve as assessment liaisons between the faculty and administrative staff when appropriate. Often times assessment subcommittees and working groups are pulled together to address a particular need (e.g., revising the institutional SLO). Whenever possible these groups include faculty representation from both LAS (Liberal Arts and Sciences) and CTE (Career and Technical Education).

Although IR staff members are available for expertise and support, Academic Chairs and faculty are ultimately responsible for developing and implementing assessment plans for their courses and programs/disciplines. The assessment process consists of developing or revising learning outcomes using the Objective Checklist, creating and implementing an assessment plan including methods and expectations for student success (e.g., ENG 101 Course Assessment Plan), reviewing and discussing results, and identifying curricular improvements. Chairs also are responsible for meeting ICCB Program Review requirements.

In order to support the responsibilities of chairs and faculty, IR staff and Assessment Committee members regularly facilitate assessment workshops during Academic Chair meetings (e.g., Learning Expectations for Associate Degrees and Certificates and Documenting Student Learning), provide training during new faculty orientation, and present at faculty/staff development days. Presentations at professional development days include:
- Beginning with the End in Mind
- Reading Day Preparation
- Something to Talk About
- Why? What? How Do You Know?

Some faculty members also have attended and presented at the Annual Assessment Fair for Illinois Community Colleges.

Faculty participation in assessment could improve with clearer communication of responsibilities as well as additional development opportunities. For example, more faculty could attend conferences and workshops, or information brought back from conferences could be more widely shared. Also, more faculty should be trained to use the assessment tools already available to them through the College's learning management system, TracDat, and the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (faculty development center). Activities during the January 2014 development day workshop, which required faculty to access Master Course Syllabi in TracDat, stimulated an increase in the number of faculty members requesting TracDat accounts.

> **Core Component**
> 4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to its retention, persistence, and completion rates in degree and certificate programs.

4.C.1: The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

The College recently completed its 2010-2013 Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan (SEM 1.0) and launched its SEM 2.0 Plan (2013-2015). Retention strategies completed as part of SEM 1.0 include developing an early warning intervention program for first-year student gateway courses, mandating STU 100 (Planning for Success) for first-year student athletes, mandating academic advising for specific student groups (i.e., student athletes and students placing into RDG 080 and RDG 096), improving partnerships with 4-year institutions (e.g., additional articulation agreements with Rasmussen College, Indiana Wesleyan University, and Aurora University), and developing an online Educational Planning Session option for targeted populations.

All incomplete tasks from SEM 1.0 are reflected in version 2.0 along with new approaches and strategies to improve student success. As a result, SEM 2.0 includes several specific goals for persistence, retention, and completion. Intended outcomes of SEM 2.0 include:

- The College will increase the number of completers (certificate and degree) by 1% per year from FY2013 to FY2015.
- Of those students who intend to complete a degree/certificate, the College will increase persistence of full-time students by 3% and of part-time students by 4% by FY2015.
- Of those students who intend to complete a degree/certificate, the College will increase retention of full-time students by 2% and of part-time students by 3% by FY2015.

The goals, objectives, and action steps leading to these outcomes are detailed in the plan.

Student success initiatives also are included in the College's Academic Plan (AY2012-2015). Goal Two of this plan states that "the College will ensure a quality learning environment that increases rates of attainment and completion for RVC students." One initiative that supports this goal is to "increase student success as measured by persistence, retention, and completion of students' identified goals," which is supported by the following action steps:

- Pursue reverse completion agreements with state universities, starting with Northern Illinois University.
- Examine factors leading to withdrawal and implement strategies to improve retention.
- Develop a process to identify, record, and update students' intended goals and measure students' success based on these identified goals.
- Implement strategies necessary to respond to the Illinois Community College Board's and Illinois Board of Higher Education's (IBHE) accountability measures for performance-based funding.

The Academic Plan includes a cross-walk that demonstrates alignment with the RVC Mission Statement, Core Values, Strategic Focus Areas, and Key Performance Indicators along with the IBHE Public Agenda Goals. The SEM 2.0 also includes a cross-walk to related college plans and units (i.e., College's Strategic Plan, Academic Plan, Institutional Advancement, and Information Technology).

4.C.2: The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs.

The College's Office of Institutional Research coordinates reporting of all student retention, persistence, and completion data. The Annual Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Reports in this area are Persistence and Retention Rates, Graduation Rates, and Transfer Rates. These KPI reports monitor and track student

performance as well as identify achievement gaps. KPI are reported to the Board of Trustees and published on the College website. In addition, relevant work groups analyze the data for planning purposes. For example, KPI data were reviewed during development of the SEM 2.0. ICCB also requires annual reporting in these categories, and the College is compliant.

Analysis of student success indicators also occurs as part of the regular work of student support offices. The Office of Student Retention and Success bi-annually produces a DFWI report for first-year students in traditional gateway courses. The DFWI report is conducted at the end of each academic term and reported to Associate Deans. Additionally, the Records and Registration Office regularly reviews graduation applications and conducts degree audits.

Program completions are report on an annual basis as required by the ICCB Student Enrollment and Completion Data (A1) and IPEDS Completion Survey. Such completion data is examined as part of academic program review. For example, labor market reports (i.e., Education Report and Occupation Report) are provided as part of the Career and Technical Education data packets. Completion data in these reports allow comparisons with other schools offering similar programs and to labor market demand. Such information can be used to determine whether the number of program completers over or under satisfies market demand, which could lead to the enhancement or elimination of programs.

4.C.3: The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to improve its persistence and completion rates as warranted by the data.

As KPI of student success - persistence, retention, and completion rates support decision making about efforts to improve transitions within the educational pipeline, as well as to eliminate achievement gaps. Data from the October 2013 KPI report on persistence and retention show an overall increase in persistence rates and decrease in retention rates from FY2009 to FY2013, indicating the College is generally improving its ability to re-enroll students from fall to spring but not from fall to fall (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: RVC Student Persistence and Retention

Fiscal Year:	FY09 (Fall 2008)	FY10 (Fall 2009)	FY11 (Fall 2010)	FY12 (Fall 2011)	FY13 (Fall 2012)	% change (FY09-FY13)
Persistence	72.3	74.3	74.2	73.9	73.1	1.1%
Retention	53.9	54.9	52.8	53.6	52.7	-2.2%

Source: Office of Institutional Research Persistence and Retention Applications

Figure 4.7 shows graduation rates by completion time for RVC students compared to peer institutions and the national average. These data from the November 2013 KPI report suggest that RVC graduation rates are consistent with at least the minimum expectation that RVC students graduate at a rate comparable to national and local comparison groups. Specifically, the percentage of students completing in 150% or 200% of normal time is comparable with peer institutions and close to the national average.   However, the percentage of students graduating from RVC within normal time falls below the national average and in the bottom half of the peer group. This suggests that, while RVC students are completing their credentials at comparable rates, they may not be completing in as timely a fashion as may be possible. Persistence, retention, and completion rates were used to inform the College's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and Academic Plan (see Section 4.C.1).

