

**Systems Appraisal Feedback Report**

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

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for

**The Higher Learning Commission**

A commission of the North Central Association

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## Elements of Missouri Western State University's Feedback Report

Welcome to the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. This report provides AQIP's official response to an institution's *Systems Portfolio* by a team of peer reviewers (the Systems Appraisal Team). After the team independently reviews the institution's portfolio, it reaches consensus on essential elements of the institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by AQIP Category, and any significant issues related to accreditation. These are then presented in three sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*: "Strategic Challenges Analysis," "AQIP Category Feedback," and "Accreditation Issues Analysis." These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating institutional performance, surfacing critical issues or accreditation concerns, and assessing institutional performance. Ahead of these three areas, the team provides a "Reflective Introduction" followed closely by an "Executive Summary." The appraisal concludes with commentary on the overall quality of the report and advice on using the report. Each of these areas is overviewed below.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team has only the institution's *Systems Portfolio* to guide its analysis of the institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, the team's report may omit important strengths, particularly if discussion or documentation of these areas in the *Systems Portfolio* were presented minimally. Similarly, the team may point out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving widespread institutional attention. Indeed, it is possible that some areas recommended for potential improvement have since become strengths rather than opportunities through the institution's ongoing efforts. Recall that the overarching goal of the Systems Appraisal Team is to provide an institution with the best possible advice for ongoing improvement.

The various sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* can be described as follows:

**Reflective Introduction & Executive Summary:** In this first section of the *System's Appraisal Feedback Report*, the team provides a summative statement that reflects its broad understanding of the institution and the constituents served (Reflective Introduction), and also the team's overall judgment regarding the institution's current performance in relation to the nine AQIP Categories (Executive Summary). In the Executive Summary, the team considers such factors as: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback; and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that each AQIP

Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

**Strategic Challenges Analysis:** Strategic challenges are those most closely related to an institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Teams formulate judgments related to strategic challenges and accreditation issues (discussed below) through careful analysis of the Organizational Overview included in the institution's Systems Portfolio and through the team's own feedback provided for each AQIP Category. These collected findings offer a framework for future improvement of processes and systems.

**AQIP Category Feedback:** The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* addresses each AQIP Category by identifying and coding strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Through comments, which are keyed to the institution's Systems Portfolio, the team offers brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by AQIP Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is often considered the heart of the *Feedback Report*.

**Accreditation Issues Analysis:** Accreditation issues are areas where an institution may have not yet provided sufficient evidence that it meets the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. It is also possible that the evidence provided suggests to the team that the institution may have difficulties, whether at present or in the future, in satisfying the *Criteria*. As with strategic challenges, teams formulate judgments related to accreditation issues through close analysis of the entire Systems Portfolio, with particular attention given to the evidence that the institution provides for satisfying the various core components of the *Criteria*. For purposes of consistency, AQIP instructs appraisal teams to identify any accreditation issue as a strategic challenge as well.

**Quality of Report & Its Use:** As with any institutional report, the *Systems Portfolio* should work to enhance the integrity and credibility of the institution by celebrating successes while also stating honestly those opportunities for improvement. The *Systems Portfolio* should therefore be transformational, and it should provide external peer reviewers insight as to how such transformation may occur through processes of continuous improvement. The AQIP Categories and the Criteria for Accreditation serve as the overarching measures for the institution's current state, as well as its proposed future state. As such, it is imperative

that the *Portfolio* be fully developed, that it adhere to the prescribed format, and that it be thoroughly vetted for clarity and correctness. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution following this review, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

## Reflective Introduction and Executive Summary For Missouri Western State University

The following consensus statement is from the System Appraisal Team's review of the institution's *Systems Portfolio Overview* and its introductions to the nine AQIP Categories. The purpose of this reflective introduction is to highlight the team's broad understanding of the institution, its mission, and the constituents that it serves.

Missouri Western State University is an open enrollment institution with just under 6,000 students. It offers Associate, Baccalaureate, and Masters degree programs. MSWU appears to have taken into consideration opportunities from the prior reviews and acted on them, putting in place a variety of mechanisms to monitor and attain high levels of institutional effectiveness and performance.

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight **Missouri Western State University's** achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

1. Overall, MWSU has demonstrated a commitment to tracking student learning and making improvements to the processes that enable success. The University has provided evidence of a culture that is developing a faculty-driven process of continuous improvement regarding the assessment of student learning. It uses systematic processes for developing courses and programs and assessing/supporting student learning, and it is poised to achieve greater results by expanding its assessment abilities and by collecting and analyzing data to inform continuous improvement in helping students learn. The shared governance structure helps ensure that front-line faculty and top leadership can reasonably feel sure that each is hearing the other's observations and recommendations. There also appears to be a priority placed upon the student over political entrenchment and building silos.
2. MWSU has an active agenda of accomplishing other distinctive objectives which involve the community and generate revenue for the region. The Foundation, Alumni Association, and Development council are key constituents representing the voice of the community at large. There is strong support for events and efforts regarding the student experience, student success, and maintaining relationships with students beyond graduation. The University shared numerous examples that demonstrate a commitment to identifying and achieving other distinctive objectives, and to serving the region in a way that impacts the financial stability of surrounding communities. MWSU's opportunities

in this category include providing evidence and examples of systematized processes, identifying effective ways to evaluate processes, and identifying key performance indicators that can better inform leadership regarding overall effectiveness of efforts expended to achieve these objectives.

3. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good. This is evidenced through MWSU's creation of the incubator to promote local economic development, its claim of spending an average of 86 percent of its total expenditures on educational support, and the creation of multiple new academic programs in response to local market labor needs. There is a plan to revise the advising model based on results from the NSSE and evaluation of persistence data.
4. MWSU has provided evidence of a culture that values people; however, the portfolio did not reflect a commitment to intentional measurement (assessment) of needs. Shared governance and listening are important cultural traits; however, to truly value people, intentional efforts to assess their needs are necessary. There isn't an indication that employee retention is a problem; however, there may be opportunities for the University to better assess what does and does not motivate its employees and develop mission-appropriate processes to further strengthen existing programming. MWSU is poised to achieve greater results by collecting and analyzing data to inform continuous improvement in valuing people.
5. MWSU's governance structure and decision-making processes appear to encourage communication about leadership decisions as well as transparency in how and why decisions are made. Authority remains vertical, yet there are many opportunities for voices to be heard and evidence is provided that leadership is responsive to the needs of students and stakeholders. Efforts seem to be done on an irregular and ad hoc basis instead of in a systematic, coordinated, comprehensive manner. MWSU indicates several recent improvements in this category; however, the University does not discuss how systematic or comprehensive its processes or performance results are.
6. This narrative focused primarily on safety, capital investments, and technology but not as they relate directly to student learning. This highlights that while MWSU engages in a number of institutional support operations, it is unclear how it assesses its activities to determine if they are appropriate and/or effective, especially in the areas of student support services. While the use of student satisfaction surveys and student success data are important indicators of success in this area, additional data points (staff, faculty, external stakeholder input) might provide a clearer picture of the University's success in this area. Finally, one must wonder how the University is balancing its capital investment in recent years while enrollments have been declining as it is noticeable that the impact of revenue downturns is not mentioned within the portfolio, both in terms of tuition and state funding.
7. MWSU appears to be committed to performance-based assessment and it has shown that by its detailed and comprehensive planning, its multiple sources data collection and analysis and its assessment methods and the involving of internal and external stakeholders and constituents in their processes. At the same time there is a need for further clarity on the accuracy, reliability and efficient use of data collected within all institutional layers.

8. As a moderately-selective institution, MWSU appears to outperform its peers in most measures despite the lack of clarity between data provided, results and specific targets or benchmarks. There is an opportunity to indicate how needs and action plans are prioritized and to provide more clarity on whether the expectation of progress reports to the administrative divisions extend to the educational units.
9. The University provides several data points regarding success in its many partnerships, and should be commended on its growth in this particular area since the 2010 SAFR. The University is active in building relationships focused around its students (feeder schools, local organizations and businesses, and providers of support services); however, its activity in building internal relationships (cross-functional) and with providers of services to the University are less clear. MWSU has an opportunity to set measurable goals and to use resulting data from the regular assessment of progress toward those goals to inform its practice in Building Collaborative Relationships and to demonstrate that improvements are a direct result of data-informed efforts and initiatives. More clear demonstration of results from the partnership survey and how they were utilized to inform change would be desirable.

