February 11, 2010

Duane M. Dunn
President
Seward County Community College/Area Technical School
PO Box 1137; 1801 N. Kansas
Liberal, KS 67905-1137

Dear President Dunn:

Enclosed is a copy of Seward County Community College/Area Technical School's *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. It begins with a concise Executive Summary, intended for those general readers that do not require a high level of detail. Your Systems Appraisal Team of quality experts provided extensive detail in the full report by identifying nine distinct groups of what they view as your institution's *strengths* and *opportunities for improvement*, one group for each of the nine AQIP Categories. We are also emailing your institution's AQIP Liaison a copy of this full *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and enclosures.

To receive maximum benefit from your Systems Appraisal, you and your colleagues should plan to invest substantial time in discussing it, considering the team's observations and advice, and identifying which actions will best advance your institution. The enclosed *After Your Appraisal* details what lies ahead and how to use your Feedback Report most effectively, and explains when and how to register for your next Strategy Forum.

To comply with federal requirements, we need the CEO of the institution formally to acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and to provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Please read the enclosed *After Your Appraisal* suggestions *before* you decide how to respond. Limit your acknowledgement and comments to a maximum of two typewritten pages, and understand that your response will become part of your institution's permanent HLC file, to be shared with future peer reviewers who review your institution (including the next Systems Appraisal team, the next Quality Checkup visit team, and the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation panel). Email your response to AQIP@hlcommission.org; call me or Mary Green (at 800-621-7440 x130) if you have any questions about it.

We know you will gain real value from the Systems Appraisal Feedback and the activities it will stimulate within your institution, and we are proud to be working with you as you continue along the never-ending path to improvement.

Sincerely,
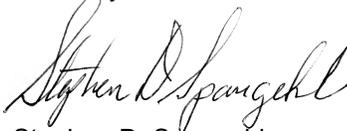
Stephen D. Spangehl
Vice President

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE/ AREA TECHNICAL SCHOOL

February 9, 2010

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Academic
Quality Improvement
Program

The Higher Learning Commission NCA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR SCCC/ATS

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight the achievements of **Seward County Community College/Area Technical School (SCCC/ATS)** and to identify challenges yet to be met.

Category 1 – Helping Students Learn: SCCC/ATS has built a good foundation in the development of its student learning and development outcomes, related departmental outcomes, and teaching and learning approaches. It also emphasizes faculty involvement and empowerment with its quality processes and initiatives. SCCC/ATS has begun to develop a comprehensive assessment program to determine how students are meeting the outcomes and how to use data to make improvements in student learning. The institution is committed to the effort and acknowledges its lack of formalized systematic approaches to assessing and improving student learning in multiple areas. The institution is aware of the challenges ahead of reviewing processes as a result of the merger. As part of the merger process review, it could be beneficial to examine ways to formalize evaluative processes for all student learning activities.

Category 2 – Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives: SCCC/ATS has undertaken measures to implement inclusive processes to move further into the AQIP paradigm. Its communication processes appear to be open and transparent—encouraging innovation and focusing on learners. SCCC/ATS has a number of mechanisms to gather feedback from various constituent groups and plans to expand its program review processes. Articulating how these decisions are made can help create a common level of understanding and a more effective response system. As it continues to implement systematic data-driven approaches, SCCC/ATS might consider establishing benchmarks, using comparative results, and setting targets for improvement.

Category 3 – Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs: SCCC/ATS has taken initial steps in the use of data (e.g. Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey) to inform decisions. However, it has yet to implement a comprehensive and systematic data-driven approach for collecting and analyzing information relative to the needs of its students and other stakeholders. Its new initiatives (e.g. Bold Steps, CCSSE Survey participation, etc.) are strong indicators of the institution's commitment to pursue

continuous improvement. These new efforts show potential to improve the institution and advance its continuous improvement efforts.

Category 4 – Valuing People: SCCC/ATS has multiple institutional processes to recruit and retain employees. It offers benefits, rewards for grant writing, and opportunities for opinions to be heard and information to be communicated through multiple committees. However, as presented, there are currently no measures to evaluate the processes or formal evaluations of employee satisfaction and recruitment. Due to the recent merger, it may be particularly important to monitor the satisfaction of employees in terms of productivity and retention. Developing measures and benchmarks also may allow for better strategic planning and implementation of the current strategic plan.