Figure 4.7: Graduation Rates by Completion Time for Students Who Began in Fall 2008
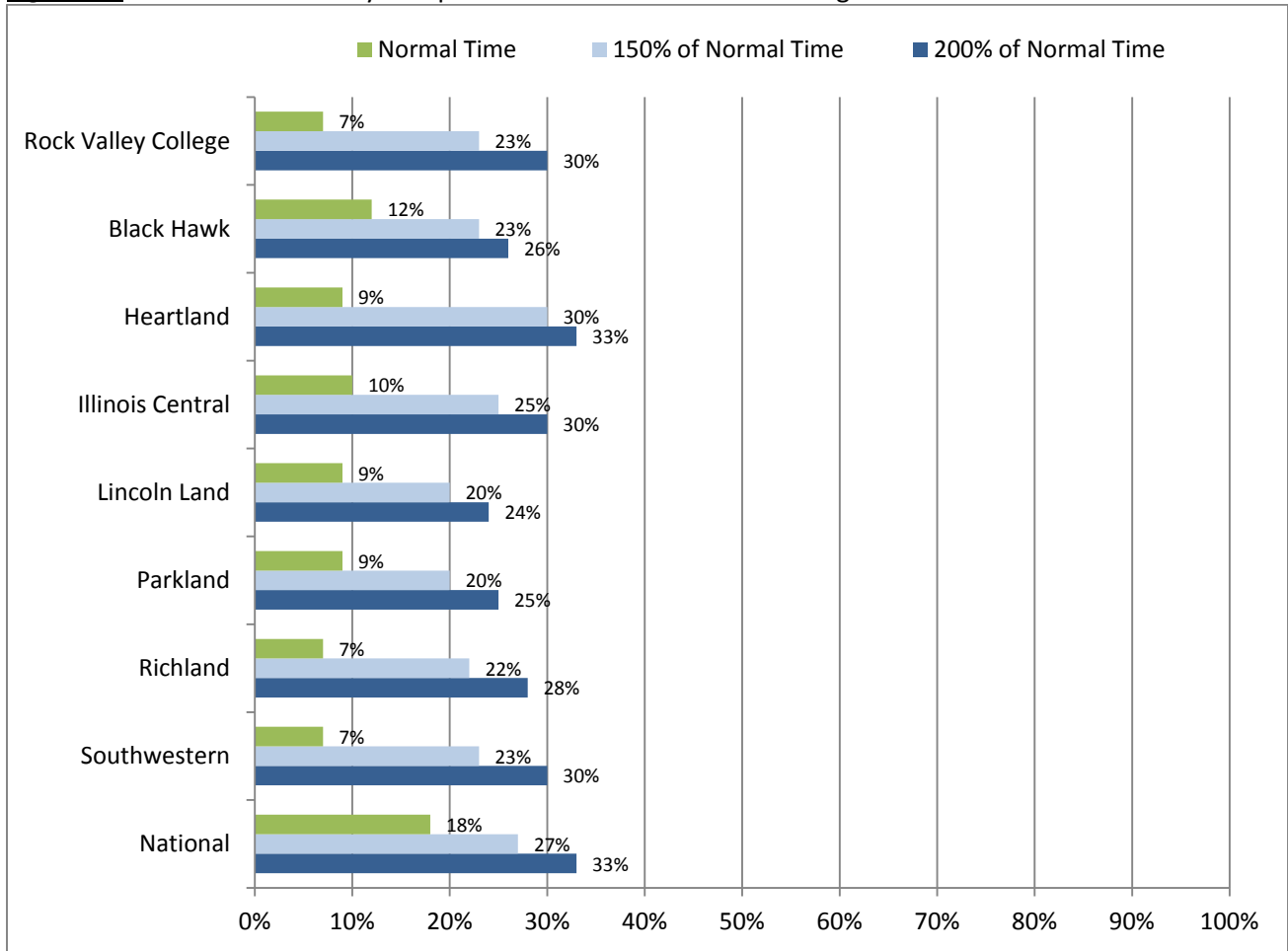
Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

RVC examines student success by demographic groups to determine whether any achievement gaps exist. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show persistence and retention rates, respectively, disaggregated by various demographic groups.

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Table 4.7: RVC Student Persistence Rates by Various Demographic Groups (Fall-to-Spring - %)

Fiscal Year:	FY09 (Fall 2008)	FY10 (Fall 2009)	FY11 (Fall 2010)	FY12 (Fall 2011)	FY13 (Fall 2012)	% change (FY09-FY13)
Overall	72.3	74.3	74.2	73.9	73.1	1.1%
Status[3]						
Full time	85.9	86.4	85.5	86.8	87.7	2.1%
Part time	61.9	64.2	64.1	63.7	62.9	1.6%
Gender						
Male	72.5	74.0	73.9	73.0	73.5	1.4%
Female	72.2	74.5	74.5	74.6	72.9	1.0%
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian / Alaska Native	*	*	86.3	71.7	77.8	--
Asian	73.8	78.3	76.6	75.7	77.3	4.7%
Black / African American	61.8	67.4	66.1	65.8	62.9	1.8%
Hispanic / Latino	71.2	71.3	73.5	71.8	76.2	7.0%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	--
White	73.9	75.3	75.2	75.1	73.6	-0.4%
Age[4]						
Traditional	74.6	75.3	75.8	75.9	75.8	1.6%
Nontraditional	68.0	71.2	71.7	70.4	68.2	0.3%

Source: Office of Institutional Research Persistence Application

*Percentages are not reported for group sizes of 30 or less; --Multi-year change data is not reportable.

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[3] Full-time students are enrolled in 12 credits or more, and part-time students are enrolled in less than 12 credit hours.
[4] Traditional students are age 24 and younger, and nontraditional students are over the age of 24.

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Table 4.8: RVC Student Retention Rates by Various Demographic Groups (Fall-to-Fall - %)

Fiscal Year:	FY09 (Fall 2008)	FY10 (Fall 2009)	FY11 (Fall 2010)	FY12 (Fall 2011)	FY13 (Fall 2012)	% change (FY09-FY13)
Overall	53.9	54.9	52.8	53.6	52.7	-2.2%
Status[5]						
Full time	64.9	63.1	61.7	63.2	64.5	-0.6%
Part time	45.8	48.3	45.2	46.5	44.7	-2.4%
Gender						
Male	52.3	52.2	51.4	52.1	51.1	-2.3%
Female	55.1	56.9	54.0	54.7	53.9	-2.2%
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian / Alaska Native	*	*	40.8	61.4	65.0	--
Asian	53.3	55.1	55.0	51.0	55.6	4.3%
Black / African American	43.1	45.1	39.0	39.7	41.7	-3.2%
Hispanic / Latino	57.7	54.7	54.6	57.4	58.0	0.5%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	--
White	55.1	56.2	54.5	55.0	52.9	-4.0%
Age[6]						
Traditional	55.9	55.5	53.3	55.1	55.0	-1.6%
Nontraditional	49.9	53.8	52.1	50.1	48.3	-3.2%

Source: Office of Institutional Research Retention Application

*Percentages are not reported for group sizes of 30 or less; --Multi-year change data is not reportable.

Data within tables 4.7 and 4.8 indicate that full-time students persist and are retained at higher rates than their part-time peers. Also, women generally have higher persistence and retention rates as compared to their male peers. These gaps have been mostly consistent over the five-year period.

Of particular concern, however, is the achievement gap between Black/African American students and their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. In FY2013, the persistence rate of Black/African American students was 13.3 percentage points below the rate of their Hispanic/Latino peers and 10.7 percentage points below that of their White peers. The achievement gap grows when moving from persistence to retention. Specifically, the retention rate of Black/African American students was 16.3 percentage points below the rate of their Hispanic/Latino peers and 11.2 percentage points below that of their White peers.

Table 4.9 shows graduation rates disaggregated by gender and race/ethnicity. Subgroup data within this table indicate that gender gaps in graduation rates exist and have widened, with female students consistently having higher graduation rates than their male peers across comparison groups. Data describing graduation rates for race/ethnicity subgroups also indicate that gaps exist. The decline in graduation rate of the College's Hispanic students should be monitored to ensure a trend does not

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[5] Full-time students are enrolled in 12 credits or more, and part-time students are enrolled in less than 12 credit hours.
[6] Traditional students are age 24 and younger, and nontraditional students are over the age of 24.

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emerge. Furthermore, the gap between black/African American students and their peers continues to be problematic. While these data suggest that the gap has narrowed in recent years, it continues to be the largest. Findings related to graduation rate data should be considered along with transfer rate data before a positive or negative evaluation is solidified as some subgroups are more likely than others to transfer without earning a credential. The following SEM 2.0 action steps begin to address graduation rate achievement gaps:

- Evaluate success of students of color mentorship program (offered by Intercultural Student Services) and offer program for up to 100 students in FY2013 (Action Step IV.2.d).
- Implement at least two new student support programs offered by Intercultural Student Services department in FY2013 and FY2014, track and share results (Action Step V.1.b).
- Using best practices reduce the number of achievement gaps between subgroups of students (e.g., status, race/ethnicity, gender) by FY2015 (Action Step V.1.e).

Table 4.9: Graduation Rates of Full-time, First-time Adjusted Cohorts (RVC and National Comparison)

Percent Graduated Within 3 years (150%)									
Fall Term Entered (graduated)	Cohort	Overall Completers	Gender		Race/Ethnicity[7]				
			Male	Female	American Indian[8]	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic	White
2005 (2008)	RVC	25	21	30	*	*	13	29	26
	Nation	31	25	26	19	13	18	21	28
2006 (2009)	RVC	25	21	29	*	*	4	28	24
	Nation	27	26	27	20	24	18	22	28
2007 (2010)	RVC	22	17	35	*	*	6	21	25
	Nation	22	21	23	20	27	15	17	25
2008 (2011)	RVC	23	17	28	*	*	7	32	25
	Nation	27	26	27	19	27	18	24	29
2009 (2012)	RVC	23	18	28	*	*	9	17	27
	Nation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

*Group size is less than or equal to 30; -- Data for National levels for 2012 are not yet available.

Over the past several years, the College has implemented several strategies to increase persistence, retention, and graduation rates. In FY2007, the College participated in the Foundations of Excellence (FOE) program to review new student success retention programs and services. The completion of this process established the College First Year Experience Office. The College also began an annual reporting of course completion data to inform academic disciplines of new student success rates in traditional gateway general education courses. This report led to a massive overhaul of the Developmental Math curriculum by dividing courses into shorter modules.

