

## 4.2 - Strategic Planning

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Strategic Planning focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 5.B. and 5.C. in this section.

### 4P2: PROCESSES

Describe the processes for communicating, planning, implementing and reviewing the institution's plans and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Engaging internal and external stakeholders in strategic planning (5.C.3)
- Aligning operations with the institution's mission, vision and values (5.C.2)
- Aligning efforts across departments, divisions and colleges for optimum effectiveness and efficiency (5.B.3)
- Capitalizing on opportunities and institutional strengths and countering the impact of institutional weaknesses and potential threats (5.C.4, 5.C.5)
- Creating and implementing strategies and action plans that maximize current resources and meet future needs (5.C.1, 5.C.4)
- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. achievement of goals and/or satisfaction with process)

### 4R2: RESULTS

What are the results for communicating, planning, implementing and reviewing the institution's operational plans? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P2. All data presented should include the population studied, 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. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)
- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks
- Interpretation of results and insights gained

### 4I2: IMPROVEMENT

Based on 4R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

## Responses

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### 4P2a. Engaging internal and external stakeholders in strategic planning (5.C.3)

Mentioned briefly in 4P1, the College utilizes a systematic, comprehensive, and inclusive process for strategic planning, which occurs every five to seven years. The planning process is

guided by the College's commitment to shared governance and begins with the organization of a strategic planning team comprised of individuals representing all internal constituencies at the College (e.g., the Trustees, executive team, faculty, staff, etc.). Team members are purposefully selected to ensure the engagement of all voices within the campus community.

The strategic planning process also purposefully engages external stakeholders through the environmental scanning component (5.C.3). Environmental scanning is a process that systematically collects and assesses relevant information to understand the environment in which the College currently exists and expects to exist in the future. Environmental scanning brings key external stakeholders into the strategic planning process, including representatives from K12, four-year institutions, the business sectors and business-related organizations, municipal government, higher-education coordinating bodies, and state government. They engage in the process by answering questions regarding the direction in which their organizations are headed; the challenges, opportunities, goals and aspirations that their organizations have for the next three to five years; and how LCCC can help their organizations, the community and state succeed.

The College then crafts its strategies and plans based on the analysis of this information. Thus, environmental scanning is one of the most essential first-steps in the strategic planning process.

#### **4P2b. Aligning operations with the institution's mission, vision and values (5.C.2)**

The College deploys operations to help sustain and improve the Institution's overall efficacy in meeting its mission. To ensure this, LCCC uses its service and support function assessment process. A service or support function is an institutional action or activity that is designed to achieve a specific purpose in alignment with the College's mission. As part of this process, each service and support function at the Institution has an articulated purpose (reason for its existence) that includes its alignment with the LCCC Mission, Vision, and Values, specific indicators and outcomes for what it is intended to specifically accomplish and identified stakeholders (5.C.2).

This process ensures that not only are the College's primary operational functions aligned with its mission, vision and values, but that they are continuously improving in their own efficacy, resulting in overall institutional improvement towards mission attainment.

#### **4P2c. Aligning efforts across departments, divisions and colleges for optimum effectiveness and efficiency (5.B.3)**

LCCC is committed to the active involvement of all internal College constituencies in the governance of the Institution through an ongoing participative process of [shared governance](#). This system begets accompanying policies, procedures, and practices under which all major institutional constituencies contribute to, and participate in, the major decisions determining the direction and operation of the Institution (5.B.3).

The College facilitates shared governance through a variety of processes, but the most central to this is the [College Council](#), a representative body designed to ensure the College is effectively and efficiently achieving the institution's mission and strategic plan priorities. College Council's

purposes include: (1) educating the college community regarding the processes, deliberations, and outcomes of the Council; (2) establishing College policies and procedures; (3) conducting institutional planning; (4) guiding the strategic and annual allocation of resources to improve institutional effectiveness; and (5) evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the institution. Collectively, these purposes form the foundation of the College's model of continuous improvement.

Two other processes are worth mentioning here as well. The first is the College's consultative feedback process. This process, predominantly used for the review and approval of policies and procedures (see [Procedure 1.2.11P](#)), is also utilized to garner cross-campus feedback on major changes to the Institution, such as the establishment of a new strategic plan. The consultative feedback process disseminates the proposed new/amended policy, procedure, or document to the entire campus community for review and input.

The second process is that of developing and deploying strategic plan strategies. Mentioned previously, the strategic plan goals and strategies are integrated into process for institutional planning and resource allocation. But these strategies are also designed to develop and encourage interdisciplinary, cross-departmental collaboration. Through the collaborative strategic planning process, Institution-wide goals are established with accompanying strategies that require or encourage interdisciplinary teams to work on their implementation and evaluation.

#### **4P2d. Capitalizing on opportunities and institutional strengths and countering the impact of institutional weaknesses and potential threats (5.C.4, 5.C.5)**

The College's strategic planning process incorporates elements to ensure the Institution is capitalizing on opportunities and institutional strengths, while countering the impact of institutional weaknesses and threats. Specifically, the processes of environmental scanning (discussed above) and assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) ensure this is occurring.

Environmental scanning informs the Institution about both internal and external factors that may be currently impacting the College or are likely to impact it in the future. It is during this stage that the Institution gathers a sound understanding of its current capacity as well as external factors that may likely influence the Institution such as enrollment trends, demographic shifts, funding, economic changes, etc. Through the environmental scan and the SWOT analysis, LCCC identifies critical issues, draws conclusions and articulates assumptions about the future to inform systematic and integrated strategic planning (5.C.4, 5.C.5).