Category 5 – Leading and Communicating: SCCC/ATS' revised mission, vision and values, and strategic planning process have become direction-setting tools for leadership and communication. Its new communications action project holds potential for significant process improvement in one communication area. However, SCCC/ATS does not yet regularly collect and analyze measures for leading and communicating processes; nor does it collect data to compare its performance with that of other institutions. Although many opportunities for improvement exist in this area, the institution has taken initial steps that could lead to effective systematic processes and institutional improvements as they become more comprehensive and data informed.

Category 6 – Supporting Institutional Operations: SCCC/ATS uses a range of direct and indirect measures to identify and document the support service needs of its students. However, it is still in the early stages of developing a systematic, data-informed approach to increase its effectiveness in this area. Especially with the changing demographics of the student population, taking time to critically reflect on appropriate measures and means to evaluate and institute a more comprehensive plan for data gathering, assessment, and utilization of findings would be beneficial for the institution.

Category 7 – Measuring Effectiveness: SCCC/ATS generates a significant amount of data and uses a number of software programs that can facilitate the gathering and dissemination of information. However, there is a lack of a selection of performance targets process, identified targets, and comparative and performance results. Identifying, implementing, and assessing performance measures may help with effective decision

making and long-term planning. It may be beneficial for future planning and development to assure that each piece is reviewed in terms of how well it will fit into a comprehensive assessment of the institution's programs and services.

Category 8 – Planning Continuous Improvement: SCCC/ATS has begun to develop a culture of continuous improvement through the involvement of committees and other stakeholders. Defining targets for performance, utilizing comparison data, and tracking performance may help reinforce and build upon that culture. These efforts will likely be advanced and supported as the recently formalized and established Research and Assessment Office is woven into the institutional fabric. The college may benefit from additional attention to longitudinal tracking of performance goals and strategic measures.

Category 9 – Building Collaborative Relationships: SCCC/ATS maintains a number of excellent relationships in the community and with other institutions. The process to establish performance targets for measuring effectiveness is informal and unstructured. As the college progresses in developing a culture of continuous improvement, assessment of this area can contribute to the information base used to measure institutional effectiveness and foster the college's ability to be strategic in its actions.

Accreditation issues and Strategic challenges for **SCCC/ATS** are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

ELEMENTS OF SCCC/ATS's FEEDBACK REPORT

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

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

Executive Summary: Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

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

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

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institution's systems and processes under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the

Criteria and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

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

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

Components for Effective Data Analysis: The portfolio demonstrates that SCCC/ATS collects some data and plans to collect more. However, defined measures, comparative data, and process analysis are often missing from the portfolio. These are important components for quality improvement, as are identifying trends and targets—informed through benchmarks with other institutions. A more formal and comprehensive process can help SCCC/ATS make better decisions and result in institutional improvement.

Direct and Indirect Measures: SCCC/ATS has an opportunity to strengthen its quality improvement efforts through greater emphasis on direct measures. The institution relies heavily on survey data to understand student and other stakeholder needs. Achieving a balance between direct and indirect measures will help SCCC/ATS strengthen its ability to make data-informed decisions leading to quality improvements.

Sustainability and Succession: As SCCC/ATS continues to change and adapt, employing techniques for sustainability of continuous improvement efforts can help ensure greater continuity. Developing a formal succession planning process and moving towards sustainable funding sources beyond grants could position SCCC/ATS to improve institutional effectiveness.

Leading and Communicating: The portfolio reports little systematic data collection and analysis on leading and communicating. Measuring the effectiveness of leadership and communication could lead to improved institutional effectiveness.

Needs Assessment and Planning: As a result of the merger, SCCC/ATS remains challenged by the need to focus strategic initiatives on the technical, as well as the academic, and consider external impacts on the programs and the budget. Within the planning process, identification of the needs of the large first-generation and Hispanic student populations are likely to inform and improve the institution. Strategic planning initiatives, along with data gathering and accountability measures and appropriate action items, can help position the institution for the future.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

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

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

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

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

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

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

Note: OVI refers to the Introduction section of the Overview.