The FOE report also led to the establishment of *STU 100: Planning for Success*. This course is designed to improve retention and success by introducing and connecting students to the RVC community and assisting students in the active development of academic and personal goals. Students work with instructors to learn strategies for their transition to college and are expected to engage in building the

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[7] *Two or more races* were an optional reporting category in IPEDS 2009-2010 with a result of 35.4%. IPEDS reports that the figure reported for this option should not be considered representative given the small sample of schools reporting using this category. However, the addition of this category may have impact on figures represented in the others.
[8] The American Indian group includes Alaska Natives.

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skills needed for college success. Course discussions include academic preparation, self-awareness, and RVC community resources. STU 100 became mandatory for all new transfer degree-seeking students in January 2013.

Initiatives of the FY2009-FY2012 Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan focused on improving student access and convenience in an effort to increase persistence, retention, and completion. The College implemented a new academic schedule matrix to reduce student transportation costs and opened a downtown campus location in Fall 2010. Additionally, the College sought and received approval from the Higher Learning Commission to offer online degrees as online course offerings increased, and more general education courses were added to the offerings at the College's southernmost location. Furthermore, registration enhancements such as automated wait-listing have allowed the College to observe and respond to enrollment patterns and offer additional sections of high demand courses like Composition and Biology.

4.C.4: The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

RVC has identified persistence, retention, and graduation rates as Key Performance Indicators (KPI) aligned to the College category of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success.* This category is aligned to the IBHE Public Agenda Goal to increase educational attainment and is defined by efforts to raise success at each stage of the education pipeline. Persistence and Retention Rates also are aligned to the College category of *Educational Quality*, which is aligned to the IBHE Public Agenda Goal to improve transitions along the educational pipeline. RVC uses the IPEDS definitions of retention and graduation rates in order to make comparisons with peers and national averages. In addition to complying with IPEDS requirement of reporting retention for first-time, first-year students, the College disaggregates persistence and retention by enrollment status (full-time vs. part-time), gender, race/ethnicity, age, intent (e.g., prepare for transfer or prepare for future job), site location, and instructional method (e.g., face-to-face and online) for all students (first-time, transfer, and continuing).

While these procedures reflect current best practice, the College recognizes that the IPEDS graduation rate is not a comprehensive method for defining completion for community college students. In an attempt to better understand the success of various student groups, the Office of Institutional Research is beginning to analyze completion by enrollment status (full-time vs. part-time), age, developmental status for Reading and Math, and number of credit at point of entry (transfer vs. first-time). The College also will calculate and analyze on-time completion rates by program for certificates covered by Gainful Employment legislation. The College needs to improve student data tracking with specific attention to student goal/intent before completion can be more fully analyzed with respect to this variable. The Student Retention and Success department is working with Records and Registration, Admissions and Recruitment, and Information Technology to identify solutions through the Ellucian student data system. The College will use the following goal/intent categories defined by the ICCB:
- Prepare for transfer to a four-year college or university
- Improve skills for present job
- Prepare for a future job immediately after attending community college
- Prepare for GED test or improve basic academic skills

- Personal interest/self-development -- not career oriented
- Unknown/Other

Because preparing students for transfer is part of the College's mission, Transfer Rate has been identified as an additional KPI aligned to the College categories of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success* and *Educational Quality.* IPEDS transfer-out rates, disaggregated by gender and race/ethnicity are compared over time and with peer institutions. Furthermore, the College uses National Student Clearinghouse data to track student movement to specific transfer institutions (e.g., Northern Illinois University, Rockford University, and Illinois State University) and general types of institutions (i.e., two-year and four-year schools). The College also collects GPA's from receiving institutions to monitor the level of rigor in preparing students for transfer. These data indicate that RVC students tend to earn higher GPA's than transfers from other community colleges and native students at the 4-year institutions for which data are available. Thus, RVC transfers tend to be competitive with other students at the same level.

CRITERIA 4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:

1. The College has a regular program review cycle that informs program change.

2. The curriculum approval and assessment processes uphold rigor.

3. CTE programs are accredited through industry-appropriate agencies.

4. Students who transfer to 4-year schools are successful, as demonstrated by GPA comparisons to transfers from other community colleges and students who began their studies at 4-year institutions.

5. Assessment workshops have been integrated into faculty development days, and assessment responsibilities have been added to the faculty contract.

6. The College's Academic Plan and Strategic Enrollment Management Plan include goals to improve retention, persistence, and completion.

Challenges:

1. The sharing of program review results has been informational rather than to inform decision-making.

2. While Records and Registration staff understand extant protocols for accepting transfer credit, some Academic Chairs and Associate Deans lack sufficient guidance in making determinations, because such situations are often unique.

3. The College's institutional student learning outcomes were unclear and difficult to measure.

4. Growth of the assessment culture has been slow.

5. KPI data indicate persistence, retention, and graduation rate achievement gaps for Black/African American students.

As a result of the self-study:

- Previously, academic program review reports were shared through the President's Council, which was designed as an information sharing group. Certificate program review reports were shared at Data-driven Decision Making (DDDM) a College leadership group, also as information sharing but with the potential to inform decision-making. In FY2011, President's Council was restructured to forums, so academic program review reports were no longer shared. In 2011-2012, the Assessment Committee recommended that academic program review be shared at Curriculum Committee. Results of 2012 program review indicated that, again, this sharing was conducted in an information manner that limited the decision-making potential of the process. As such, academic program reviews will be shared with DDDM, as well as Curriculum Committee.

- In some instances, Chairs have access to a syllabus from another institution. In others, they have samples of student work from that class. The College recognized the need for better training for Academic Chairs, and a manual for this employee group was developed within the previous learning management system (LMS). This resource has yet to be moved to the new LMS platform, Canvas.

- Midway through AY2012-2013, based on recommendations from the committee working on criterion three of the HLC Self Study, the Assessment Committee began to revise the College's SLO based on concern that they were not well-defined or measurable. The SLO revision process extended from Summer 2012 through Fall 2013 and involved several faculty and staff members from Liberal Arts and Sciences, Career and Technical Education, Academic Affairs, and Student Development. Most of the drafting was done by the Assessment Committee and a small group of interested faculty during Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. A targeted survey was conducted in Summer 2013 to gather feedback about the proposed SLO, and faculty and staff had several additional opportunities to provide feedback throughout Fall 2013. In December 2013, the new institutional SLO were finalized and presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee of the Board of Trustees. In Spring 2014, faculty will update MCS by mapping course objectives to the new institutional SLO. Students will begin seeing the new SLO on syllabi and displayed around campus in Summer and Fall 2014.

- The College has taken steps to improve the assessment culture by adding responsibilities to the faculty contract, involving faculty in the Assessment Committee and SLO revision process, and providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. Future professional development will reinforce the importance of assessment and provide resources for integrating course and program assessment.

- The following SEM 2.0 action steps begin to address achievement gaps:
  - Evaluate success of students of color mentorship program (offered by Intercultural Student Services) and offer program for up to 100 students in FY2013 (Action Step IV.2.d).
  - Implement at least two new student support programs offered by Intercultural Student Services department in FY2013 and FY2014, track and share results (Action Step V.1.b).
  - Using best practices reduce the number of achievement gaps between subgroups of students (e.g., status, race/ethnicity, gender) by FY2015 (Action Step V.1.e).

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative

CHAPTER 5

CRITERIA 5: RESOURCES, PLANNING, AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Criterion 5 Summary

RVC values quality, integrity, and efficiency in planning and management of resources entrusted to its operation by the public (Mission Document, Public Trusts Core Value). In concert with HLC Guiding Values, the College upholds this trust through careful, strategic planning that guides, as well as supports, budgetary and financial decisions that address the mission of this institution.

The following provides supporting evidence and documentation to address the criteria and its core components:

> **Core Component**
> 5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

5.A.1: The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

RVC offers programs at and courses on its main campus and other satellite locations (e.g., Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE), Learning and Opportunity Center (LOC), and the Aviation Center) and in multiple methods of delivery (i.e., face-to-face, hybrid, and on-line). The College ensures resource sufficiency to support operations wherever and however programs are delivered through its strategic planning documents, as well as planning and review processes, described below.

Fiscal Resources. As is the case for many institutions of higher education, the declining equalized assessed valuation (EAV), declining enrollment, and flat State apportionment of recent years has threatened the College's potential to maintain a balanced operating budget without funding cuts or adjustments. However, RVC continues to operate a zero balance budget. To achieve this goal, the College monitors revenues and expenditures on a regular basis. The two largest line item expenditures, payroll and healthcare claims, are monitored monthly, which provides an opportunity to make budget adjustments in a timely, as-needed fashion. Additionally, the operating cash balance is monitored monthly through previous-year comparisons to provide an indication of the degree to which revenues flowing into and expenditures flowing out of the institution are similar to prior years. This information is reported monthly to the Leadership Team and Board of Trustees within Vital Signs; annual and quarterly financial reports are reconciled to the monthly processes and reports to enhance reliability.