**Note: Strategic challenges and accreditation issues are discussed in detail in subsequent sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.**

### **Strategic Challenges For Missouri Western State University**

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the Systems Appraisal Team attempted to identify the broader issues that would seem to present the greatest challenges and opportunities for the institution in the coming years. These areas are ones that the institution should address as it seeks to become the institution it wants to be. From these the institution may discover its immediate priorities, as well as strategies for long-term performance improvement. These items may also serve as the basis for future activities and projects that satisfy other AQIP requirements. The team also considered whether any of these challenges put the institution at risk of not meeting the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. That portion of the team's work is presented later in this report.

Knowing that **Missouri Western State University** will discuss these strategic challenges, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified the following:

- MWSU demonstrated significant strength in Category 3, specifically in responding to the needs of student stakeholders with clear linkages between survey results and improved processes evident. Given this demonstrated ability to respond to student needs and valuing them as people and as learners, Category 4 was in stark contrast, and did not reflect that same passion. While the portfolio asserts that employees are viewed as “family” and as part of a “team,” the process and results narrative appeared less responsive to faculty and staff needs and did not evidence measurable goals or a systematic cycle of assessment.
- There is an opportunity to improve how MWSU addresses long-term strategic plans and obstacles. For example, it was noted that projections of its traditional student base is shrinking and that state funding is also comprising a smaller portion of institutional fiscal resources. In that environment, what strategies is MWSU employing to ensure the long-term fiscal integrity of the institution? In the short term, scholarships have been increased, but it is unclear the extent to which this is sustainable given the context provided. Furthermore, while MWSU demonstrates considerable responsiveness to addressing students’ needs, the responsiveness appears to be reactive, and executed on an as-needed, just-in time fashion. There is room for improving an integrated approach to responding to student needs into a more holistic, long-term, strategic approach where the improvements reflect an overall strategic direction and assessment of progress toward measurable goals through a plan that addresses the aforementioned contextual conditions rather than a narrow focus on immediate needs.
- MWSU has an opportunity to improve data selection for strategic decision-making and how those data are interpreted. The focus of many current measures appears to be on documenting outputs rather than outcomes (e.g., counting attendance at a community event rather than measuring the extent to which the event addresses a strategic goal). By setting goals, selecting measures of success toward those goals and using the resulting data to inform and refine its support services, the institution will be able to document improvements and shifting priorities over time. To that end, MWSU could also better define its (primary) comparison group for benchmarking. While it is understood that often peer groups are defined by the tool being used (those using NSSE, SSI, for example), it was unclear the extent to which MWSU desires to compare itself with other open-enrollment institutions versus more selective four-year colleges. Choosing a specific comparison group – functionally similar institutions or an aspirational group – will help better contextualize MWSU’s successes.

### **AQIP Category Feedback**

In the following section, the Systems Appraisal Team delineates institutional strengths along with opportunities for improvement within the nine AQIP Categories. As explained above, the



symbols used in this section are **SS** for outstanding strength, **S** for strength, **O** for opportunity for improvement, and **OO** for outstanding opportunity for improvement. The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the team members and deserves the institution's thoughtful consideration. Comments marked **SS** or **OO** may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

**AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn.** This category identifies the shared purpose of all higher education institutions and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. It focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet it also addresses how the entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 1.

Since WMSU is an open-enrollment institution, its focus appears to be on services and programs to aid in academic success. Its commitment to timely student graduation is evidenced through its "College Completion Team" (CCT), which regularly analyzes data related to degree completion and student satisfaction. Improvements include adjustments to the advising process, the Early Intervention process, tutoring services, an enhanced degree audit system plus a variety of enhancements in student services. Leadership utilizes triangulation to determine the course offerings (based on student input, historical enrollment data, and program sequencing requirements).

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**1P1, S.** Clearly articulated common learning objectives are determined by the Faculty Senate General Studies Committee, which ensures courses address General Studies learning objectives. The process includes all appropriate stakeholders and incorporates accreditation standards, advisory boards, the state approval process, and market research.

**1P2, S.** MWSU has well-designed and formalized processes in which specific program learning objectives are determined by faculty with feedback from advisory boards, employers, and program accrediting agencies. Student learning is assessed by specific programs at regular intervals, including annual program reports which indicate results for student learning assessment and program changes/improvements that have been made

based on the resultant data. Faculty hold primary responsibility for the assessment of student learning, with input from department chairs and deans.

**1P3, S.** MWSU designs new programs and courses through a multi-layered approval process that is based in market and student demand. Input from employers and advisory committees, disciplinary standards, and trends from professional societies drive decisions to change programs/courses; program faculty are responsible for implementing the changes. The process considers competing programs to ensure the viability of new offerings, and all curriculum proposals go through several layers of approvals.

**1P4, S.** MWSU has integrated processes which balance applied learning, student career needs, and the realities of the employment market. Students often participate in applied learning experiences, and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate School monitor course prerequisites, program reviews, and five-year comprehensive reviews. Student satisfaction inventory results and measures of student learning ensure that the institution's programming remains commensurate with the needs of learners and expectations of employers.

**1P5, S.** While the specifics are unclear, MWSU appears to determine the preparation required of students for curricula, programs, courses, and learning through a number of processes that focus on particular student needs. For competitive admission programs, admission criteria are determined by faculty and are based on discipline standards, student success data and input from advisory councils and/or employers.

**1P6, S.** The University has multiple mechanisms in place to communicate with both prospective and current students; course information is available via recruiting materials, the academic catalog, and the website. Admissions, Academic Advising, and the Registrar provide information regarding course and degree requirements, and students meet with advisors each semester

**1P7, S.** MWSU uses a variety of methods to help match students with academic interests, especially those with undeclared majors. These include counseling services (academic, personal, career, multicultural, and disability), career fairs, UNV101, faculty and academic advisors, and course placement. Most of the opportunities presented appear to be optional rather systematically incorporated into each student's experience, which could impact the success of the initiatives and student achievement.

**1P8, O.** While MWSU identifies underprepared students via multiple measures, it is unclear what efforts are made to address the issue beyond placement in developmental courses. It is unclear if/how developmental students are tracked after completion of courses, or how effective these programs are. The University has an opportunity to use data about underprepared students and to put in place intentional strategies for serving and retaining this population.

**1P9, S.** For first year students, MWSU addresses different learning styles through several means, including administering a learning styles assessment to students in UNV101 which helps them self-assess learning styles and obstacles; it is unclear if transfer students have similar opportunities. Faculty are encouraged to use multiple modalities in courses to accommodate various learning styles, and tutors are trained to recognize learning styles and adapt tutoring techniques to fit those styles.

**1P10, SS.** The University has established services for multiple student subgroups. Students are identified through self-identification, review of records, and assessments, and substantial efforts are evident for veteran students, students with disabilities, students of color, student athletes, and post-traditional students.

**1P11, SS.** MWSU has in place formalized, robust venues through which it defines, documents, and communicates expectations for effective teaching and learning. Student course evaluations, teaching innovations, and evidence of student success are components of each faculty member's annual review. MWSU should be commended for its particular focus and processes related to academic honesty.

**1P12, S.** MWSU has processes in place which provide for effective course delivery based on student demand and needs, feedback from accrediting bodies, transfer requirements and articulations, and business and industry needs. While there is no evidence provided that the online learning experience is equal to that in the classroom, student surveys indicate high satisfaction with and a growing preference for online course delivery. The University has mechanisms in place for dealing with the growth of online programs in a sustainable manner.

**1P13, S.** MWSU ensures curricular currency and effectiveness through regular, proactive assessment at the course, program, and institutional levels, the program review process (annual and five-year), program-specific accreditations, and feedback from advisory councils. The university has an opportunity to better document that the actual mechanisms used to ensure program currency and efficacy are continually revised.

**1P14, O.** While the University follows a regular curriculum and program review process, and the Missouri Department of Higher Education recommends review of low-performing programs, the actual criteria used in the decision to discontinue programs and courses is unclear. More emphasis seems to be placed on the mechanics of the process rather than the assessment and evaluation needed to make the decisions that lead to discontinuation.

**1P15, O.** While MWSU has mechanisms in place for determining student learning support needs, it has an opportunity to provide documentation that these efforts are systematic, intentional, consistently integrated, or aligned processes. It is also unclear how the support needs of faculty are addressed. The University might consider using college surveys, focus groups, meetings with faculty and student leaders, usage levels, and other institutional data through which to inform such a plan.

**1P16, O.** While MWSU offers a variety of co- and extra-curricular offerings for its students, it is unclear the extent to which these activities intentionally align with institutional goals. The University has an opportunity to enhance existing initiatives by systematically and more clearly aligning specific co-curricular activities with specific curricular learning objectives.

**1P17, S.** MWSU determines that students have met its learning and development objectives using multiple measures, including course completion and grades, program-level assessments, state examinations, licensure exam pass rates, and the ETS proficiency profile.