Item   Critical Characteristic

OVIa   SCCC and Southwest Kansas Area Technical School merged in July 2008 as a result of legislative action directing technical schools to merge with a degree-granting institution. This resulted in expanded opportunities for career and technical education programs.

OVIb   SCCC/ATS is a public comprehensive two-year technical college located in Liberal, Kansas, in the extreme southwestern corner of the state. The main campus and 10 outreach centers serve a seven-county area in Kansas and draws students from nine nearby counties in Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado.

OVIc   The percentage of Seward County's population of Hispanic or Latino origin has grown to 51.8% resulting in the county achieving majority Hispanic status (the first county in Kansas).

OVId   From 2000 to 2008, students identified as racial/ethnic minorities (REM) increased from 19% to 35%. In fall 2008, 54% of the new freshman students were identified as REM, and 83% of the REM students were Hispanic.

OV1a   SCCC/ATS offers multiple degree programs and continuing education opportunities in many forms, including dual credit offerings, non-credit instructional programs through the Business and Industry office, and online classes through interactive television, online, video conferencing, and TELENET 2.

OV1b   SCCC/ATS offers 42 for-credit instructional programs through five divisions. Non-credit instructional programs are delivered through the Business and Industry office and the University of Kansas' Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

OV1c   SCCC/ATS has defined nine student learning outcomes supported through five broad instructional areas that advance those outcomes, its mission and its philosophy.

OV3a   SCCC/ATS has well-defined short- and long-term expectations for students and other stakeholders.

OV3b   SCCC/ATS has identified four educational institutions as primary competitors within their region. They include a state university and three community colleges.

OV4a   As a result of the 2008 merger, SCCC/ATS has 339 employees, including 63 faculty members and 167 adjuncts. The average turnover rate for all employee classifications is 5.6% (2003-2009). There was no turnover in administration, faculty, and adjunct categories for 2008-2009.

OV4b   In 2008, the SCCC/ATS faculty and staff identified the following as what they value in their work as excellence, teamwork, operational integrity, and a caring atmosphere.

OV5a   The broad mission, policy, legal, ethical, and social responsibilities are set by the Kansas Board of Regents. The SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees is responsible for aligning the institution's priorities with those established by the state.

OV5b   Various tools are used to align SCCC/ATS with the Board of Regents' objectives, including a Performance Agreement, strategic planning, and the AQIP approach.

OV6   Administrative support and services are aligned with the institution's missions and values through the strategic planning process, implementation plans, and budget development.

OV7   A variety of methods are used to inform internal processes and to comply with federal or state data collection requirements.

OV8   The area's industrial base supports many low-wage, low-skill jobs where post-secondary education or training is not viewed as necessary for employment. Most local employers do training in-house instead of turning to SCCC/ATS.

OV9   SCCC/ATS fosters numerous partnerships and collaborations with K-12 and post-secondary institutions, business/industry, local area and communities, donors, consortiums, and suppliers.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

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

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

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

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OVIa   SCCC and Southwest Kansas Area Technical School merged in July 2008 as a result of legislative action directing technical schools to merge with a degree-granting institution. This resulted in expanded opportunities for career and technical education programs.

OV1a   SCCC/ATS offers multiple degree programs and continuing education opportunities in many forms, including dual credit offerings, non-credit instructional programs through the Business and Industry office, and online classes through interactive television, online, video conferencing, and TELENET 2.

OV1b   SCCC/ATS offers 42 for-credit instructional programs through five divisions. Non-credit instructional programs are delivered through the Business and Industry office and the University of Kansas' Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

OV1c   SCCC/ATS has defined nine student learning outcomes supported through five broad instructional areas that advance those outcomes, its mission and its philosophy.