Since the annual budget is based on a specified enrollment goal, enrollment is also monitored regularly. During enrollment periods, it is monitored daily through current to previous year comparisons based on

point in time of enrollment rather than calendar date (e.g., compare between year 1 and year 2 at fifth day of an enrollment period, rather than specific date from year 1 to year 2); progress toward enrollment goals are also reported monthly to the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees.

In addition to the regular monitoring of budget, the College uses a Financial Planning Model (described further in 5.A.5 and 5.C.1) to annually review department and program budgets and develop the overall College budget. Through this model, the College is able to plan fiscal resource allocation to address strategic initiatives and provide a balance of support across operations.

In addition to the College's general fund, it also relies on grant funding to maintain a level of currency in program delivery. One large grant funded source for this is the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act – Postsecondary Perkins Program. Per funding requirements, the College uses these funds to support Career and Technical Education (CTE). In the current fiscal year, this program provided $333,950 of support to CTE at the College. A large part of Perkins funds are used to maintain the currency of our CTE programs; Table 5.1 identifies such expenditures. In addition to supporting CTE programs, Perkins funding supports underserved, at-risk students. For example, the College's disability support services office has used these funds to purchase assistive technology, and, in this current fiscal year, a specialized database to support the delivery and monitoring of accommodation services.

Table 5.1: Overview of Perkins Postsecondary Grant Program Expenditures

Year	Examples of Programs Supported	Examples of Equipment and Materials Purchased
2004	Aviation Maintenance, CIS, Dental Hygiene, Automotive, Graphic Arts, Welding	Ice and Rain Training, Computer Lab Furniture, Dental Lab Equipment, Hoist, Developer/Press, Welding Machine
2005	Support Services, CIS, Graphic Arts, Nursing, Disability Services	Stress Reduction Speaker Center, Cisco Express Software and Router, Digital Equipment for Web Development, Premier EZ stand, Sanyo Dictation Recorder
2006	Academy for Teaching & Learning, Respiratory Care, Nursing, General Support for Career and Technical Education, CIS	Laptop, SAM junior, Nursing Lab Equipment and supplies, Study Skills supplies, New server
2007	CIS, Engineering, Aviation Maintenance, General Support for Career and Technical Education, Respiratory Care	Cisco Aironet, CNC Virtual Training Software, Cj610 Aircraft Engine, Writing Material For Student Study Skills, Segmented Lung Reproduction
2008	CIS, Graphic Arts, Mass Communications, Engineering, Fire Science, Dental Hygiene, Nursing	Adobe Mac software, Mac Computers, Nikon Cameras, Robot Construction Sets, Self –contained Breathing Apparatus, Flat Panel Monitor, Hurrying – up tables
2009	General Support for Career and Technical Education, Allied Health, Welding, Automotive, AVM, Respiratory Care, Disability Services	Math Type 6 Academic Software, Powerheart AED, Power Mig, Eight Channel Ignition/Lab Scope, Digital Electronic Valve Spring Tester, CPR 7 Pack, Scientific Notebook for vision-impaired

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative

Table 5.1: Overview of Perkins Postsecondary Grant Program Expenditures *(cont.)*

Year	Examples of Programs Supported	Examples of Equipment and Materials Purchased
2010	CIS, Dental Hygiene, Engineering, Respiratory Care, Aviation Maintenance, Nursing	Mac Pro Server, Dental Hygiene Film Processor, Transmission Dyna Monitor, Clinical Software, Cockpit Instrumentation, Life Care Infusion Pump
2011	Graphic Arts, Nursing, Aviation Maintenance, Metrology	CS5 Software, Male/Female Simulator, Bench Mounted Riveter, Metrology Lab Equipment
2012	Aviation Maintenance, CIS, Engineering, Welding, Nursing	Aircraft Radio Package, Cisco Router, Training Robot, Cut-315 Cold Saw, Alaris Pump System
2013	Respiratory Care, Mass Communications, Nursing, Fire Science, Disability Services	Respiratory Supplies, Control Room Equipment, Nursing Supplies, Fire Fighter Protective Equipment, Braille Translator
2014	Automotive, Welding, Dental Hygiene, CIS, Mass Communications	2007 or newer automobiles, Metal Brake, Digital X-Ray Sensor, IPad Project, Digital Camera

Through the efforts of the RVC Foundation, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation that supports the activities of the College through fund raising from private sources, faculty and staff are offered grant opportunities. Each application requires a detailed budget along with proposed project information. As indicated on the College website, awarding of funds is based on the following criteria: impact on College and community, potential lack of College funding, degree of creativity and innovation, support of the College's priorities, and level of visibility for the Foundation. Furthermore, preference is given to academic areas.   Recently funded projects have include the following:

Autoclave and Incubator for SCCE   Purchase of a tabletop autoclave and a refrigerated incubator for the new laboratory at the SCCE. The autoclave will allow for in-house sterilization of bio-hazardous equipment, and the incubator allows for contained cultivation of necessary microorganisms to support curriculum.

Digital SRL Camera for Hi-definition Video   Purchase of a digital, single-lens reflex camera and lenses for high-definition video production. Allows for expansion of curriculum to address emerging skill and technology that is quickly becoming industry standard.

FT-IR Spectrometer   Purchase a replacement. This equipment is used by organic chemists to identify the functional groups in a compound and supports student development of skills in analysis of FT-IR spectra and conduct solid sampling.

Grow Our Own Nursing Faculty   Offer tuition scholarships to current RVC nursing staff, faculty, and/or graduates for completion of BSN or MSN to be qualified to teach nursing at the College.

Physical/Facilities Resources: The College's physical infrastructure includes multiple locations to serve a wider area of its District.   While any student can attend classes or programs at any RVC location, alternatives to main campus were developed to increase ease of access, particularly to those students for whom a drive to main campus is quite a distance. Information presented in Figure 5.1 and Table 5.2 inform considerations about situating and purposing College facilities to best support its operations and the needs of the Community.

Figure 5.1: Map of Cities with Top 10 Enrollment Rates within District 511
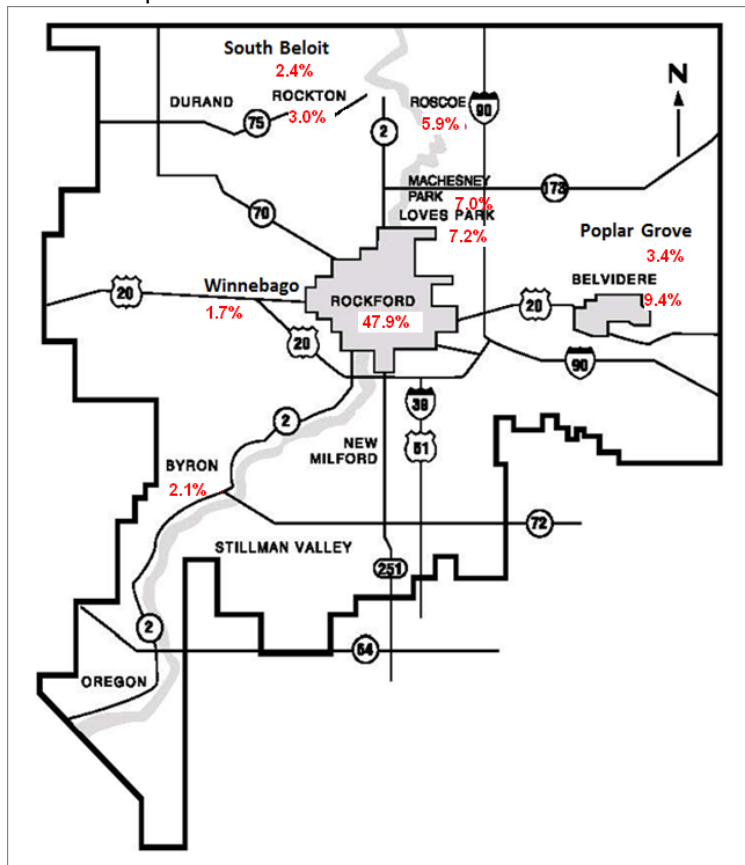
Source: Informer Report, Enrollment by Zip Code, run 10.10.12

 The Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE), which primarily supports Career Technical Education (CTE) programming, was recently designated as a degree site. Being located south of Rockford, SCCE provides a closer RVC alternative (See Table 5.2) for those students in the southwestern portion of the district seeking transfer degree options. In 2011, another site, the Learning and Opportunities Center (LOC) was established in downtown Rockford to support students in the downtown and western part of the RVC district.   New facilities, such as the LOC, are developed after careful consideration of the best way to support new and existing programs, and how best to serve our student population.