**1P18, S.** While MWSU's processes here are loosely defined, and it is not clear which bodies are responsible for developing targets, tools, and timelines for assessing student learning, the University's process for assessing student learning do include faculty, staff, administrators, and committees. Assessments are included in course syllabi, and are reviewed by departmental chairs; the undergraduate curriculum committee and the Graduate Council also review assessments of student learning. Results are compared with discipline standards, institutional standards and goals, peer institutions, and national results.

**1R1, S.** MWSU utilizes multiple well-regarded and nationally-normed instruments for measuring the effectiveness of its teaching and learning, including ETS, NSSE, major field exams, and portfolios. It also collects and analyzes data using institutional, program-specific and classroom-level measures that incorporate such information as completions, grade distributions, graduate surveys, licensure pass rates and developmental coursework performance.

**1R2, S.** Overall, despite being an open enrollment institution, MWSU reports higher scores on the ETS-PP than the national averages and their levels of students performing at the "non proficient" level has slightly improved in writing while remaining constant in reading and math. Student self-assessment (through NSSE and SSI) also appears to show that students are positive about instructional effectiveness and their college experiences.

**1R3, O.** Although the University Educational Testing Service Major Field Exam for mathematics indicates a higher than the national average score for two of the past three test years, MWSU has an opportunity to predetermine goals and acceptable measures on these outcomes rather than accepting real data points as sufficient in and of themselves. This is also a very limited view of program level assessment results; the presentation of only a single performance result (mathematics) leaves it unclear whether or not this is indicative of all units.

**1R4, O.** While MWSU reports that those completing the PTA program have licensure and job placement success, these are results for only a single program. It is unclear the extent to which the results presented in the portfolio are indicative of the whole, and it is not evident that the institution employs multiple measures to determine whether or not students have acquired the knowledge and skills they need.

**1R5, O.** While amount of Library traffic and the extent to which student tutoring is available and utilized are commendable, these limited results do not demonstrate the effectiveness of learning support services. MWSU has an opportunity to show how the support services impact student performance and success.

**1R6, S.** MWSU uses a considerable amount of comparable data in its assessments. It benchmarks ETS Proficiency Profile data which in academic year 2011 indicated that, in general, MWSU students generally perform at or above levels at peer institutions. Data regarding the University's completion rates for degrees and certificates and licensure exam pass rates would be additional helpful data points, and it is not clear what analysis MWSU has done to determine a comparable peer group.

**1I1, O.** While MWSU has made numerous improvements aimed at helping students learn, such as regular reviews/assessments of student learning and tracking data trends to provide enhanced context regarding student learning, the extent to which improvements

in processes are linked to demonstrable results in teaching and learning remains uncertain. It is unclear the extent to which the results of figure 1.14 are directly attributable to the improvements listed; the sudden and dramatic improvement of Fall 2013 to Fall 2014 retention rates is unprecedented and, more importantly, not shown to be something other than an anomaly. The University has an opportunity to further develop and/or articulate goals, use multiple measures to assess progress, and use resultant data to inform continuous improvement.

**1I2, S.** MWSU has demonstrated a process-rich and personnel-inclusive culture with regards to addressing student learning. The shared governance structure and collaborative committee processes provide the foundation for a culture of continuous improvement, and the portfolio provides evidence of a culture that stands ready to support specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance. Students report high levels of satisfaction with the academic culture and faculty appear to be on the front lines with regards to student instruction as well as program design and upkeep.

**AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.** This category addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of its mission. Depending on the institution's character, it examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 2.

Non-instructional initiatives have expanded, including the formation of the Missouri Western Arts Society, a planned conference on ethics in journalism, and the formation of a Centennial Committee to create a year-long series of events celebrating the University's Centennial. MWSU appears to have made specific progress through shared governance and committees with membership from across the institution to garner strategic and timely input from stakeholders and inform smooth, integrated operations. Initiatives are led by cross-functional teams of faculty, staff and administration; and include input from key stakeholders. There are specific processes for designing, operating, communicating expectations, and evaluating non-instructional processes.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**2P1, O.** While new initiatives are moved through committees and appropriate administration for approval, and while priorities must be aligned with the strategic plan, the institution has an opportunity to more clearly articulate the extent to which clear and consistent processes exist for the design of and operation of key non-instructional processes. While MWSU notes that it has

compliance to ensure fiscal responsibility and adherence to state/federal regulation, non-instructional processes appear to be governed on an ad hoc basis.

**2P2, S.** The University employs feedback from advisory and volunteer boards, academic advisory councils, the Community Alliance and the Missouri Western Foundation in determining its non-instructional objectives. Non-instructional objectives are ultimately determined by the Vice President for University Advancement, and may then be ‘championed’ by the appropriate unit director.

**2P3, S.** Processes for communicating expectations and accomplishments pertaining to non-instructional objectives are aligned, and include various communication media and formats such as electronic, print, billboards, websites, videos, annual reports, social media, media releases, events and meeting updates.

**2P4, S.** Surveys and group meetings with stakeholders inform yearly operating plans which are aligned with established non-instructional objectives and the institution’s strategic plan. In response to the opportunity identified in the last HLC review, an annual perception survey was implemented to ascertain stakeholder perceptions of the University’s direction. MSWU has established a healthy respect for gathering and using data to inform its direction pertaining to non-instructional objectives.

**2P5, O.** While MWSU provides forums for input on specific initiatives (new pool facility, master planning process) and there are a variety of division and department meetings, the University has an opportunity to develop *systematic processes* for triangulating, documenting, and evaluating the various data sources, thereby allowing for a more organized approach that will allow for better analysis and prioritization of expressed needs.

**2P6, S.** Processes incorporating faculty and staff information and needs are aligned and communicated on a regular basis at meetings including the President’s Cabinet, CCT, SALT, Dean’s Council, Athletics, Strategic Plan Steering committee, Faculty Senate and Staff Association. The Office of Public Relations and Marketing established a cross-campus marketing committee that includes members from departments across campus.

**2R1, S.** The University Advancement division collects data on event attendance; number of contacts initiated; dollars raised and distributed; corporate sponsorships and public perception. This data is analyzed at the unit level, committee level, and occasionally at the Presidential Cabinet level. Performance data shared in the portfolio suggest that MWSU is experiencing success in the performance of its non-instructional objectives.

**2R2, O.** MWSU has an opportunity to provide pre-established goals context which would demonstrate whether (if) attendance and monetary support (or revenue) is meeting and/or exceeding expectations, established goals, and minimum need.

**2R3, O.** It is unclear how well MWSU’s performance results in accomplishing other distinctive objectives compare generally with those of other institutions. Data collected and analyzed should be relevant, useful, and closely aligned with the purpose of the University’s established objectives and goals in this category.

**2R4, S.** The impressive accomplishments and data points listed by the institution indicate that the other distinctive objectives of the institution are being addressed and supported by the institution to a far greater degree than is typically found at most regional institutions. It is

evident that the institution embraces its role as a leader for the academic, economic, social and cultural needs of the region.

**2I1, S.** The Systems Portfolio provides evidence of recent improvements to facilities and programming related to other distinctive objectives. Perception survey results informed changes in many areas of including development of new communications methods to parents, strengthening of internal communications to meet faculty and staff needs, the development of new marketing messaging and updates to Missouri Western magazine. The University has responded to previous feedback and is proactively surveying stakeholders regarding communication plans.

**2I2, O.** The University has made noted improvements to facilities and programming related to other distinctive objectives. Additionally, the University has responded to previous feedback and is proactively surveying stakeholders regarding communication plans. Thus far, evaluation of programming is based primarily on attendance and participation rates so there may be opportunities to identify key performance indicators that provide more in depth feedback regarding these initiatives.

**AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs.** This category examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification; student and stakeholder requirements; analysis of student and stakeholder needs; relationship building with students and stakeholders; complaint collection, analysis, and resolution; determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 3.

MWSU identifies changing student needs through feedback received from a wide variety of national and in-house sources in order to support the University's strategic plan. These data, especially those related to retention, persistence, and completion, appear to be systematically administered, reviewed and acted upon. Programs are developed with input from stakeholder groups; formal assessments and informal meetings provide feedback.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**3P1, SS.** The University acted upon an opportunity from the 2010 SAFR to clarify specific assessment tools and uses of assessment data gathered. MWSU employs multiple methods for determining the needs of its students - from nationally normed and validated instruments (CSI, MYSA, SYSA, SSI, NSSE, etc.) to exit surveys, internal committee initiatives, and dialogues with pulse groups. These tools allow for benchmarking with peer institutions as well as drill-down data into student sub-groups.