OV3a   SCCC/ATS has well-defined short- and long-term expectations for students and other stakeholders.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as SCCC/ATS's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
1P1	S	The Academic Affairs Council oversees the process for determining common student learning objectives with input from faculty, student learning support staff, and student services staff.
1P2	S	Faculty receive guidance from each other and a member of the Assessment Committee when developing program level learning outcomes. Each program area has developed a mission statement and a minimum of three performance outcomes which are reviewed by the Assessment Committee to ensure they are compatible with the College's mission statement and outcomes.
1P4	O	SCCC/ATS solicits feedback from a variety of constituencies regarding potential programs. However, the process for using this information to make informed decisions is not clearly articulated. Defining a full decision-making process could help those who are presenting new program ideas to understand how priorities are established.
1P8	S	SCCC/ATS uses multiple approaches to identify and assist underprepared students. The Early Alert process links students with needed advising and resources which are modified throughout the semester depending on progress.
1P9	O	Students in the First Year Seminar share their results from the StrengthsQuest survey with their advisor. SCCC/ATS might consider making these results available to students' other instructors so they are aware of each student's skills and strengths as identified by the survey.
1P10	O	Although SCCC/ATS provides special services for students with disabilities, senior citizens, and distance education students, it does not appear to have a coordinated systematic approach to determine and address the special needs of its various student subgroups.

1P11   S   SCCC/ATS employs a process which brings together expertise from multiple areas of campus to define, document, and communicate expectations for effective teaching and learning. In addition, professional development activities are used to communicate expectations throughout the institution.

1P12   O   SCCC/ATS recognizes that building an effective and efficient course delivery system has been a challenge for them. Therefore, they have indicated their commitment to the development of a more formal, data-driven evaluation process. As SCCC/ATS pursues this commitment, institutional progress in this area is likely to be facilitated.

1P13   O   SCCC/ATS has an opportunity to review their program review cycle to ensure improvement as opposed to compliance. The institution's program review processes might be improved to ensure frequent check-ups to better reflect program improvement and to address unique indicators for technical programs.

1P14   O   While SCCC/ATS has a process for evaluating courses that may need to be changed or discontinued, the portfolio does not present an institutional plan for identifying courses or programs in order to get them into the evaluation pipeline.

1P16   O   SCCC/ATS has proposed a formal process for 2010 to assess institutional learning outcomes. This provides an opportunity to refine/improve processes and more effectively demonstrate the value of co-curricular development goals and how they align with curricular learning objectives.

1P18   SS   Faculty are empowered through the approach SCCC/ATS employs to design processes for assessing student learning. Faculty engineer and conduct in-house assessment at the course, program, and institutional level. In addition, the model on which the three-tiered assessment process is based (the institutional Writing Assessment Process) has been recognized nationally with a National Council of Instructional Administrators Exemplary Initiatives Competition Award.

1R1-1R2	O	While SCCC/ATS utilizes the CAAP and institutional assessments to track student success in basic skills areas for graduates, there is no mention of how these results are analyzed and used to improve student learning. In addition, SCCC/ATS might consider regularly collecting and analyzing multiple measures throughout the student experience.
1R3	O	SCCC/ATS has an opportunity to develop a more formal and comprehensive method for sharing and utilizing program review data to improve performance with student learning.
1R4	O	SCCC/ATS recognizes the opportunity the merger presents to improve the compilation and sharing of results for student learning. SCCC/ATS has an opportunity to develop a process to provide evidence that students completing their studies have the knowledge and skills required by stakeholders of the institution. Programs mentioned in the portfolio that currently collect data might serve as good examples for institutional improvement in this area.
1R5	O	Although SCCC/ATS acknowledges that no formalized performance processes have been developed; its advisement training appears to be effective. The institution might want to consider having all faculty advisors complete the training program and formalizing a measure of its effectiveness.
1R6	OO	SCCC/ATS cites the CAAP test as a means to compare student's results, but it is unclear how the institution is using this data, setting goals and targets, and planning for improvement. SCCC/ATS might want to consider utilizing other comparative performance measures – especially those that include student learning results from its primary competitors.
1I1	S	SCCC/ATS has used assessment data to improve student learning in the areas of writing and math, with plans for continued changes implemented with the goal of continued increases in student's proficiency in these areas. The processes used within these two areas might serve as examples for other academic areas seeking improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OVIa   SCCC and Southwest Kansas Area Technical School merged in July 2008 as a result of legislative action directing technical schools to merge with a degree-granting institution. This resulted in expanded opportunities for career and technical education programs.