Table 5.2: Distance to Campus from Cities within District 511 Regions

District 511 Region	Cities	Distance to Campus Locations (miles)		
		Main Campus (3301 North Mulford Rd.)	Stenstrom (4151 Samuelson Rd.)	LOC (308 West State St.)
Central	Rockford	7	7	0
Northeast	Caledonia	10	19	16
	Capron	19	27	24
	Garden Prairie	19	18	25
	Belvidere	11	13	14
	Poplar Grove	14	22	19
Northwest	Shirland	20	23	15
	Durand	23	28	20
	Pecatonica	22	21	15
	Rockton	14	26	15
	Roscoe	10	21	12
	So. Beloit	17	25	17
	Loves Park	4	11	5
	Machesney Park	5	10	7
Southeast	Monroe Center	15	10	19
	Cherry Valley	8	6	13
Southwest	Oregon	34	27	26
	Davis Junction	20	10	15
	Byron	27	16	15
	Seward	30	23	17

Source: travelmath.com

RVC is further guided in planning and use of these resources through a Facilities Master Plan. The Facilities Master Plan documents short- and long-term development of the College based on analysis of goals, growth, regional needs, and trends in higher education. The Facilities Master Plan is regularly reviewed and updated annually with the approval of the Board of Trustees and has led to remodeling of existing buildings on campus (e.g., Educational Resource Center (ERC), Physical Education Center (PEC), and Student Center), the development of new educational space (i.e., Jacobs Center for Science and Math (JCSM)), and the support of alternative locations (e.g., SCCE and LOC). The Facilities Master Plan also ensures that the College continues to provide state-of-the-art, ADA-compliant, learning facilities with appropriate resources to support operations; recent efforts have also led to two Gold-level, LEED certified buildings – the PEC and JCSM.

It should be noted, however, that 2011 marked the last update to the Facilities Master Plan. This is due in large part to continued discussions about use of State funds originally allocated for an arts instructional building (AIC). The original plans for these funds involved the development of a stand-alone AIC; however, after much discussion and community input, a decision was made to revert these funds, with ICCB approval, to the remodeling of existing classroom buildings (i.e., CLI and CLII) and the building of an arts venue. Facilities Master Plan updates have been drafted to reflect such changes, but updates

have not been approved by the Board of Trustees. It is anticipated that as renovation and venue decisions are finalized on these capital development efforts, the Facilties Master Plan update will be approved and published.

Furthermore, given renovation and remodeling efforts over the past several years, allocation of space has been further challenged by temporary closing of classroom and office spaces. Programs such as adult education and continuing and community education have had a more difficult time finding classroom space, especially during the peak offering time of credit courses between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Such space issues are also addressed on both a temporary and long-term basis through the Faciliities Master Plan.

Human Resources: College leadership makes every attempt to hold down costs for the College and provide the faculty and staff needed to best serve our students and the College community. The Financial Planning Model, reviewed annually, looks at projections for additions and sometimes potential reductions in staffing and plans the budget to accommodate accordingly

Human Resources conducts monthly headcounts to see what positions are filled and yet need to be filled. This is compared to authorized openings. Through position control, Human Resources ensures that no unbudgeted position is filled, and that the positions being filled are authorized. In recent years as revenues have declined, the Board of Trustees has requested that the College maintain a threshold on employee headcount. The President can add positions but then must get approval from the Board of Trustees if the position changes headcount. As is the case with most decision making at RVC, priority in human resource allocation is given to the support of academic programs. When position requests are considered annually during the budgeting process, faculty positions naturally will supersede others. Requests for additional faculty and staff need to be supported by data patterns and trends such as those included in program reviews (e.g., unit costs, staffing trends, and enrollment patterns).

In recent years, to maintain the established employee threshold, retirements have been viewed as general open positions, rather than discipline or program specific openings. Therefore, positions move to those areas of most need as determined by data (e.g., course and program enrollment). As reported in 3.C.1 of this document, the College has also seen a shift in headcount from a majority of full-time faculty to a majority of part-time faculty, an important shift given that the College has long-held a philosophy that larger numbers of full-time faculty are critical to the stability and quality of its educational offerings. This shift may be due in part to the employee threshold. The degree to which the threshold is impacting these numbers will be evaluated as part of the current review of related data and discussion among the Leadership Team.

This practice has also led to a flattening of levels in support and operational staff positions. Additionally, the workload for many of these employees has increased given simultaneous increases in federal regulations and reporting requirements, a large number of retirements due to changes in State retirement (i.e., SURS) regulations, and the decrease in allowable work hours for part-time employees under the Affordable Care Act.

Recent reorganizations at the College leadership level have further impacted general work load for not only those Leadership Team members who assumed new responsibilities to cover gaps, but also for the staff in their reporting areas. This reorganization was a result of changes in the Chief Academic Officer/Provost and College President positions. Last Spring the Chief Academic Officer/Provost left RVC

to take a position at another higher education institution. At that time the leadership in Academic Affairs was restructured. The President, aware that his contract would be ending with the fiscal year, decided that this key position should be filled by the next sitting College President, so existing Leadership Team members would cover the Chief Academic Officer responsibilities in the interim.

Technological Infrastructure. These **i**nfrastructure priorities are defined by the Information Technology (IT) Strategic Plan. As stated within the Executive Overview of this document, this plan is, "designed around outcomes and value to the college" (p. 2). IT equipment replacement follows a replacement forecast that is based on lifecycles of equipment.   The lifecycle of equipment is the number of years it is used before it is replaced. As such, age is not the sole factor for determining replacement; minimum requirements for the function are also considered. Naturally, as with other College resources, IT allocations give priority to "supporting a progressive academic environment" (Goal 4, IT Strategic Plan). By developing and implementing a multi-tiered lifecycle model, the goal is to align the equipment to meet the needs of classrooms and offices while maximizing the value of the College's investment.

Due to funding limits, the expected computer lifecycle at RVC is six years. This expected lifecycle provides the framework for replacement so that 1/6 of the computer inventory is to be replaced each year. To prioritize, three levels of computer technology based on age and use were developed. These tiers were then wrapped into a cascade plan for reallocating and replacing inventory.

While IT budget does address the replacement cycle needs in its multi-tiered lifecycle model, additional IT equipment has been funded in years where the College has surplus funding. As the number of computers increases, so must the budget required to replace them when they no longer meet minimum standards. However, as a result of decreased revenue, the budget has been able to provide fewer dollars over the last several years for computer replacement. Also, with new facilities, such as the Jacobs Center for Science and Math (JCSM), budget allocations for computer replacement within a given fiscal year were directed toward outfitting that building.

These factors have resulted in an interruption to the replacement cycle. As such, many computers are still in operation at the College beyond six years. Furthermore, some labs need newer computers due to usage and software demands. Ultimately, a six-or-more-year old computer, especially in a learning environment, is old in terms of efficiency and usability. To address this interruption of the replacement cycle, the focus of replacement in the current fiscal year has been to reduce lifecycle from 7+ years to the 6-year, College standard, or in some cases, to meet the needs of changing technical requirements of necessary software. As such, the replacement plan is less specific but appropriate in helping the College return to its own standard. For the next fiscal year, however, allocations for replacement will be more focused; specifically they will be directed toward replacing instructor computers in all classrooms across the College.

5.A.2: The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to any superordinate entity.

RVC is a public community college that routinely prioritizes resources to academic areas. Results of a recent Recognition Report (e.g., Section 3c.Financial Compliance) support the College's compliance with guidelines and expectations for resource allocation to support the educational purposes of the institution.

5.A.3: The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

Based on the information provided in 5.A.1 and 5.A.2, the goals of RVC's mission document and related strategic planning documents are realistic in light of the institution's organization and resources. The following exemplify the College's efforts to align resources within constraints to realistically address the mission while advancing the institution:

- Support of opportunities ranging from the Community Education Whiz Kids program and Math or Science Olympiad activities to the Center for Learning in Retirement program to promote lifelong learning in the region.
- The mission statement goals associated with economic development in the region are affirmed and aligned within the strategic planning documents (e.g., Academic and Strategic Enrollment Management plans) that are reviewed on a regular basis.
- The College's grant development process aligns funding opportunities to the strategic initiatives that are also in line with the mission of the College.

Certainly, as is the case with many institutions of higher education, recent economic factors detailed in 5.A. 1 have challenged the College in its use of fiscal, human, physical/facility, and technological resources.   This has been compounded to some degree by a large number of retirements and changes in the Chief Academic Officer/Provost and College President positions. These challenges, however, are being addressed in daily operations, and monitoring reports of strategic planning documents would suggest that while some delays have occurred, the College continues to make progress in addressing its strategic initiatives, and thus, its mission.