**3P2, S.** Relationships with students begin with campus visit days and new student registration, and UNIV101 to acclimate students to the University. There are various clubs and organizations which further provide an environment for further relationship building. As mentioned in Category 1, academic advisors meet with students regularly to ensure academic velocity is maintained. Various offices such as the Division of Student Affairs, the Center for Student Involvement (CSI) and the Center for Multicultural Education (CME) provide robust programming through student clubs and organizations, multicultural exploration, sensitivity and competency.

**3P3, S.** Pulse groups, advisory councils, the perception survey, and governing entities provide important information regarding stakeholder needs. As needs are identified, responsibility for addressing those needs is delegated to appropriate divisions and departments. New services for veterans, enhanced student and parent communications, and the new science and technology incubator are resulting improvements gleaned through this feedback.

**3P4, S.** The institution has a robust set of activities and programs that build and cultivate relationships with stakeholders. Some of these activities include the annual reception for donors, the Convocation on Critical Issues, as well as credit and non-credit education opportunities that are extended to the community.

**3P5, S.** MWSU has in place formal (market research, surveys, the institutional strategic plan) and informal (stakeholder dialogues) mechanisms through which it gathers feedback regarding student and other stakeholder needs; this data enables the university to develop plans that are appropriate for and in alignment with overarching objectives. This is most clearly demonstrated by the development of a new BBA degree program in response to the needs of a local employer as well as work with a local military unit to develop a degree completion program.

**3P6, S.** While it is unclear how the feedback is analyzed, how resulting actions are communicated to stakeholders or how the feedback is correlated or used to inform future strategic objectives, since the last review NWSU has adopted complaint collection and resolution processes which are integrated into its daily institutional operations. This involves an online single source of concerns and complaints which can be accessed by any stakeholder; feedback is reviewed by the Assistant to the President. The University's food service provider also uses a web-based survey to identify both strengths as well as concerns with the dining program and staff.

**3R1, S.** MWSU utilizes multiple data sources to identify (changing) student needs, including multiple Noel Levitz surveys, NSSE, EBI, ETS. More focused data collection is done via "Pulse" groups.

**3R2, S.** The results of the various instruments used to measure satisfaction, such as the SSI, the MYSA and the SYSA, show that WMS's results are above national averages; MWSU continues to seek areas for improvement regardless (e.g., the redesign of its one-stop shop as a result of low scores on an SSI question). While the results of the MYSA and SYSA surveys are positive, no statistical analyses were performed to demonstrate whether the higher scores at MWSU are *statistically significant* or not.

**3R3a, S.** Improvements to address the needs of specific student groups are bearing fruit as evidenced by the improvement of academic performance of Greek students. Improvements to interaction events between university and community members (e.g., Western league for Excellence) also demonstrate areas of improvement.



**3R3b, O.** It will be important for MWSU to systematically measure the impact of these improvements in retention and satisfaction between a multitude of student groups over time to gain a concrete understanding of the impact of the improvements and initiatives that the University invests in. As well, while grade point averages were presented, no statistical analyses were performed to demonstrate whether differences between groups and/or over time are statistically significant or not.

**3R4, S.** Stakeholder satisfaction has increased as indicated by the Western League for Excellence banquet which changed to a reception, the PR and Marketing Annual Perception Research Survey as well as the Graduate Survey, indicating that the institution is moving in the right direction increasing constituent satisfaction.

**3R5, O.** Attendance at stakeholder events, increases in volunteerism, intentional engagement of multiple partners to secure the Kansas City Chiefs' summer training camp, and creation of the Walter Kronkite museum serve as examples of positive results in this category. However, the University has an opportunity to specify targets/goals, improve *how* the effectiveness of such events are measured (currently, measures are largely anecdotal), and systematically measure the impact of improvements over time to gain a concrete understanding of the impact of these improvements.

**3R6, S.** MWSU has done a commendable job of benchmarking its performance results for understanding *students'* needs with other institutions, and data from nationally-normed instruments suggest the institution is performing admirably in this regard. The institution has an opportunity to likewise benchmark its performance results for understanding *other stakeholders'* needs as well as students' needs.

**3I1, S.** The Systems Portfolio provides evidence that the institution has implemented several new improvements in understanding student and stakeholder needs, including additional online options for academic courses and programs, improved transfer student orientation, and other academic, administrative, and community programs.

**3I2a, S.** MWSU appears to take very seriously the voices of its *students*. Many of the improvements listed throughout the process and results section of this category directly cite data from students as being the impetus for changes. MWSU has a well-developed governance structure with a number of inter-related teams and boards; each solicits feedback from members to inform planning and programming processes. Changes to processes are then monitored with measurable results. While the University has made numerous improvements in this category, its processes for the regular assessment of its performance results for *stakeholders other than students* are neither systemic nor comprehensive.

**AQIP Category 4: Valuing People.** This category explores the institution's commitment to the development of its employees since the efforts of all faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis

of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 4.

MWSU implemented a number of new policies, procedures, and systems to address work processes and activity issues such as recruiting, hiring, onboarding and evaluating staff. MWSU appears to have in place a strong commitment to team-based engagement of personnel in improvement and decision-making. Cross-functional teams and collaborative initiatives contribute to organizational productivity, and greater employee satisfaction.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**4P1, S.** MWSU is to be commended for its efforts to ensure that the specific credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators are assessed in relationship to similar positions both internally and externally. Conducting market surveys every five years helps ensure university positions are held to current and competitive standards.

**4P2, S.** The University uses formal hiring processes that are in compliance with Equal Opportunity Employer standards and federal and state laws regarding recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees. All vacancies are reviewed to ensure need and the position description is reviewed to ensure accuracy. Hiring committees are convened, and presentations are open to broad constituents to ensure multiple voices in the hiring process. Depending on the nature of the hire, search committees may include community and/or student participation.

**4P3, S.** MWSU, as part of its commitment to attracting a diverse and qualified workforce, advertises extensively. The University complies with all federal and state laws and has well developed hiring guidelines. It also offers a typical suite of benefits, including wellness programs/screenings, tuition reduction, sick leave/holidays, and professional development opportunities.

**4P4, S.** MWSU requires a new employee orientation that includes an introduction to the University's vision and mission; the *Benefits Guide* which incorporates the mission, vision and values of the institution also provides this information. Beyond a Benefits Guide and informal peer/mentoring opportunities at each unit's discretion, there does not appear to be a consistent orientation/on-boarding process. This is surprising given the highly formal processes used to orient students. That said, new employees are oriented to the institution through an informal orientation and through departmental peers and mentors. University events and peer support are an avenue which a new hire may pursue to gain greater insight. In addition to reinforcing the mission statements as they appear in writing, the university is strategically identifying opportunities to act upon and demonstrate said statements.

**4P5, S.** MWSU anticipates turnover due to retirements and resignations, and evaluates its staffing needs strategically before reauthorizing positions. These are handled primarily by designated cabinet-level administrators who decide future action pertaining to needed personnel changes. Annual unit reports and five-year strategic planning processes allow the university to consider short and longer term needs. However, while the portfolio details the process used to

review the need for replacement of departing staff, it is unclear how the university plans for changes in personnel.

**4P6, O.** Since its last review, MWSU has created processes in which units are grouped into teams, which have regular joint meetings. While this approach can contribute to organizational effectiveness through shared communication, more formal approaches such as cross-training might prove more effective. It is also unclear how these activities improve employee satisfaction. Work processes appear to remain generally the purview of local leaders and administrators. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which overarching policies and process are systemically incorporated rather than handled on a unit-by-unit basis. Responsibility for improving work processes appears to generally be at individual employees' discretion.

**4P7, S.** MWSU demonstrates a clear commitment to ensuring ethical practices. Its policies in this regard are clear, and are strengthened through training during annual employee professional development days. Reports related to ethical issues are handled by either the Risk Manager or HR Director. MWSU has established standard policies and procedures regarding sexual harassment, use of human subjects, discrimination, and similar issues, which are published and distributed via its Policy Guide. Every year each employee signs a statement acknowledging the contents of the Policy Guide.

**4P8, S.** MWSU has demonstrated commitment to the assessment of employee needs and the deployment of needs-based professional development offering. Training needs are determined on an as-needed basis, some training required by law, some per a unit's or an individual's specific need. Data has been collected (but not yet reported) specifically pertaining to general training needs for broad swaths of employees. Of note is the inclusion of a specific inquiry in 2013-14 on the staff evaluation form regarding training needs which provided the opportunity for individuals closest to the work to make recommendations. Additionally, MWSU should be commended for its proactive 'active shooter' training, which indicates not only an institutional commitment to training, but to the safety of its students, faculty and staff.