OV4b   In 2008, the SCCC/ATS faculty and staff identified the following as what they value in their work as excellence, teamwork, operational integrity, and a caring atmosphere.

OV5a   The broad mission, policy, legal, ethical, and social responsibilities are set by the Kansas Board of Regents. The SCCC/ATS Board of Trustee is responsible for aligning the institution's priorities with those established by the state.

OV8   The area's industrial base supports many low-wage, low-skill jobs where post-secondary education or training is not viewed as necessary for employment. Most local employers do training in-house instead of turning to SCCC/ATS.

OV9   SCCC/ATS fosters numerous partnerships and collaborations with K-12 and post-secondary institutions, business/industry, local area and communities, donors, consortiums, and suppliers.

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

Item   S/O   Comment

2P1-2P2	S	SCCC/ATS uses input from both internal and external stakeholders in the determination of non-instructional objectives. This information is gathered in a variety of ways, including environmental scans, as well as from advisory committees, groups and organizations. This broad-based involvement enables the institution to make informed decisions that address stakeholder needs.
2P6a	S	SCCC/ATS promotes a system of shared governance that is operationalized through its strategic planning process, budget planning, and committee structure.
2P6b	O	The Systems Portfolio presents no formal process for gathering information on employee needs so that they can better accomplish their jobs and have an impact on objectives and processes. If one does not exist for SCCC/ATS, a formal process for gathering and utilizing information that is clearly understood by everyone could help the institution identify and address opportunities earlier.
2R1-2R2	O	The portfolio addresses data results for only two non-instructional areas. A non-instructional Program Review Process will be piloted 2010. This process provides the opportunity to address the institution's current need for more measures and performance results for accomplishing non-instructional objectives.
2R3	O	The portfolio does not address how results for the performance of non-instructional processes compare with other higher education organizations. Developing processes to compare its non-instructional results with other institutions can provide valuable information for institutional improvement.
2R4a	S	SCCC/ATS demonstrates multiple opportunities for participation and involvement in order to strengthen relationships.
2R4b	O	While SCCC/ATS tracks participation rates for various programs/services, it presents little data to indicate satisfaction, goal accomplishment, or value to the institution. This kind of information could help identify needs

for improvements in programs to better serve students and community members.

2I1	O	SCCC/ATS is taking steps to seek additional funding for new programs important to the local workforce and to implement workforce needs-driven programs. Although this effort holds potential to meet a significant need in the area, it is still only in the conceptual stage.
2I1b	S	SCCC/ATS is one of seven Kansas community college partners participating in a grant that supports the extension and improvement of services initiated through the institution's Student Success System.
2I2	OO	Establishing processes that drive performances based on results could enhance the institution's continuous improvement efforts.

AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OVIc   The percentage of Seward County's population of Hispanic or Latino origin has grown to 51.8% resulting in the county achieving majority Hispanic status (the first county in Kansas).

OVId   From 2000 to 2008, students identified as racial/ethnic minorities (REM) increased from 19% to 35%. In fall 2008, 54% of the new freshman students were identified as REM, and 83% of the REM students were Hispanic.

OV3a   SCCC/ATS has well-defined short- and long-term expectations for students and other stakeholders.

OV4b   In 2008, the SCCC/ATS faculty and staff identified the following as what they value in their work as excellence, teamwork, operational integrity, and a caring atmosphere.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
3P1	S	SCCC/ATS uses multiple methods and measures to identify the changing needs of student groups. Various committees analyze these needs and recommend how to address them.
3P2	S	SCCC/ATS appears to build and maintain strong relationships with students through an array of curricular and co-curricular activities, advisement opportunities, numerous special events, and involvement of trustees, administration, faculty and staff in student events.
3P3	O	Although SCCC/ATS collects information from appropriate sources regarding non-student stakeholder needs, it is unclear how it selects courses of action regarding those needs. Systematic processes for responding to identified stakeholder needs could help lead to successful solutions.
3P5a	S	SCCC/ATS's strategic planning process involved focus groups, the dean's council, and other stakeholder feedback. Fifteen of 28 recommendations in the plan address new target groups.
3P5b	O	Although the strategic planning process had its strengths, developing an implementation plan and timelines could capitalize upon the interest and commitment of stakeholders, advance the initiatives and improve the organization.