5.A.4: The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

Human Resources at RVC has hiring procedures in place – one for the hiring of faculty and another for non-faculty continuous positions. All members of each search committee follow the parameters of these procedures, familiarize themselves with the appropriate position description, and complete a training that provides general search committee guidelines. All staff are hired using job descriptions that correspond with the level of experience needed to ensure efficient and effective job performance. Examples of position descriptions and how qualifications are aligned include the following:
- Director of Business Services
- Director of Facilities Planning Operations and Maintenance
- Human Resource Generalist
- Manager Programmers Support Group
- Production Technician Print Services
- Theater Box Office Manager

Once new employees are hired, they are required to participate in a New Employee Orientation in addition to position specific training provided by their employment area. Each New Employee Orientation is standardized to address the following:
- Introduction to RVC
- Payroll
- RVC Public Relations Department

- RVC Foundation
- Information Technology
- RVC Police Department
- Academic Affairs
- Employee Assistance Program
- FERPA
- Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policies/Training
- Employee Benefits

The College also considers the professional development needs of its employees. In addition to opportunities offered during the College's development days, additional professional development opportunities are provided. For example, the College is currently preparing for a new managerial and supervisory development program. Human Resources has already assessed, via survey, the training and development needs of the directors, managers and supervisors, and selected a list of core topics that are needed. These supervisor training sessions are scheduled to begin March of 2014.

5.A.5: The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

RVC uses a Financial Planning Model (described further in 5.C.1) to review department and program budgets in light of the overall College budget. During this process, budget managers meet with their supervisor, the Vice President of Administrative Services, and Financial Services staff to review proposed, zero-based budgets.   Justification and alignment to strategic efforts must be provided for any expenditures. This process allows for budget officers and Financial Services to plan for the upcoming year, as well as two to three years into the future, to ensure that expenditures are consistent with fiscal year goals and reflect College priorities.

In addition to the Financial Planning Model described in 5.A.1, the College also engages in an annual audit conducted by an external auditor. While planning for this begins in March each year, the actual audit begins in August and culminates with a report presented to the Board of Trustees in September. In this process, external auditors monitor internal systems, processes, and revenue streams, as well as verify the accuracy of related College data submitted via compliance reports to ICCB. Results of this audit demonstrate the College's repeated success in operating within a balanced budget despite recent fiscal challenges that RVC (and most institutions of higher education) are facing. Furthermore, RVC has received Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Award since 2009 and Certificate of Achievement for Excellence (CAFR) in Financial Reporting since 2007.

5.B.1: The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies – including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students – in the institution's governance.

RVC has established policies and procedures to govern its operations. These policies are established by administration with input from College faculty and staff, as well as approval of the Board of Trustees. College employees are represented by union and non-union employee groups that support their constituents' participation in the governance of the institution. Unionized groups, namely the Faculty Association and Fraternal Order of Police, also engage in the development of the institution's policy and procedure through the contract negotiation process.

For example, in response to concerns over rising healthcare costs and the fiscal need for a change in the way employees contribute to healthcare insurance, the College formally agreed through faculty contract negotiations to form and maintain a Healthcare/Wellness Committee. A charge of this committee was to monitor, evaluate, and if appropriate, recommend changes with respect to the College's health insurance programs. The committee was co-chaired by a faculty member and Human Resource administrator and made up of a representative group of employees (i.e., members of the Faculty Association and the Professional Staff Association (PSA) and Employee Support Personnel (ESP) groups. Within two months of the committee's initial meeting, the current health insurance plans were analyzed and three new options were recommended to the Board, meeting the contractual obligation of a January 2013 deadline for implementation. The options were then presented to employees for feedback. With employees working together, alternative health care options were researched, proposed, and ultimately adopted. The committee continued its effort working to develop and implement a wellness program. Using both College and community input and resources, a wellness program was recommended to the Board for approval at the May 2, 2013 regular meeting (BR 7010) with initial screening kicking off implementation in the Fall of 2013.

While RVC does engage its internal constituents in the institution's governance through its policies and procedures, accessibility to the information is problematic, primarily given the scope, organization, and presentation of this information. The College has engaged in attempts to update the policy manual and improve its consistency in formatting and cataloging of information. In 2008, per meeting minutes of the Board of Trustees Human Resources Committee, updates on the Administrative Policy Manual Project were provided (see Table 2.2 in Section 2.C.1 of this document). This effort led to the existing Administrative Policy Manual.

In recent years, Human Resources has again initiated an effort to further address improvements to this manual. Since it contained both policies and procedures, efforts were made to separate the procedures from this manual. Additional policies and procedures have been established (e.g., Academic Affairs and Student Development Policy and Procedure Manual) or separated (e.g., hiring processes for faculty and

[non-faculty continuous employees](#)) from the Administrative Policy Manual .   Furthermore, the various handbooks of the College (e.g., [Employee Handbook](#), [Faculty Handbook](#), and [Student Handbook](#)) outline those policies and procedures most relevant to the respective groups.

Efforts to improving the navigation, organization and currency of the electronic form of the Administration Policy Manual have also been initiated. Reorganization efforts are anticipated to be completed by January of 2014. Further review of the resulting policy manual will then be undertaken to identify any gaps in policy. The criterion subcommittee also recommended a formal schedule of review of the policy manual. Such a review would not only maintain the currency of the document, it could also assist in engaging the College internal constituencies.

5.B.2: The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The governing board receives regular input from the President and the Administration, who speak on behalf of the institution with opportunities for employees to have access to the Board as well. The Board meets as a whole on a monthly basis. In addition, the Board has organized four subcommittees that normally meet quarterly, but can and have most recently met more frequently to address the business of the College. The four standing subcommittees are:
1. Teaching and Learning Committee. This committee includes information related to all areas relevant to academics, including student enrollment and retention.
2. Human Resources Committee. This committee reviews HR and Board policies, grievances, terminations, and status of contract negotiations, during negotiations.
3. Facilities Committee. This committee reviews the Facilities Master Plan, and all building programs on behalf of the College at all sites.
4. Finance Committee. This committee considers all budgetary and financial concerns of the College.

The agenda for the standing subcommittee meetings are established by respective members of Leadership Team and administration with approval from the Board subcommittee chair. Agendas and minutes are posted on the College's website and intranet (i.e., the Quarry). Some items are reviewed on a routine basis and are standing agenda items for the subcommittees (e.g., review of strategic plans, policies and procedures, Vital Signs, and enrollment). Approval of subcommittee meeting minutes takes place when subcommittee reports are shared as part of the full monthly meeting of the Board.

Guided by established by-laws collected in the [Administrative Policy Manual](#), the Board of Trustees monitors and advises College leadership on key areas through the subcommittee and monthly Board meeting structure. Training and support for new trustees is provided through the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA); an orientation program assists new trustees in navigating the complexities of College governance. Although Board members meet with the Leadership team as part of this orientation process, no consistent, formal training for new trustees exists or is outlined for future Boards in the Administrative Policy Manual.

As is often the case, Board members may have conflicts between support for the College and support for community constituents and are challenged to find balance in this respect. The current Board seeks to strike a balance between functioning in a supportive role and steering multiple projects to completion

without impeding the day-to-day operations of the College.

5.B.3: The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

As an institution, RVC uses effective structures of collaboration that involve a variety of internal stakeholders in setting academic requirements, policies and procedures. The institutional groups that enable administration, faculty and staff to effectively collaborate include the following:

- **Academic Council** – Comprised of administration, faculty and student development personnel, the Council reviews new ideas and concepts related to academic programs and effective practices that impact faculty and students. For example, the Academic Council is currently reviewing the College Classroom Technology Policy as it relates to the use of adaptive technology for disabled students.

- **Curriculum Committee** – Comprised of faculty, administration and student development, Curriculum Committee engages in approval of changes or development of new curriculum.

- **Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC)** – Comprised of faculty, administration, staff and student development personnel, ITAC plans for the effective growth and use of technology at RVC.

- **Chief Academic Officer Council (CAO) and Dean's Council** – CAO is comprised of Academic Deans, Academic Affairs personnel and Student Service Personnel. The Dean's Council is comprised of Academic Deans and Academic Affairs personnel. Both groups review new ideas and concepts, problem solve, share information, and to ensure consistency of practice.

- **Division and Department Meetings** – By contract, these meetings are held monthly to problem solve, review information, and make decisions for their respective areas.

- **Student Government Association (SGA)** – led by the Student Trustee, SGA brings issues, concerns and student activities to the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees for review. The Student Trustee reports monthly at each regular Board meeting.

- **Committees and Task Forces** are formed as needed to address particular issues or to foster problem solving or innovation across all employee groups. A cost savings task force and an enrollment task force are two recent examples.

The College strategic planning documents, Administrative Policy Manual, Academic Affairs and Student Development Policy and Procedure Manual, and various handbooks provide guidance for committees, and inform processes for updating and monitoring committees and committee needs. The committees and task force groups mentioned above are examples of the way in which various stakeholders from across the College are involved in effective structures for collaborative effort. These groups serve as cross-functional teams to address academic processes, issues, policies, governance, innovation and problem solving and have strong commitment to tasks and efforts by their membership.

It should also be noted that while students are welcome members of the various committees and task forces on campus, widespread student involvement is not a reality on all committees. As such, student involvement in such matters is often limited to feedback during vetting processes.