**4P9, O.** The University provides funding for professional development and sabbaticals, which should be encouraged. Training activities are conducted through a variety of means, including conference, workshop and meeting attendance, internal training, and online videoconferencing, webinars, and other virtual training mechanisms. Funds are allocated for these professional development activities. However, MWSU has an opportunity to develop a systematic, longitudinal assessment plan for its professional development efforts to ensure that these efforts are, in fact, contributing to effectiveness and employee performance.

**4P10, S.** MWSU employs standard employee evaluation processes for staff evaluations. Faculty and staff are evaluated on an annual basis, with a standard method of self-evaluation, goal-setting, and supervisor feedback

**4P11, S.** The University extends formal awards for outstanding performance, and is currently working with a compensation consultant to ensure that its salary and benefits packages are competitive and fair. Retirees and employees receive free access to wellness facilities, and employees and their dependents receive tuition discounts. Reflecting the "family/team" approach, MWSU offers multiple venues for recognition of outstanding performance. Compensation is held to market trends via market surveys. Benefits are informed via a benefits committee to align faculty/staff needs with potential programs.

**4P12, O.** The portfolio cites listening and communication in meetings as the primary method of

determining key issues relating to staff motivation. While it ensures that voices are heard, it is unclear the extent to which the communication systems enabled by the shared governance model (which is a strength) specifically provide motivation for faculty and staff productivity and satisfaction. The University has an opportunity to develop a more structured and systematic procedure for collecting this information by developing and implementing *proactive* means for identifying key issues related to the motivation of its faculty, staff, and administrators in addition to utilizing listening as a key institutional strategy.

**4P13, O.** MWSU appears to have multiple data collection opportunities and processes in place to help ensure the health, safety and well-being of its faculty, staff, and students. However, MWSU has an opportunity to develop systematic measures of employee satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being. The portfolio does not provide intentionally-derived measures nor any measure of employee satisfaction. Although it is mentioned that the 2010 Student Satisfaction Inventory resulted in one question having lower satisfaction than the benchmark institutions, it would be valuable to present trend data for both the university and benchmark institutions as this would provide more context.

**4R1, O.** MWSU, while citing several indicators of valuing employees, does not demonstrate existence of strategic, longitudinal, systemic, intentional assessment or measurable results in this area. Benchmarking with neighboring schools regarding assessment in this area may provide a valuable starting point. Additionally, while there are several data collection points for specific faculty and staff issues, there do not appear to be any comprehensive faculty/staff satisfaction data collection efforts that provide broad feedback across institutional areas of interest. The portfolio cites collection of Clery Crime Statistics and participation numbers as its measures of valuing people but these are not appropriate indicators of valuing people. The University has an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive suite of tools to measure its performance in this area.

**4R2, O.** The results appear positive; however, without context regarding whether or not the data presented were within the objectives established it is difficult to determine whether the results are positive or not or whether the results demonstrate real improvements based on processes designed to address faculty/staff needs. While participation in listed programs show some recent improvement, participation counts only represent one dimension of measurable impact. It is unclear the extent to which these foster greater satisfaction or in any way improve one's work environment beyond assumed or anecdotal feedback.

**4R3, O.** The portfolio did not provide specific data related to employee productivity and effectiveness. By benchmarking with similar institutions and implementing a cohesive, systemic plan, the University can use resulting data to inform its continued efforts in this area. Data regarding benefits priorities and implementation of tobacco-free environment, while positive, do not demonstrate overall positive impact to productivity.

**4R4, O.** While NSSE/SSI survey results provide indirect evidence of faculty productivity (from student perspective, at least), it is unclear the extent to which measures of valuing people are comparable with peer institutions.

**4I1, O.** The University has incorporated a number of improvements, some in response to feedback from the previous systems portfolio. MWSU's improvements on valuing people are centered on its benefits program, which is laudable. However, it is unclear the extent to which other areas for valuing its employees are researched and acted upon, especially given the strong

communication avenues in place via its shared governance model.

**4I2, O.** The shared governance and committee approach to planning appears to serve the institution well as it continues to identify opportunities for improvement. From a broad perspective, the examples provided speak to the committee approach. However, it is a bit difficult to determine the relationship between the examples and valuing people. MWSU has an opportunity to develop and implement systematic, comprehensive processes that will yield direct measures and meaningful performance results for Valuing People. By developing and implementing a continuous quality improvement plan and cycle, the University will begin to see the fruits of its important work in this category.

**AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating.** This category addresses how the institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide planning, decision-making, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction-setting, use of data, analysis of results, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 5.

With regard to Leading and Communicating, MWSU has focused on three particular areas: teamwork, partnerships, and planning. The university employs a shared governance decision-making process that includes involvement from all sectors of the campus community. There are a number of communication processes that provide updates about progress and feedback. The university is working on encouraging, developing and strengthening leadership skills, and has created new initiatives to expand training and provide additional professional development opportunities are aiding in succession planning.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**5P1, S.** Missouri Western State's mission and values are defined and reviewed as part of the five-year strategic planning cycle and at regular meetings of campus leadership groups. Internal and external stakeholders participate in the review, including the Board of Regents, faculty and staff associations, and students.

**5P2, S.** MWSU's strategic plan is a collaborative, proactive tool through which institutional directions are determined and which attempts to integrate the University's leadership with community needs. A recently retired AQIP project, Communicating Quality, is an example of the institution's marked improvement in this area. Moreover, the mission, vision, and values are on display via a variety of media and at events.

**5P3, S.** MWS uses feedback from a variety of needs surveys, open forums, and committee meetings (e.g., NSSE, SSI, employer surveys, advisory committee feedback, and community impact surveys) to create set directions that meet the needs and expectations of students and

stakeholder groups. The University develops degree programs based on specific student requirements, and builds partnerships to respond to community needs.

**5P4, S.** New opportunities are discussed and vetted through the President's Cabinet. Ideas often flow in via various communication streams and decisions are made in light of academic policies, budget feasibility, and action-plan viability. Priority for new ideas may be influenced by campus climate survey results, changes in federal or state policies and expectations, and other regional and national needs. Moreover, there are periodic communication processes providing on-going updates about progress and feedback such as the Griff Gab, mass emails to the entire university, Missouri Western Magazine, Points of Pride, etc.

**5P5, S.** The University has a clearly defined decision-making model. Decisions are made through the shared governance process, which includes representatives from all sectors of the campus. Committees share reports and recommendations to the GAC and the President shares reports and recommendations with the Board. The President is responsible for decisions made with input from the Cabinet.

**5P6, S.** MWSU has an opportunity to more clearly articulate the process for how data, information, and performance results are used in decision making. And while there are many examples provided of how information was used, it is not clear how the actual process works. That said, MWSU uses multiple opportunities to gather, collect and analyze data used in the decision-making process to accomplish institutional goals and objectives. Institutional Research archives the data used by decision makers at various levels and then distributes updates regarding faculty information, IPEDS data, enrollment trends and graduation rates, retention rates, program-specific information, and personal impact survey results. The University is investing in two additional high-level positions for assessment and institutional effectiveness.

**5P7, S.** The University's shared governance structure enables vertical and cross-unit communication. Vertical integration occurs as decisions are made (per 5P1 – 5P6) and the various committees and cross-functional teams help ensure information about and between units occurs. Venues for communication involve leadership groups, SPSC meetings, publications, governance groups, print publications, forums, strategic plan web pages and various reports including the Annual Report on the Strategic Plan.

**5P8, S.** The President issues an annual update as to the progress towards goals of the strategic plan, as well as holding meetings for the campus community on important issues. Top administrators attend faculty senate and staff association meetings to share information as well as get feedback. Additionally, through the GoldLink system and e-mail, the institution makes available communication to its internal constituents regarding decisions and strategic directions.

**5P9, O.** The University offers a variety of ways in which faculty and staff may pursue personal and leadership development. Funds are available for development and there are many committees on which employees can serve and be part of the decision-making process. Although the University has articulated several opportunities that are available for developing leadership abilities, there does not appear to be a clearly articulated and systematic plan to develop, encourage, or strengthen leadership abilities.

**5P10, O.** The University has added several key positions to the leadership teams at the vice- and associate- levels, which ensure thorough training and understanding of the institutional mission, structure, and resources. While the University appears to have a succession plan in place, that plan was not articulated or referenced directly in the portfolio. It is also not clear how the

organization maintains its mission, etc., during a leadership succession. The portfolio does not provide information regarding succession planning beyond that for the president.

**5R1, S.** The institution's Perception Research Survey, site-based Google R analytics, and Personal Impact Survey are examples provided in the portfolio of multiple, systematic performance measures of Leading and Communicating that are collected and analyzed regularly.

**5R2, S.** Results from the Perception Research Survey indicate that MWSU's employees feel the institution is headed in a positive direction and have confidence in themselves and their peers to continue leading the institution in this regard. Follow through on results of other data collected such as Google Analytics and the Personal Impact Survey will be an important next step for the institution.

