6.2 - Culture of Quality

Culture of Quality focuses on how the institution integrates continuous quality improvement into its culture. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.D. in this section.

6P2: PROCESSES

Describe how a culture of quality is ensured within the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Developing an infrastructure and providing resources to support a culture of quality
- Ensuring continuous quality improvement is making an evident and widely understood impact on institutional culture and operations (5.D.1)
- Ensuring the institution learns from its experiences with CQI initiatives (5.D.2)
- Reviewing, reaffirming and understanding the role and vitality of the AQIP Pathway within the institution

6R2: RESULTS

What are the results for continuous quality improvement to evidence a culture of quality? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 6P2. All data presented should include the population studied, the response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared.

6I2: IMPROVEMENT

Based on 6R2, what process improvements to the quality culture have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Responses

6P2a. Developing an infrastructure and providing resources to support a culture of quality

LCCC has embraced the foundational elements of CQI by focusing the Institution on rigorous assessment of institutional effectiveness, improvement planning based on evidence, resource allocation and implementation, and formative and summative evaluation, repeating the cycle. Integrated within this cycle is the College's belief in shared governance and inclusiveness across all levels of the Institution. This forms the infrastructure to support a culture of quality and continuous improvement at the College.

More specifically, LCCC utilizes four processes to develop infrastructure and provide resources that sustain the culture of quality at the College.

1. Integration of the CQI model in Major Processes – Throughout this Systems Portfolio, major institutional processes are described. Elements of the LCCC CQI model are integrated within them. For example, the incorporation of KPIs into various planning and resource allocation processes, strategic plan goals and strategies integrated within budget development process, operational planning, etc. In addition, the College has established an entire chapter in its policy manual focused on Continuous Improvement, which houses Board Policies and Administrative Procedures establishing major CQI processes.

2. Employee Development and Performance Assessment on CQI – LCCC has incorporated continuous improvement expectations into employee selection/hiring, as well as development processes. CQI is a building block in the draft employee competencies framework currently in development.

3. Proliferation of CQI Cycle (culture of evidence) – The College has been disciplined in its rhythm of CQI, leading by example with the review and update of strategic plan progress, the annual assessment of institutional effectiveness and release of the College's Report Card at each fall convocation, and the difficult, yet concerted, effort to establish academic program review and the developing service/support function review processes.

4. Resource Allocation tied to CQI Initiatives – LCCC has made a formal commitment to allocate its financial resources to those areas that demonstrate a commitment to improvements leading to higher levels of efficacy. For example, new position requests and one-time fund requests are scored against criterion rubrics that incorporate CQI expectations and alignment with institutional mission and strategy.

Other recent institutional actions demonstrate the College's commitment to developing and sustaining the infrastructure that supports the LCCC CQI model. These include the establishment of an Institutional Effectiveness Division that focuses on developing a culture of continuous improvement, creating an Institutional Projects office to house a new position for institutional project management, funding of a continuous improvement technology platform (Aquila - Campus Labs), data visualization software (Tableau), etc.

6P2b. Ensuring continuous quality improvement is making an evident and widely understood impact on institutional culture and operations (5.D.1)

Since publishing its first Systems Portfolio in 2010, LCCC's quality transformation has been built on the foundation of disciplined, evidence-informed decision making, strategic allocation of resources, and clearly articulated processes. Prior to 2010, pockets of the Institution focused on continuous improvement, and some basic elements of an integrated cycle were at the institutional level; however, the culture and institutional operations were not clearly connected to this concept.

Today, the College openly assesses institutional, program, and function effectiveness and widely distributes documentation of the results. This is primarily illustrated through the annual assessment of institutional effectiveness and efficiency reported in the KPIs. Each year, during the fall state-of-the-college address, the President presents the College's report card on these measures (**5.D.1**). They are objective, authentic, and pertinent to LCCC's performance, and,

most importantly, they demonstrate a commitment to identifying areas where improvement is required.

In addition to the KPI system, other processes have been developed and implemented to ensure continuous improvement is evident at the College. For example, LCCC utilizes shared governance concepts through its Budget Resource Allocation Committee (BRAC) and incorporates rubrics that intentionally assess CQI initiatives in the rubric criteria, such as strategic plan strategies, academic and functions assessment planning, and program review when determining where to allocate funds and hire new positions.

Peer review is purposefully integrated within LCCC's actions and processes to further ensure CQI is impacting its culture and operations. These processes are designed to engender evaluative thinking and CQI knowledge by having peers provide feedback on academic program review, service/support function assessment, and the budget development and allocation processes. For example, each year, the BRAC recommends budget development process improvements to the College Council, a public and utilitarian display of the commitment to CQI.

6P2c. Ensuring the institution learns from its experiences with CQI initiatives (5.D.2)

LCCC's CQI model, described in 6P1, is the process that ensures the College continually learns from its CQI initiatives. This model, with its accompanying processes (e.g., strategic planning, program review and assessment, function review and assessment) and systems (e.g., Aquila, project management, etc.), includes several feedback and evaluation components that inform the Institution and its employees of the successes and failures with CQI initiatives and the processes themselves. The outcomes of these efforts have engendered exploration and development of formal and self-evaluation methods. Thus, institutional learning is central to LCCC's CQI model (**5.D.2**).