3P6	O	SCCC/ATS has a clear process to allow students to register complaints. This process could be used as a model for processing and analyzing less formal complaints and concerns from other stakeholder groups.
3R1	O	SCCC/ATS has administered the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey for eight years which provides good trend information. However, it is unclear how it systematically determines the satisfaction of other stakeholders, or what measures of satisfaction it collects and analyzes regularly to improve the experience of students and other stakeholders.
3R2-3R3	O	The comparison data in the "Student Satisfaction Institutional Summary 2003-2007" chart indicates noticeable drops in 11 of the 12 categories from 2005 to 2007. The portfolio reports no explanation for the negative trends. The institution may benefit from further investigation into the reason for the decline and establish plans of action to address the across the board drop in student satisfaction.
3R4-3R5	O	SCCC/ATS is aware of a lack of performance results for stakeholder satisfaction and building relationships with key stakeholders. The Transfer Student Action Project is a good first step to address this area for one stakeholder group.
3R6	O	SCCC/ATS lacks comparative data on performance of processes for understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs. Plans are in place to utilize an additional student satisfaction survey, the Community College Survey for Student Engagement (CCSSE). This will augment the information available to improve student services.
3I1	O	The transfer campus visit program has helped to address the stated student concerns about transfer advising and support. An assessment component would be helpful in continuous improvement of the program.

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

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

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OV4a As a result of the 2008 merger, SCCC/ATS has 339 employees, including 63 faculty members and 167 adjuncts. The average turnover rate for all employee classifications is 5.6% (2003-2009). There was no turnover in administration, faculty, and adjunct categories for 2008-2009.

OV4b In 2008, the SCCC/ATS faculty and staff identified the following as what they value in their work as excellence, teamwork, operational integrity, and a caring atmosphere.

OV6   Administrative support and services are aligned with the institution's missions and values through the strategic planning process, implementation plans, and budget development.

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

Item   S/O   Comment

4P1   S   SCCC/ATS has implemented an externally validated software system to manage employee salaries and job descriptions.

4P3   S   SCCC/ATS has a thorough and clear process to recruit, hire, and retain employees.

4P4	S	An employee orientation exists to acquaint new hires with the institution and its service community. Continuing employees are supported with professional development opportunities.
4P5	O	SCCC/ATS does not identify a formal succession planning process. It is unclear whether there are significant numbers of close-to-retirement employees and what the continuity plan is when key positions are vacant.
4P6	O	The document states that SCCC/ATS employees' "insight, involvement, and ownership leads to higher productivity and satisfaction". However, no process for measurement or evidence is provided.
4P10	S	A committee made up of cross functional representatives designed the personnel evaluation system. Evaluation is tied to institutional objectives for instructional and non-instructional programs.
4P11	O	While SCCC/ATS has a number of mechanisms to recognize and reward employees; it appears, as presented in the systems portfolio, that faculty often are rewarded for grant writing as opposed to instructional objective rewards and incentives.
4P12-4P13	O	The college does not identify in the Systems Portfolio formal processes for determining employee motivation or satisfaction issues. If not yet in place, structured processes could provide additional information to be used in the development of a process to address key issues.
4R1-4R4a	S	SCCC/ATS recognizes its need for formalized processes to evaluate employee satisfaction, productivity, recruitment, and retention - including comparative data.
4R1-4R4b	O	With the inclusion of recruitment and retention as part of the 2010-2017 Strategic Plan, SCCC/ATS has an opportunity to identify external benchmarks to measure results obtained from a structured employee motivation/satisfaction assessment process. Monitoring actions and results in these areas over the next few years, and comparing them with performance results of other institutions, could produce valuable insights for ongoing quality improvement related to valuing people.