**5R3, S.** The University measures its performance on financial responsibility and efficiency through a performance-funding model for individual improvement as well as sustained excellence comparison to 47 peer institutions nationwide. Comparative information regarding leading and communicating is provided via state funding models and nationally normed surveys – both of which provide indirect measures of success, yet do provide evidence of overall success. With regards to the SSI, an opportunity exists to focus less on the overall satisfaction scores themselves but to compare the satisfaction/importance gap at the University with the gap at national universities. This would provide insight as to how well student expectations are being met rather than equating raw satisfaction levels.

**5I1, S.** The University has made substantive efforts at improvements in Leading and Communicating, including the initiation of AQIP action projects, especially regarding communication efforts. A greater emphasis on continuous, systematic measurement and refinement will ensure the University's ongoing growth in this area.

**5I2, O.** The University's governance structure and decision-making processes appear to encourage communication about leadership decisions as well as transparency in how and why decisions are made. Authority remains vertical, yet there are opportunities for voices to be heard and evidence is provided that leadership is responsive to the needs of students and stakeholders. Other than citing the University's transparent and accommodating atmosphere, the portfolio does not describe how its culture and infrastructure helps the institution select processes to improve or set targets for improved performance results.

**AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations.** This category addresses the variety of institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal

Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 6.

Improving institutional operations and increasing/managing resources are key goals in the current strategic plan. MWSU's processes to identify support service needs of students and stakeholders are *aligned* through a continuous flow of information received from and analyzed by numerous institutional committees, student organizations, functional work groups and their governing board. Cross-functional work groups address key student, administrative, and institutional support service needs. A fully integrated ERP aids in implementing support for institutional operations. Through AQIP Action Projects, MWSU is currently building an infrastructure to accommodate a growing population of international students and support for student degree completion.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**6P1, S.** MWSU appears to have a robust data collection system with multiple inputs (surveys, established student and employee groups, etc.), including feedback from the SGA, NSSE data, and a variety of surveys, to identify the support service needs of students and other key stakeholder groups.

**6P2, S.** Strategic planning, shared governance, surveys, and the annual reporting processes serve as the foundation for identifying and analyzing additional administrative support needs. Requests are vetted through a needs analysis to determine how needs can be best met and the impact of the decision is reviewed through the annual process.

**6P3, S.** While it is unclear how its initiatives are integrated in a cohesive plan with little indication regarding specific goals or progress toward goals, The University does employ a highly participative campus safety program and is supported by a University Police Department that works collaboratively with physical plant in collaboration with other departments. The portfolio demonstrates an institutional commitment to safety and security through its engagement, diligence in communication, and Emergency Management Committee, CASS initiative (behavioral assessment and intervention for students) and Griffon Alert system which includes text messaging, emails, PAs, alerts, etc.

**6P4, O.** MWSU is engaged in a number of activities which support institutional operations, but it is unclear how the University ensures that needs are being addressed as intended. Two examples offered in the portfolio suggest that Physical Plant has systematic efforts in place (institutional structure/leadership and communication efforts); however, the portfolio did not articulate specific, systematic *processes* through which the institution ensures that its student support and administrative support services are meeting the needs they are intended to meet.

**6P5, O.** The portfolio provided ample evidence that it makes available information pertaining to support *services* available to its stakeholders; however, the portfolio fails to answer the central question inherent in 6P5: How do you document your support *processes* to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation, and empowerment, and maximize operational efficiency?

**6R1, S.** MWSU utilizes a vast array of institutional measures, some nationally normed (NSSE, SSI, etc.) some necessarily local such as participation numbers, surveys, and analytics/reports.



**6R2, O.** The data presented do not include goals or benchmarks so there is little context by which to make informed judgments. The portfolio provided simple counts (head counts, application counts, attendance counts), but did not provide any evaluative data pertaining to the degree to which it performs its student services effectively. Given recent trends negatively impacting enrollment, MWSU appears to remain strong in how it supports its students, especially in the area of financial aid and money-awareness. It is unclear the extent to which the reduction in students served is negatively impacting operations or if current enrollment is considered a new normal and the peak years were the anomaly. For example, the data presented do not link with the student support services hence some of the results based on this information can be misleading and open to multiple interpretations. More detailed metrics should be utilized for meaningful results. Although it is important to track participation rates for debt management, more telling metrics would involve how these sessions influenced student debt management upon graduation.

**6R3, O.** Indicators such as facility improvements, IT infrastructure expansion, and Foundation funds raised were offered as examples of performance results for administrative support services; however, the evidence offered does not indicate continuous assessment of measures over time, but rather points of proof at this point in time. Furthermore, some of the measures cited such as physical plant improvements and related costs are indirect measures of the quality of administrative support services. Similarly, the annual accounting audit is neither a direct nor an adequate measure to assess the efficiency of fund utilization and how much each expense contributes to student enrolment and the overall the institutional improvement and growth. Finally, although scholarships awarded increased from fiscal year 2010 to fiscal year 2014 increased, during this time, the institution saw declining enrollments. It would be useful to present these measures within the context of pre-established objectives and benchmarks.

**6R4, S.** The University has in place a strong system, which utilizes information from a variety of sources in identifying and responding to the changing student needs; trend data are routinely used to determine where adjustments are needed

**6R5, O.** The University has benchmarked its performance results via the SSI, and is performing well compared to other higher educational institutions in the SSI. However, it should be noted that raw satisfaction scores are just one part of the SSI – the gap between “importance” and “satisfaction” meaning how well student expectations are met – is the real strength of the survey. The University has an opportunity to benchmark its other support services results – such as testing center performance, graduate placement rates, success and retention rates, etc. - with other institutions. Additionally, it is recommended that the University seek additional measuring tools and metrics to assess its regional and national performance on student support services.

**6I1, O.** MWSU has made many notable improvements related to supporting institutional operations, particularly with regard to technological advancement, public safety, expansion of online delivery, and the new completion initiative. While improvements to safety and distance learning are laudable, it is unclear the extent to which broader institutional operations, especially those that directly impact student learning have been improved. The institution has various systems and processes including hardware and software, however the improvements do not seem to be the direct result of those systems. That is, how have the interagency data management system or the relationship with the local police department improved the services provided to students and faculty, etc.? There is no information provided that speaks to the improvements that are a result of these initiatives. The University may benefit by tracking improvements based on

specific objectives that are aligned with the initiatives.

**6I2, S.** MWSU's shared governance structure helps ensure transparency and input from multiple sources, especially in regards to large capital investments. The strategic planning process and related activities are the foundation for supporting institutional operations. The formal planning processes and formal committee structure appear to support a culture of continuous improvement. It appears that effectiveness of processes is aligned with cost or participation type metrics so the university may benefit by identifying additional means of evaluating effectiveness. While the University's commitment to shared governance shows great potential to become one that embraces a cycle of continuous improvement in which goals are set, measures are taken, and refinements made based on resultant data, the portfolio did not evidence that such a cycle exists.

**AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness.** This category examines how the institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data both at the institutional and departmental/unit levels. It considers institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 7.

The University actively collects key data via NSSE, SST, ETS Major Field Tests and Proficiency Profile to determine institutional effectiveness and uses this information to influence improvements. The addition of an Associate Provost for Research and a Director of Assessment and Institutional Research may expand the use of data for institutional improvement. Instructional performance data is selected through a systematic and comprehensive cycle of strategic planning and reporting processes which includes input from academic program faculty, department chairs and deans.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**7P1, S.** MWSU uses data from multiple sources in a comprehensive and systematic manner to support instructional as well as non-instructional planning and improvement efforts. The faculty-selected data are standardized, collected and distributed as needed and they appear to be in alignment with both the planning process and internal and external compliance requirements.

**7P2, S.** The evidentiary statements indicate that the University utilizes multi-source data supporting its various programs and services in a system integrated in its the planning process, the strategic plan and subsequent improvement efforts.

**7P3, S.** Institutional needs are identified by academic units, prioritized by administrative units and data are available and accessible via electronic media (ERP) to various boards, committees etc for evaluation and decision making.

**7P4, O.** Although MWSU complies with external reporting efforts such as IPEDS, accreditation

requirements and legislative requests, it utilizes indirect data sources which often lack adequate detail, and a systematic and comprehensive approach to measure institutional effectiveness.

**7P5, O.** Clearly the University utilizes a robust set of comparative data. However, it is not clear what the criteria and methods for selecting the sources are. This ambiguity is highlighted by the continually varying set of comparative peers MWSU has chosen to use for different categories throughout the portfolio.

**7P6, S.** MWSU shares annual reports utilizing a report template requiring data input and analysis from all units on departmental activities which are linked (aligned) to institutional goals, annual reports are aggregated and reviewed by all levels of the organization to determine the next steps to improve performance.