> **Core Component**
> 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

5.C.1: The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

RVC allocates it resources in alignment with its priorities as defined by the College mission document and strategic initiatives.   During the self-study process, College priorities were articulated through Strategic Focus Areas, which were revised every 2 to 3 years. By using Strategic Focus Areas that were more frequently reviewed and revised, RVC had developed a fluid, adaptive process for aligning resources with its priorities and mission that could more readily grow along with the changes of the greater College learning community. However, it was identified in the self-study process that by not having a longer-term, strategic plan to guide alignment, problems of consistency were created that impacted resource allocation. As a result, the current College Strategic Plan was developed and implemented.   It, along with targeted strategic plans (e.g., Academic Plan, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Institutional Advancement Plan, Informational Technology Plan, and the Facilities Master Plan) delineates College priorities and frames the allocation of resources. More information about the process for developing and implementing the Strategic Focus Areas and the College Strategic Plan have been described in Part I, Strategic Planning.

Ultimately, to ensure that financial resources reflect the College's priorities and its mission document, the College allocates fiscal resources through its Financial Planning Model. The annual budgeting process follows the timeline detailed in Figure 5.2. Through this process, budget officers are encouraged to review budgets of prior years, as well as strategic initiatives, data trends (e.g., those on courses offered and enrolled student headcount) and, when appropriate, program review to project expenditures of the next fiscal year.   As demonstrated in the timeline below, budget officers participate in these discussions with their supervisors and appropriate Leadership Team member.

Figure 5.2: Time for Budgeting Process/Financial Planning Model (FPM)

Task	Start	End	2013 Q4	2014 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Budget/FPM Process	11/1/13	10/30/14					
Planning of budget/FPM timeline and communications	11/1/13	12/31/13	⬭				
Communicate to Leadership Team and budget officers about budget/FPM timeline and expectations	1/1/14	2/28/14		⬭			
Budget officer planning	2/1/14	3/31/14		⬭			
FPM meetings with budget officers and appropriate supervisory Leadership Team member	3/1/14	4/30/14		⬭			
First pass analysis by Financial Services	3/1/14	4/30/14		⬭			
Leadership Team discussion to confirm resource allocation to College priorities/strategic initiatives	5/1/14	5/31/14			⬤		
Balancing efforts/analysis of revenues and expenditures	5/1/14	5/31/14			⬤		
Second pass analysis by Financial Services	5/1/14	5/31/14			⬤		
Presentation of final FY14 budget (plus tentative FY15 and FY16 budgets) to Board of Trustees	6/1/14	6/30/14			⬤		
Public Hearing and budget adoption by Board of Trustees	8/1/14	8/31/14				⬤	
Submission of annual budget/budget documentation to ICCB	9/1/14	9/30/14				⬤	
Submission of annual budget/budget documentation to GFOA	10/1/14	10/30/14					⬤

In additional to the general operating budget, RVC receives revenue in the form of grant funding. While fewer funding opportunities, especially those from federal and state departments of education, have been available in recent years, the College continues to seek them in support of strategic and critical initiatives. For example, RVC received funds from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge funded in 2012 and the TAACCCT – Multi-State Advanced Manufacturing Consortium Project funded in 2013. In response to addressing regional economic need as identified through monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and goals of strategic planning documents, these grants are focused at training new engineers and manufacturing workers to meet the needs of 21st century Rockford-area manufacturing workplaces. Funds from these programs are being used to recruit more students into manufacturing programs, as well as develop and refine curriculum and credentialing in Process Technology, Manufacturing Systems, and Manufacturing Maintenance.

The College also utilizes the Facilities Master Plan to ensure that the allocation of space and building resources aligns the physical infrastructure with its mission and priorities. The fluidity of the Facilities Master Plan process allows for adaptation as priorities change to meet the needs of the community over time.

Rock Valley College's 2014 Self-study Narrative

In addition, the following procedures are also used by the College to ensure alignment of resources to its mission and priorities:

- **Staffing Priorities** – The college hiring practices are tied to the Financial Planning cycle with priority given to academic positions needed to fulfill the priorities of the College. Although the Financial Planning Model has been established for a number of years, the lack of an overarching strategic plan in the past has led to the need to hire adjunct faculty close to the beginning of the semester because sufficient faculty to fill student need was not available.

- **Course Offering** – The scheduling of existing courses and the development of new course offerings is in part based on student demand, but with the development of the Academic Plan, as well as the results of the Program Review process, new course offerings that meet the priorities of the college can be developed in a systematic and logical manner.

- **Program Review** – Followed by both the academic and non-academic areas of the College, this process encourages examination of resource allocation on a five-year cycle per ICCB requirements.

5.C.2: The institution links processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

The College has strong processes in place for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting. Through the strategic planning and the Financial Planning Model, effort is made to link these processes. Figure 5.3 provides one illustration of this alignment effort.

Processes currently in place for this purpose include:

- **Assessment of Student Learning**
    - Program Review uses assessment data to inform action items.
    - Course, program and institutional assessment inform academic planning and departmental /divisional priorities.

- **Evaluation of College Operations** – Several evaluative process inform planning and budget, including the following:
    - Program Review
    - Compliance reporting
    - Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition Report
    - Fiscal Vital Signs
    - Performance evaluation practices of faculty and staff
    - Facilities Master Planning

- **Planning**
    - College Strategic Plan
    - Academic Plan
    - Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
    - Facilities Master Plan
    - Institutional Advancement Plan

o   Information Technology Plan

- **Budgeting**
    o   Financial Planning Model
    o   Surplus fund allocation

Figure 5.3: Alignment of College Strategic Plan to Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

IBHE Public Agenda Goals	Increase educational attainment	Ensure college affordability	Increase the number and quality of post-secondary credentials		Better integrate assets to meet economic need
RVC KPI Categories	Educational Attainment, Access, and Success	Affordability	Educational Quality	Accountability	Addressing Regional Economic Need
Operational Definition	1. Raise success of students at each stage of the P-20 educational pipeline 2. Eliminate achievement gaps	1. Lower percent of family income required to pay net cost of attendance for low- and middle-income families 2. Lower average amount of debt per undergraduate student	1. Raise the number of people with quality postsecondary credentials, especially in areas of critical skill shortage 2. Improve transitions along the educational pipeline	Provide State and region with educated workforce and engaged citizenry	Support State and regional in economic development
College Strategic Plan (2013-2015) Detailed alignment of institutional goals to IBHE goals and College KPI.	Goal 1: Foster students' attainment of their academic goals and prepare them for life-long learning to succeed in an ever-changing world Goal 5: Promote an inclusive community that enhances the College climate and workforce	Goal 2: Enhance College and community partnerships Goal 3: Ensure institutional validity through continuous improvement	Goal 1: Foster students' attainment of their academic goals and prepare them for life-long learning to succeed in an ever-changing world Goal 3: Ensure institutional validity through continuous improvement Goal 4: Maintain the College's strong regional identity as an institution that provides quality education, workforce development, and cultural enrichment Goal 5: Promote an inclusive community that enhances the College climate and workforce		Goal 2: Enhance College and community partnerships Goal 3: Ensure institutional validity through continuous improvement Goal 4: Maintain the College's strong regional identity as an institution that provides quality education, workforce development, and cultural enrichment
KPI to Report	Persistence and Retention Rates Graduation Rate Transfer Rate	Affordability • Cost of Attendance • Financial Aid Debt	Assessment for Student Learning • July 2013 • April 2013 • Archive Persistence and Retention Rates	Accountability • External Accreditation Outcomes • Overview of Program Review	Labor Market Study Community Survey Employer Survey Economic Impact Study (EIS)

As stated, the assessment of student learning has strong processes in place and is tied to some extent through these processes to evaluations of operations, planning, and budgeting. However, these are not readily clear and consistently understood across the College community. Furthermore, linking financial planning and strategic planning of expenditures are performed at the more global, institutional level, but not consistently at more narrow, specific levels (e.g., department or program level).

5.C.3: The planning process takes encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal external constituent groups.

RVC is an institution that uses planning processes that encompass a wide range of involvement of both internal and external constituent groups. The planning processes include involvement of members representing the various employee groups at RVC (e.g., Faculty Association, Fraternal Order of Police, Professional Staff Association (PSA), and the Educational Support Personnel (ESP)). As planning documents are developed they are vetted out to the internal College community through departments and divisions, as well as through the College's committee structure and various student groups (e.g., SGA, Phi Theta Kappa, Association of Latin American Students (ALAS), Student Veteran's Association,

and peer tutors). While planning documents consider the diverse needs of those served by the College and students are frequently involved in the vetting process, few, if any, are directly involved in the full planning process. Communication of the planning efforts to internal stakeholders is often limited to those present in the room at planning and vetting meetings. Efforts to report out to the larger College community are often impaired by inconsistent use of College communication tools (e.g., campus mail, Daily News, and the College intranet (i.e., the Quarry)) by College employees.