4I1-4I2	O	SCCC/ATS is still in the early stages of implementing systematic and comprehensive processes for documenting and analyzing performance results for valuing people. The 2010-2017 Strategic Plan provides an opportunity for more systematically setting data-informed targets for improved performance results in valuing people.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OV3a SCCC/ATS has well-defined short- and long-term expectations for students and other stakeholders.

OV5a The broad mission, policy, legal, ethical, and social responsibilities are set by the Kansas Board of Regents. The SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees is responsible for aligning the institution's priorities with those established by the state.

OV5b Various tools are used to align SCCC/ATS with the Board of Regents' objectives, including a Performance Agreement, strategic planning, and the AQIP approach.

OV6   Administrative support and services are aligned with the institution's missions and values through the strategic planning process, implementation plans, and budget development.

OV7   A variety of methods are used to inform internal processes and to comply with federal or state data collection requirements.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as SCCC/ATS's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
5P1	S	Following the recent merger between Seward County Community College and Southwest Kansas Technical School, the history and values were reviewed by a cross-functional group. This activity resulted in revisions to the mission statement and the institutional values statement. A new strategic plan for 2010-17 is being developed in support of the revised mission, vision, and values.
5P2a	S	The SCCC/ATS processes are informed by the continuous improvement paradigm. As that process matures it is likely to advance the institution.
5P2b	S	SCCC/ATS has recently implemented a Continuous Quality Improvement Council charged with identifying, communicating, and implementing initiatives for staff benefit.
5P4	O	The portfolio indicates that "partnerships and grant development processes are the principal tools for guiding and seeking future opportunities." Although partnerships and grants can lead to future opportunities, SCCC/ATS might benefit from including a systematic examination of the current and projected needs of its constituents.
5P5	S	The organizational structure of SCCC/ATS appears to provide for two-way decision-making that is both inclusive and transparent.
5P6	O	The portfolio lists a wide range of principal data sets and information used in decision-making processes. However, it is unclear how the institution uses this information. A systematic approach for evaluating data constitutes a significant component for quality improvement.
5P9	O	While the Academy for Leadership and Development has provided professional development opportunities for a small number of employees,

SCCC/ATS may benefit from a more comprehensive employee development process.

| 5I2 | O | The establishment of a Communication Action Project may help SCCC/ATS begin a more intentional focus on communication processes. As the project is completed, there will be an opportunity to create additional action projects that further address communication processes. |

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

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

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OVIa   SCCC and Southwest Kansas Area Technical School merged in July 2008 as a result of legislative action directing technical schools to merge with a degree-granting institution. This resulted in expanded opportunities for career and technical education programs.

OV6   Administrative support and services are aligned with the institution's missions and values through the strategic planning process, implementation plans, and budget development.

OV7   A variety of methods are used to inform internal processes and to comply with federal or state data collection requirements.

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

Item   S/O   Comment

6P1	S	SCCC/ATS receives input through various avenues, such as conversations, surveys, and service requests, to identify support service needs of its students.
6P3a	S	SCCC/ATS has developed the standard policies and protocols to address the safety and security needs of the physical campus—as well as faculty, staff and students.
6P3b	O	The campus may benefit from establishing guidelines for periodic review and update of the Emergency Procedures Manual and from opportunities and activities for students to discuss these topics.
6P4	S	SCCC/ATS uses its eSupport System for managing, documenting, and archiving key administrative support service processes on a day-to-day basis. This helps ensure that issues are addressed and communicated back to the initiating party.
6R1-6R2	S	The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey provides longitudinal input on student perceptions. The board-student dinner allows students to express themselves on specific issues of importance to them.
6R3	O	The performance results for administrative support service processes reported in the portfolio do not reflect a systematic, data-informed approach. A more formal, institution-wide process, which is broader than implementation of a Physical Plant infrastructure plan, could help SCCC/ATS increase its effectiveness in this area.
6R5a	O	The "Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey – 2003 & 2007" chart (p. 65) shows a noticeable drop in satisfaction with campus support services from 2005 to 2007 and is statistically lower than the National Group Mean. The institution may benefit from attempting to identify any issues this raises.
6R5b	O	It is unclear how directly linked the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction results are to evaluating organizational support processes which include faculty and staff as well. It may be beneficial to revisit these measures as part of the strategic planning process.