The Institution has deployed a centralized, technology-based system, called "Aquila," to facilitate the documentation, review, and archiving of continuous improvement efforts. Through its planning module, the College has integrated its system for Strategic Plan strategy implementation, the review of academic programs and service/support functions, and the implementation of short-cycle and long-cycle improvement goals. This systematic generation of organizational learning ensures the gradual manifestation of an improvement culture.

Mentioned previously in this portfolio, the various processes for conducting planning, implementation and evaluation incorporate teams of individuals to manage, monitor, and review quality improvement projects. This broad involvement, coupled with the technology system to collect and archive quality initiative information, provides a body of knowledge with which the College continually engages to understand and learn from the various attempts it makes at continuous quality improvement (**5.D.2**).

For example, early in the implementation of the new program review process, the College learned that its self-study template required significant revision. Based on stakeholder feedback and process evaluation, a faculty-based committee redesigned the template during Spring 2017, with a much smoother implementation for reviews thereafter. In addition, the College is in the

process of revising and simplifying several of its quality standards for the new service/support functions assessment and review process based on feedback from employees who are involved in the early implementation.

Another example arose from the attempted implementation of an early alert system (Starfish) as part of a student retention CQI initiative. Even with utilizing LCCC's then new project management process, the Starfish implementation was painful; evaluation and feedback quickly led the College to its discontinuation. The post-mortem assessment by those involved identified the necessity for better understanding of underlying processes, as well as missing project management components. This awareness guided improvements in the project management structure, which has resulted in successful implementation of an admissions customer relations management system. The project management structure now underlies LCCC's Guided Pathways work.

6P2d. Reviewing, reaffirming and understanding the role and vitality of the AQIP Pathway within the institution

Stated previously in 6.1, LCCC does not view AQIP as something it does. Rather, the College is committed to "doing" continuous quality improvement in all its work, and the AQIP Pathway is the process through which it validates how well its CQI model is functioning. Unfortunately, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has recently announced its plans to discontinue the AQIP Pathway. This decision requires that LCCC prepare to move to a new pathway. However, because LCCC has embraced a commitment to CQI, and, more importantly, has integrated CQI concepts and processes throughout the Institution, the very culture that the College has built will ensure that its understanding and commitment to CQI will survive this transition.

6R2. What are the results for continuous quality improvement to evidence a culture of quality?

LCCC's transformation towards a culture of quality has been impressive. For example, LCCC has gone from laggard to leader among Wyoming community colleges. Today, the College leads the state in program articulation, has the first articulated general education program with the University of Wyoming, drives the colleges' legislative agenda, leads when partnering with the state system and its councils, champions the use of predictive data and analytics, leads the implementation of best practices, and much more.

Leadership has been a concern of the Board of Trustees and campus for some time. To see this, all one must do is read back through early iterations of our "Leading and Communicating" surveys and the Organizational Audit completed in 2011. Today we have one of the strongest executive leadership teams that exist in any community college in America. Are we perfect? No, not by any measure, but when you consider the caliber and commitment of the individuals who now hold executive and mid-level leadership positions at LCCC, we are truly positioned to continue driving change and improving student outcomes.

LCCC has been continually improving the rate at which students succeed in their educational pursuits. While graduation rates are still far too low, they, along with almost all other measures

of student success, are moving in the right direction. In the past six years, the College has had two record-setting graduating classes. Moreover, LCCC awarded more credentials in the past five years than at any other time in its history, while experiencing year-over-year enrollment declines. In addition, course completion rates have increased every year, illustrating that LCCC is becoming more effective in getting students to succeed in their coursework. Finally, for all success metrics used for Guided Pathways, LCCC's results outpace those of its cohort and, more importantly, are moving in the right direction.

The College has received national and local recognition for its innovation. Like its acceptance into the American Association of Community College's Guided Pathways 2.0 (one of just 13 institutions selected to be part of this program), LCCC is continually rising to the national stage for its efforts, innovations, and outcomes. The College also actively leads locally, within the community college "system," mentioned above, and within its community. From leadership in a local community planning effort, LCCC's active involvement in the Governor's economic diversification efforts, leadership on community and business organizations, and so many more, LCCC is stepping up and being recognized for it.

6I2. Based on 6R2, what process improvements to the quality culture have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Stated briefly above, the annual cycle of assessment results in the identification of areas for improvement in many of the CQI process and sub-processes. Thus, there are numerous improvements in these various processes each year. For example, as described earlier in this portfolio, after the initial roll-out of the academic program review process, primary stakeholders' feedback identified numerous areas for process improvement. A committee of faculty and other vested stakeholders was formed to implement significant improvements to the program review template, the calendar cycle, etc.

In addition, utilizing a 2015 Strategy Forum, the College established an action project to develop a service/support function (or non-academic program) review process. This work is well underway with the initial emphasis on articulating function purpose, mapping processes, identifying and engaging stakeholders, and establishing baseline data and benchmarks to assess current performance levels. This work proved useful in making strategic, objective decisions in 2016 when the College faced significant budget cuts in state appropriations.

Finally, and, likely the most significant improvement planned to further build a quality culture at LCCC, is the design and deployment of a college-wide continuous quality improvement professional development program for employees. While LCCC has made it well known that employees are expected to embrace CQI and illustrate an understanding, through action, of continuous improvement practices and process, it has not yet integrated a process for the formal development of CQI knowledge, skills, and abilities for all its employees. This CQI training program will be designed to help employees actively contribute to CQI in their current positions, while helping them develop those CQI competencies that are most desired in other positions at LCCC that they may be interested in pursuing.