The College is able to consider the perspectives of a number of external constituent groups to support planning. Several Leadership Team members and other College personnel participate on community boards (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Rockford Health Council, YMCA, Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC) , Manufacturing Advisory Council, Rockford Arts Council, Growth Dimensions, Rockford Association for Minority Management (RAMM), Kiwanis, Rotary, the Northern Illinois Community Foundation, Family Counseling Services, Alignment Rockford and the Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois (CEANCI). Through their involvement on these boards, College personnel are able to share community perspectives in the planning process. Nonetheless, direct, formal involvement of community members in the College planning has been limited. Furthermore, communication in these efforts between the College and community members is often one-way. In this, the College receives information from community members, but does not have a consistent method to report back impact or implications of that information sharing.

Although the College uses planning processes that encompass the institution as a whole, several strategies were recommended by the criterion subcommittee, including the following:
- Improve the use of meetings and meeting structures:
    - Consider using technology instead of face-to-face meetings to more effectively use staff/faculty time
    - Consider more action-oriented or work session meetings; informational meetings could be structured to be electronic
    - Develop a regular review process of committees/committee structures/committee purpose to determine if they continue to add value to the strategic efforts of the College

- Use multiple methods and develop more opportunities to increase student involvement in planning

- Improve the structure and use of Advisory Committees (e.g., improve representation from the community and the process of communicating back to these representatives as a follow-up).

These recommendations are currently being considered by College leadership and will be implemented as appropriate through strategic planning documents.

5.C.4: The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

RVC uses a sound understanding of its current capacity to plan. Data, such as those provided in Fiscal Vital Signs, enrollment monitoring, and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Summary Reports inform this foundational understanding.   As such, the College anticipates the possible impact of fluctuations in the

institution's sources of revenue (e.g., enrollment and state support) and relevant economic factors (e.g., as reported through labor market and affordability studies). Processes and strategic planning documents described in previous sections of this chapter are in place to ensure an understanding of institutional capacity.

5.C.5: Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

RVC has plans that are strategic and forward thinking. These plans are developed using data and an understanding of emerging factors presented through research, literature, and professional meetings and conferences. Addressing regional economic need is embedded within strategic plans and identified as a College key performance indicator (KPI). Data to provide insight in this area (e.g., labor market and demographic patters) have been identified and made available to those engaged in strategic planning. Wherever possible, a crosswalk illustrating the connection among strategic plans is developed (e.g., in Academic Plan and Strategic Enrollment Management Plan). Through these crosswalks and monitoring of implementation, strategic planning documents provide not only a sense of direction but also a source of re-occurring conversation that creates an opportunity for currency.

> **Core Component**
> 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

5.D.1: The institution develops and documents evidence of performance of its operations.

RVC develops and documents evidence of performance of its operations through a number of processes and reports, including by not limited to the following:
- Academic Operations
  - Assessment of student learning (i.e., institutional, program, course assessment)
  - Survey of student engagement (i.e., CCSSE)
  - Program Review

- Fiscal Operations
  - Budget process/Financial Planning Model
  - Annual audits
  - Annual updates to the Facilities Master Plan
  - Quarterly budget reports
  - Vital Signs

- Overall Institutional Operations
  - Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Summary Reports
  - 10th Day Census Enrollment and Student Profile Data Briefs
  - Annual State and Federal Compliance Reporting
  - ICCB Recognition Report
  - Quarterly monitoring of strategic initiatives
  - Employee Performance Review

This evidence is shared with the College community through presentations at Board of Trustee meetings

and their corresponding minutes, presentations to appropriate committees and groups (e.g., sharing KPI reports on persistence and retention with Student Development managers or presenting progress on course and program assessment to Dean's Council), and in artifacts posted to the website and intranet (i.e., the Quarry).

In addition, RVC is required to submit compliance reports to ICCB and IPEDS, and also provides similar information to other groups outside of the immediate College community, such as the College Board. Since the last HLC site visit evaluation, RVC has re-established a reputation for providing accurate and timely compliance submissions to ICCB. This effort has been documented and affirmed through the ICCB Recognition Report and process.

5.D.2: The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

As shown in sections above addressing this criterion, RVC has several processes and documents in place that can guide effectiveness efforts. The College engages in self-evaluative efforts and data-driven decision making, using these efforts to determine future action. Transitioning from the first to the second planning cycle for both the Academic Plan and Strategic Enrollment Management Plan exemplify how the College uses experience and knowledge gained to inform continued improvement. Efforts were made to monitor progress on these plans during the first planning cycle, which supported efforts to efficiently review progress made in preparation for the development of the next strategic planning document. For instance, in reviewing the monitoring reports of the various subcommittees responsible for implementation of the first Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, the Steering Committee determined that efficiency would be improved if the initiatives and action items were organized around goals that targeted improvement of effectiveness rather than functions. Table 5.3 illustrates the comparison between goals in these two plans. By using goals that address issues of effectiveness, the monitoring of the plan now becomes focused on improving outcomes rather than task completion.

Table 5.3: Comparison of Goals in RVC Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plans

2010-2013	2013-2015
- Marketing & Recruitment - Pricing - Enrollment - Supporting Teaching and Learning - Retention - Engagement	- Expand access and opportunity for all prospective students leading to successful enrollment of a diversified student body. - Ensure continued affordability to all students. - Ensure program development and course offerings that meet student demands. - Increase the likelihood of student achievement (e.g., persistence and retention) by offering adequate academic and support programs and services. - Increase student retention and completion rates and improve overall success. - Enhance programs and provide information to students preparing to complete certificate/degree requirements and/or transition to a 4-year institution or the workplace.

While the College has made improvements in developing and documenting evidence of performance, continued effort is needed to maximize operating within a culture of institutional effectiveness rather than a culture of compliance. Some groups on campus are more aware of and more readily use readily available data, such as Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data, in the planning and taking of next steps than others. Additional efforts to maximize the College community's access to and awareness of available resources, such as these data, will continue to be discussed by College Leadership in Data-driven Decision Making (DDDM) this Spring.

CRITERIA 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:

1. Strong processes (e.g., budget and financial planning, hiring of faculty and non-faculty continuous employees, and computer replacement) guide the College's resource allocation and operations in an institutionally effective manner.

2. The College has consistently maintained a zero-balance budget. Furthermore, the budget and financial reporting have been recognized as outstanding by the Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA).

3. Strategic planning documents are consistent with the mission and values of the College and operate compatibly to define direction for the College.

4. The College engages in regular monitoring and report of strategic initiatives.

5. Processes and decision-making include opportunities for faculty, staff, and student contribution and collaboration.

Challenges:

1. While strategic planning documents have been designed to operate compatibly, RVC lacked an overarching College strategic plan that would provide for more effective alignment of resource planning and allocation to College mission.

2. Awareness of strategic planning documents, resource allocation, and alignment of assessment to operational processes is inconsistent across the College community and limits engagement in decision-making by various groups.

3. Strategic initiatives and priorities have not consistently focused on institutional effectiveness outcomes.

4. The College lacks a comprehensive, consistent, and timely process for orienting new members of the Board of Trustees to the College and higher education.

5. Maintaining fiscal and human resources to support operations, program delivery, and new initiatives has been difficult given recent economy and changes in key College leaders after a long period of stability.

As a result of the self-study

- An overarching College Strategic Plan was developed by the Leadership Team through a series of planning meetings. The 2013-2015 plan used key findings and criteria subcommittee recommendations from the self-study process in conjunction with elements of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and the Academic Plan to develop five broad goals and annual strategic initiatives. Members of the Leadership Team are responsible for monitoring the College Strategic Plan and reporting progress to the Board of Trustees (and the College community) on a quarterly basis.

  Providing for a consistent and comprehensive awareness of these strategic goals and initiatives will be enhanced with the revised performance review process for non-faculty employees. Beginning in Spring of 2014, all employees will be required to align their performance goals to a goal or initiative of the College Strategic Plan. This process will be done electronically, so employees will not be able to complete their plan without reading and identifying one of these.

  Moving forward, the College Strategic Plan will lead the strategic planning cycle in other areas. Through the process of developing this plan and the newer iterations of the Academic and Strategic Enrollment Management plans, models have been developed to reflect the development of initiatives and priorities that focus on institutional effectiveness outcomes rather that completion of tasks.

- The development of a formal orientation process will be addressed as the institutional policies are reviewed and updated during the Spring of 2014.

- In the fall of 2013 the Leadership Team developed a position priority list to address fiscal and human resources needed to adequately support operations, program delivery, and strategic initiatives. This list has been reviewed with the Board of Trustees and will inform budget planning for the next fiscal year. Furthermore, a transitional plan has been implemented to address recent vacancies in key areas of College leadership, recognizing that this plan is not a long-term solution but providing the College an opportunity for smooth transition while continuing normal operations.