#### **4P2e. Creating and implementing strategies and action plans that maximize current resources and meet future needs (5.C.1, 5.C.4)**

LCCC's strategic planning process ensures that the College creates and implements strategies and action plans that maximize current resources and meet future needs. This process culminates in the establishment of a few broad, over-arching goals that LCCC hopes to accomplish. Strategic goals then drive operational strategies and unit-specific objectives. This continuity

ensures that the Institution's work and resources focus in areas that help accomplish those things identified as critical to more fully attain its mission.

As stated previously, the Institution's assessment practices and resource allocation processes integrate the Strategic Plan goals and operational strategies, and call for identification of other objectives from campus units to ensure Institutional effort and resources are allocated to those areas focused on helping the College meet its mission (5.C.1). As a reminder, the environmental scanning component of the planning process considers the current state of LCCC's own efficacy through the internal analysis and assessment of the College's KPIs as well as the external influences impacting the Institution currently or in the future (5.C.4).

#### **4P2f. Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. achievement of goals and/or satisfaction with process)**

LCCC utilizes three primary processes for assessing its strategic planning process's efficacy, i.e., how well the process engages the campus community and how well the Institution achieves its strategic goals. The first is through assessing employee engagement in, understanding of, and commitment to the strategic planning process itself. This is accomplished through the annual employee satisfaction and engagement surveys described previously.

The second process is a formative evaluation process to assess strategic plan achievement, implemented in Fall 2015. In a similar fashion to the process used for strategic plan development, the College utilizes an inclusive group to track mid-plan progress on plan goals and strategies. For this evaluation process, the group is comprised of individuals who are most closely associated with the actions, activities and specific outcomes being assessed.

Finally, LCCC utilizes strategy-specific assessments to evaluate progress on strategic plan goals. These are typically summative in nature. For example, Goal 1 of the current strategic plan is to "increase the number of students earning high-value credentials by reinventing the College's programs and services to be designed for 21st century learners and aligned to drive the economic and social futures of Southeastern Wyoming". The Board of Trustees has emphasized this goal by passing a resolution to increase the number of credentials earned by LCCC students by five percent each year through 2022. A specific mechanism, charting annual credentials awarded, has been established to track progress towards this goal.

#### **4R2a. Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)**

Results are presented in accordance with the three primary processes used by LCCC to assess efficacy of its strategic planning activities. First, [Table 4R2-1](#) presents results of the past employee surveys items pertaining to institutional planning.

Second, the strategic plan evaluation process resulted in the production of the 2016 Strategic Plan Progress Report, which provides formative [progress assessment](#) (pg. 11) on the implementation of plan goals and strategies.

Third, as mentioned previously, LCCC has developed specific tracking tools for the strategic plan goals and strategies. None is more important than the [completions tracking](#) report that has been established to assess progress towards the achievement of Goal 1 and the Trustee's completion goal. In addition, the College tracks the [number and type of credentials awarded](#).

#### **4R2b. Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks**

Similar to the results and trends with the comparisons provided in section 4.1, it is clear that LCCC is making substantial progress on improving the engagement of employees and their satisfaction with the planning process at the College. And while increases in these results far outpace that of the [national comparison data](#), LCCC still lags behind that benchmark.

The strategic plan progress assessment is primarily a formative one and has no external benchmarks. However, during the 2015 refresh, LCCC had the internal target of having 30 percent progress completed (10 percent per year since the plan's 2013 implementation and anticipating three years until the plan's 2020 completion by the progress report's publication). The vast majority of the plan's goals and activities were well beyond that target and remain ahead of schedule at this writing.

As provided above, the completions tracking report incorporates the Trustees' goal as the College's target. Since tracking began, the College has exceeded that target twice.

#### **4R2c. Interpretation of results and insights gained**

The Institution continues to make progress and improvements across many domains, including its institutional planning. Illustrated in the results above, the College's employees are seeing increased alignment between the Institution's goals and objectives and its mission, feeling more involved in the planning processes, and satisfied that LCCC plans carefully. Although LCCC still falls below its national benchmarks on these measures, it is worth noting that while these benchmarks have remained flat (in one case actually decreasing), LCCC has made sustained growth.

Similarly, the progress the Institution has made on the advancement of its strategic plan is nothing short of amazing. As LCCC enters plan year six, the vast majority of its strategies have been or are nearly completed. More importantly, the Institution is seeing progress on its primary goal of student completions. It is worth noting that while LCCC has only exceeded the internal target (the Board of Trustees' completion goal) in two of the past five years, the College has had the five highest years for credentials awarded in its history during this time, while it has experienced enrollment declines. Moreover, the trend for student completions is back on an upswing and appears to be closing the gap towards the Trustees' goals.

#### **4I2. Based on 4R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?**

LCCC has entered the final two years of its strategic plan. To help the College and the campus community continue its progress towards completion of the plan, LCCC has developed a third

supplement to the plan titled [Focus](#), which focuses the remaining strategic plan work on three key areas:

1. Student Success
2. Inside LCCC
3. Campus Transformation

While the second and third focus areas reiterate the final elements of LCCC's strategic plan, the first consolidates the remaining work from Goal 1 and Goal 2 of the original 2013 plan and incorporates the College's significant Guided Pathways work. LCCC's participation in the [American Association of Community College's Guided Pathways 2.0](#) has provided a mechanism to bring these various "high impact practices" into coherence and essentially demonstrate integration of LCCC's work over the past year into a vastly improved and effective student experience at the College.