**7P7, S.** There is a system in place for data collection, process, analysis etc. MWSU may benefit from ensuring there is adequate clarity on data accuracy and reliability at each level.

**7R1, S.** MWSU utilizes a variety of data and measures to gauge their performance and effectiveness on information and knowledge management.

**7R2, S.** While MWSU should be more clear as to whether the evaluation of its processes are ongoing and systematic, the University appears to be using various measurements and data in an effective manner to gauge performance and take corrective action as needed.

**7R3, O.** The institutional data provided appear inadequate and/or irrelevant to fully respond to the question asked.

**7I1, O.** MWSU claims that many of the recent improvements in this category have made a difference but there is no evidence to support this. There is no discussion of how systematic or comprehensive the processes are or what performance results would provide evidence for this statement.

**7I2, S.** The University involves various committees, boards and stakeholders to address and discuss performance issues as well as provide solutions to improve effectiveness and performance.

**AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement.** This category examines the institution's planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping to achieve the institution's mission and vision. It examines coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 8.

The key planning processes appear well *integrated* into all aspects of the institution and incorporate input from stakeholders during the strategic planning process. The unique

mission and clearly-articulated values of MWSU appear to be closely aligned its AQIP Action Projects. The current strategic plan suggests that a conscious effort was made to *integrate* institutional priorities with regional, state, and national initiatives (e.g. reverse transfer, retention, graduation, recruit-back initiatives) and accreditation standards.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**8P1, S** MWSU uses its strategic plan as its main planning process, which is on a 5-yr reporting cycle and involves numerous departments, stakeholders and constituents. It appears the strategic planning process to be in alignment with the institutional mission and goals. However, there is need for clarity on how the institutional processes promote continuous alignment and improvement to all institutional units and layers involved in the process.

**8P2, S.** While there is a lack of clarity for the existence of a systematic and comprehensive process for identifying strategies based on evaluation results, the institutional strategic plan does include short and long-term strategies incorporating data from multiple sources, tools and methods.

**8P3, SS.** Action plans are developed in response to stakeholder input, aligned with the strategic planning process. Plans are developed over a span of time, with an ordered process of open discussion, followed by the development of short- and long-term goals and finally the creation of the policies to achieve those goals. Numerous stakeholders and other constituents in conjunction with Administration are involved in the process of determining short and long-term strategies utilizing the 5-yr reporting reviews as the main mechanism to do so.

**8P4, S.** MWSU has a variety of both internal and external mechanisms to ensure coordination and alignment of planning processes, organizational strategies and action plans at all institutional levels.

**8P5, O.** While the University utilizes an inclusive, interactive and iterative process to identify issues, define objectives, select measures and set performance goals as part of their strategic plan, there is a need for clarity on defining and prioritizing objectives, selecting measures and setting performance targets.

**8P6, S.** MWSU draws funding from various sources such as the State, student tuition and the University Foundation which are incorporated in their strategic planning and require fiscal responsibility reflected and aligned with goals and objectives. Any new proposed programs require the submission of an estimate of all resources –including human- and possible impact on other programs to determine whether potential savings can be had from reorganizing or downsizing.

**8P7, S.** The University employs a full time risk manager who collects, process, and analyzes data from various sources, incorporating input from numerous internal and external stakeholders in the planning processes to assess and address risk. MWSU could further benefit by using the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) risk assessment toolkit.

[http://www.nacubo.org/Business\\_and\\_Policy\\_Areas/Accounting/Accounting\\_Topics/Risk\\_Assessment.html](http://www.nacubo.org/Business_and_Policy_Areas/Accounting/Accounting_Topics/Risk_Assessment.html)

**8P8, S.** The current institutional strategic plan places high importance on funding professional

development and employee training using as its main tools staff development day and the faculty luncheon.

**8R1, S.** MWSU utilizes a variety of measures from internal and external sources to gauge their effectiveness such as strategic plan progress reports, action progress reports, external audits, community impact reports, state assessment performance indicators and accreditations.

**8R2, O.** The wealth and variety of results presented do not provide observable results tied to benchmarks, targets or specific goals/objectives. Further it is unclear on what are the reasons on which fluctuations in performance can be attributed.

**8R3, O.** There is an absence of a direct link between goals to results creating a need for further clarity and specificity of targets and results based on actions taken.

**8R4, O.** The portfolio states that SPSC regularly looks at internal and external performance measures to determine progress toward strategic goals such as safety, support services, retention and graduation rates; however, that data is not presented, nor does the portfolio offer dialogue or portrayal regarding how these data points compare with other higher education institutions.

**8R5, O.** Other than ongoing accreditations no data or other evidence is presented to support the effectiveness of continuous improvement.

**8I1, O.** The University has overall benefited from various systemic and systematic improvements in many areas and departments however there is room for improvement in identifying more direct measures and setting attainable targets in the planning process which can be directly associated with improving institutional effectiveness.

**8I2, S.** The University's culture is inclusive, and its infrastructure allows for an iterative planning continuous improvement process and a strategic plan conscientious of stakeholder needs despite indirect linkages between goals to specific strategies.

**AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships.** This category examines the institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution accomplishing its mission. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, and building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Missouri Western State University** for Category 9.

One of MWSU's stated objectives is developing and maintaining both internal and external relationships for student benefit. The University seeks opportunities to build collaborative relationships with educational organizations, employers, service providers and materials and supply providers using integrated processes and a number of measures for evaluating partnership effectiveness. MWSU develops collaborative relationships with academic partners through articulation agreements, joint degree and dual credit programs.

**(Item, S/O. Comment)**

**9P1, S.** The University has defined well-established processes for creating and building relationships with educational organizations, which are integrated throughout the institution. The process involves a number of internal and external constituents such as administrators, faculty, staff, regional school administrators, counselors, and transfer coordinators to assess and respond to student needs adhering to the university's vision, mission and values.

**9P2, S.** The University has processes involving administrators, faculty and staff that actively partner with regional educational institutions, workforce development organizations, economic development councils, private and public agencies, and businesses to identify regional needs, opportunities, and goals. Prioritization of the university's actions depends upon the level of need, available/potential resources, and appropriateness to the institutional vision, mission and values.

**9P3, S.** MWSU has in place vetting processes for student needs identification and bid processes which assist in prioritizing university relationships based on those needs in alignment with strategic initiatives and availability of resources. In some instances, the services themselves, such as ARAMARK, survey the students themselves to proactively identify issues.

**9P4, O.** While MWSU follows established purchasing guidelines in creating and operationalizing transactions with external organizations that supply materials and services, it has an opportunity to establish or articulate how it creates, prioritizes, and builds relationships with the organizations that supply materials and services.

**9P5, S.** One of the institutional strategic plan goals is the preparation of its graduates for careers, graduate studies and life opportunities. This is accomplished with the involvement of university administrators, faculty and staff, business people, business clusters and advisory council members who identify immediate needs, regional trends and resources.

**9P6, S.** The University uses positive student/organization satisfaction surveys, increased enrollment, increased and/or repeat business, increased financial support from businesses, student feedback on applied learning experiences, and decreased complaints to determine whether partnership relationships meet the varying needs of those involved. Additionally, the University participates in the Higher Education Partnership Satisfaction Survey to measure the level of satisfaction of various institutional partners.

**9P7, S.** The University's mature governance/committee structure includes institution-wide bodies which facilitate open communication and relationship-building. Orientation, mentoring, and many communication avenues enhance the process. A more clearly defined and articulated process would improve creating, building, communicating those efforts.

**9R1, S.** While the portfolio did not present measures for internal relationships presented, the University uses a variety of measures to build collaborative relationships such as feeder institutions/organizations, receiving institutions/organizations, employers, suppliers of student services, the general community and educational associations and consortia partners.

**9R2, O.** The University has a number of measures in place that indicate performance results; however, it may benefit from more specific analysis as well as performing longitudinal analysis of these measures in order to "close the loop" and demonstrate that there is continuous improvement. For example, why is the number of graduates applying to health professions schools reported as a sum of the five year period 2009-2013 yet for the number of completed

internships, the institution only reports on 2013 results? This inconsistency makes it difficult to determine what the actual performance results for the review period are. It is unclear how the results provided assess the performance of the partnership. Providing comparisons to previous performance data sets in these categories would further inform the institution regarding ongoing performance.

**9R3, SS.** In response to an opportunity noted in the 2010 SAFR, MWSU collaborated with researchers at Eastern Arizona University to proactively seek benchmarking data for its results in this category. There are several AQIP institutions that have supported one another in this way; such collaborations are a beneficial place to gather benchmarking data for partnership-related endeavors.

**9I1, O.** The University implemented/participated in several new initiatives, including the Missouri Reverse Transfer Initiative, the Air National Guard’s Airlift Wing, and the Brazil Scientific Monthly Program. The improvements made appear to be ad-hoc and reactionary rather than integrated into strategic thinking. As such, the institution has an opportunity to articulate and adhere to clear, systematic, and comprehensive processes and to assess the health of its relationships regularly.

**9I2, O.** MWSU’s description of how culture and infrastructure assist in selecting specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Building Collaborative Relationships is unclear.

**Accreditation Evidence Missouri Western State University**

The following section identifies any areas in the judgment of the Systems Appraisal Team where the institution either has not provided sufficient evidence that it currently meets the Commission’s Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components, or that it may face difficulty in meeting the Criteria and Core Components in the future. Identification of any such deficiencies as part of the Systems Appraisal process affords the institution the opportunity to remedy the problem prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Criterion 1: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	1A	1B	1C	1D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 2: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X		X
Adequate but could be				X	

improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 3: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X		
Adequate but could be improved.				X	X
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 4: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	4A	4B	4C		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X		
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 5: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	5A	5B	5C	5D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X		X		
Adequate but could be improved.		X		X	
Unclear or incomplete.					

**1A**

The mission and vision are promulgated throughout all levels of the institution and academic programs and student services are consistent with the mission. The student code of conduct is built on stated values, and the SGA's mission incorporates these values as well.

**1B**

Missouri Western's vision, mission and values are clearly articulated through multiple public documents, the University's website, the strategic plan, retention plan, marketing plan, student handbook, university catalog, admissions materials and framed posters throughout the University's divisions, buildings, and major meeting rooms.

**1C**

The University incorporates diversity in its values and has a broad and diverse group of student organizations. Curricular and co-curricular activities are developed that incorporate diversity issues. In particular, the Griffin Edge incorporates diversity. Additionally, the Center for Multicultural Education (CME) mission incorporates a focus on diversity.

**1D**

Missouri Western has worked to support the public good and its mission embodies that commitment. Public service is a core element of Missouri Western's mission. Missouri Western engages with its external constituencies and maintains a number of partnerships with community



and regional organizations to promote economic development, cultural outreach and workforce development.

## **2A**

The University has in place policies and procedures published in the Policy Guide and on the website including sexual harassment, approval for research on human subject, discrimination, employee grievance, computing, copyright, employment, promotion and tenure, prohibited and political activities, safety, release of employee information, whistleblower policies, and a triennial NCAA audit.

## **2B**

The University makes public information regarding programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation through printed documents including the print and online catalog. Sources for information include the Office of Admissions, Office of Financial Aid, and the College Completion Team.

## **2C**

The institution is a “stand alone” entity, with the President reporting directly to the Board of Governors, and is not part of a larger system, other than the State itself. Governing board responsibilities are outlined in the bylaws and policy handbook and there are processes/policies in place to clearly differentiate the roles of the Board versus the roles of individuals within the university, including the faculty.

## **2D**

The University Policy Guide outlines expectations for academic freedom and responsibility. The portfolio does not describe how these expectations are integrated into daily operations

## **2E**

The University has a long-standing policy addressing academic honesty and many courses address the ethical use of information. Missouri Western has clear policies regarding expectations of academic quality and behavior of both faculty and students and policies govern the required components of every syllabus.

## **3A**

The academic programs offered at Missouri Western are appropriate to be offered at a four-year institution of higher education. Missouri Western State University offers bachelor’s degree programs, associate degree programs, and a few certificate programs. Master’s degree programs and graduate certificate programs are also offered by the university. Many programs have attained and maintained program accreditation through professional accreditation agencies. Advisory boards, employers and alumni provide feedback regarding programs, helping to ensure that offerings are appropriate.

## **3B**

Faculty are responsible for developing and evaluating general education outcomes and offerings. Undergraduate catalog states that general education consists of a common core of curriculum offerings necessary to equip students for successful and fulfilled lives as educated and active citizens. The general education program is also in alignment with the stated mission and this

alignment, along with the specific outcomes, are described in the undergraduate catalog. The faculty adhere to a specific framework for general education

### **3C**

All faculty and staff meet the credential and position requirements established through the C-3 classification and compensation process. No one is hired without meeting the position requirements, passing a background check and participating in a tuberculosis screening. Any non-resident alien applicant must provide documentation of the ability to work in the United States.

### **3D**

The university provides numerous student support services and faculty support services aimed to enhance learning and teaching opportunities. All students are provided academic advising services. Additionally, students are evaluated to determine appropriate academic placement. The Student Handbook outlines standards related to effective use of research and information resources. However, although there is a fair amount of evidence in the portfolio that the university provides support for student learning, there is room for improving how student needs are addressed systematically, consistently, and in an aligned and integrated manner rather than in just a reactionary manner.

### **3E**

Academic Affairs works with Student Affairs to provide broad student offerings designed to enhance the classroom experience. The university cites that applied learning affords students the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge that prepare them for the future. Although the portfolio indicates that employers verify the effectiveness of applied learning, there do not appear to be direct measures documenting success in this area.

### **4A**

The university manages the academic integrity of programs through regular program reviews, transfer credit evaluation, prerequisite needs, academic rigor, and faculty qualifications. The university adheres to the Credit Transfer Guidelines for Student Transfer and Articulation Among MO Colleges and Universities.

### **4B**

Exit exams or other assessments measuring discipline-specific knowledge are required prior to graduation. Each program produces an annual report summarizing assessment of student learning and noting actions that have been taken or are planned to improve student outcomes. The university uses internal and external assessments for evaluating student learning in each program every five years, and results are used to guide curricular changes to enhance student learning.

### **4C**

The university actively works to influence persistence and retention. Assessments are used to impact retention. The CCT Second Year to Graduation Subcommittee reviews persistence from 2nd to 3rd year as well as 3rd year to graduation. They examine data from both “persisters” and “non-persisters” to make recommendations for programs such as “Sophomore Jump,” which enables second year students to stay engaged with the University and persist. They also track students through to graduation. The First Year Experience Subcommittee examines the profiles

of students who persist from their first fall to the second fall and makes recommendations on enhancements to programs

### **5A**

While cost-containment is practiced as a matter of good stewardship, the University's SPC has directed that the measures taken not impact MWSU's educational mission. Missouri Western has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense. The university is heavily dependent upon tuition revenue and state appropriations; as such, it strives to identify alternative opportunities for generating revenue. The budget is aligned with the strategic planning process allowing for ongoing review of fiscal health.

### **5B**

Missouri Western uses a shared governance decision-making process with representation from all sectors of the campus community. Faculty and staff involvement in strategic planning and AQIP Action Projects helps develop institutional perspectives and create opportunities for leadership. However, while the University has articulated several opportunities that are available for developing leadership abilities, there does not appear to be a clearly articulated and systematic plan to develop, encourage, or strengthen leadership abilities.

### **5C**

The university engages in systematic and integrated planning through the annual strategic planning process, which is aligned with the budget planning process. MWS uses the implementation of its strategic plan and its shared governance process to set directions in alignment with its mission and values. The University uses a wide variety of data in its decision-making (e.g., financial data, enrollment trends, IPEDS data) which are collected and distributed by IR via online methods, institutional fact sheets, and reports. These data are then used to determine directions in the decision-making process.

### **5D**

The University actively seeks opportunities to evaluate performance and uses internal and external data sources in this endeavor. Strategic planning processes incorporate annual reviews/reports which provide documentation concerning departmental progress toward stated outcomes. Information learned from annual evaluation processes informs future planning and goal setting. However while it is clear the institution does work to improve its performance based on the specific examples given from individual units, it is not clear how that is systematically implemented throughout the organization. Evidence provided often relies on indirect data sources which lack adequate detail and specific relation to defined metrics measure institutional effectiveness.

## **Quality of Systems Portfolio For Missouri Western State University**

The portfolio would benefit from more clear examples of the data used in decision making. Setting up a URL where sample documents such as survey results, analyses, and committee recommendations could be pooled and referenced in the portfolio for the review committee to see would help illustrate what types of data are being utilized without sacrificing narrative space.

The portfolio would also benefit from more direct lines of evidence. That is, results sections should reference the specific processes that are measured and the improvement section should reference specific processes that were improved due to given results. It is difficult for the review committee to designate strengths when the linkages between process, result, and improvement are indirect or non-existent.

### **Using the Feedback Report**

The AQIP Systems Appraisal process is intended to initiate action for institutional improvement. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution, the Commission expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of this report may include: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned? How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration, and integrity.

The Commission's goal is to help an institution clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities in ways that will make a difference in institutional performance.