6I1	S	Since student and employee feedback have indicated satisfaction with most organizational support services, SCCC/ATS has emphasized maintaining its "high level of performance." The recent Strategic Planning Process is designed to "connect the processes in this category to long-term institutional level planning…"

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OV5a The broad mission, policy, legal, ethical, and social responsibilities are set by the Kansas Board of Regents. The SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees is responsible for aligning the institution's priorities with those established by the state.

OV5b Various tools are used to align SCCC/ATS with the Board of Regents' objectives, including a Performance Agreement, strategic planning, and the AQIP approach.

OV6   Administrative support and services are aligned with the institution's missions and values through the strategic planning process, implementation plans, and budget development.

OV7   A variety of methods are used to inform internal processes and to comply with federal or state data collection requirements.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
7P1-7P2	S	SCCC/ATS handles data requests through a number of committees and offices and has a number of software tools to help manage and respond to data requests.
7P3	O	Data and performance information needs of departments and units are decentralized. SCCC/ATS has hired a research analyst who may be responsible for centralized data collection and disbursement. Creation of a centralized data location could be beneficial for persons needing data, as they would know from whom to request the data. This could also enhance data integrity.
7P4	S	The Office of Research and Assessment was created to develop a data warehouse and dashboard for organizational performance indicators. An AQIP action project will address the next step of formalizing an Information Management Plan. Although these are not yet realized, the institution appears to be improving in measuring its effectiveness.
7P5	S	To improve the selection and use of comparative data, SCCC/ATS has budgeted funding to become a member of the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) in 2010. It has targeted 17 NCCBP benchmarks "for evaluation and inclusion as organizational and program level measures." This commitment to the use of comparative data from nationally-normed sources is a positive step for continuous improvement.
7P6	O	While SCCC/ATS appears to align departmental data with organizational goals for instructional programs and services and shares this information through a reporting schedule, a five year reporting cycle does not allow for quick feedback that reflects the nature of program change.
7R1a	O	The portfolio indicates that SCCC/ATS is committed to process development. However, the only performance results reported by the

		portfolio to be used consistently by SCCC/ATS are for the Early Warning System.
7R1b	S	The college is taking steps to address its challenges with measuring effectiveness, such as improving its information reliability and developing standardized data sets for program reviews.
7I1	O	SCCC/ATS is using AQIP action projects and Kansas Board of Regents Performance Agreements to help identify improvement and performance targets measuring effectiveness. However, the portfolio does not report any specific improvements.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item Critical Characteristic

OV3a SCCC/ATS has well-defined short- and long-term expectations for students and other stakeholders.

OV5a The broad mission, policy, legal, ethical, and social responsibilities are set by the Kansas Board of Regents. The SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees is responsible for aligning the institution's priorities with those established by the state.

OV5b Various tools are used to align SCCC/ATS with the Board of Regents' objectives, including a Performance Agreement, strategic planning, and the AQIP approach.

OV6   Administrative support and services are aligned with the institution's missions and values through the strategic planning process, implementation plans, and budget development.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as SCCC/ATS's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement.

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
8P1	S	SCCC/ATS has developed systematic methods for planning which include multiple dimensions of review, evaluation and revision.
8P2	S	SCCC/ATS utilizes subcommittees of the Strategic Planning committee to identify and develop long- and short-term strategies. The Dean's Council provides oversight of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives.
8P3	S	Since joining AQIP in 2005, SCCC/ATS has initiated nine AQIP action projects "that have become part of college operations." The AQIP action projects originate from the strategic planning process.
8P4	O	SCCC/ATS recognizes the need to better coordinate and align planning processes across the institution. The pilot project utilizing TracDat, a relational data base and performance assessment tool, is an opportunity for the college to align goals and track performance for assessment of student learning outcomes.
8P7a	S	Budgetary projections used by the Board of Trustees and Dean's Council include assessed evaluation of property, activity of other taxing entities, state funding projections, enrollment, staffing needs, salary and benefits, utilities, facilities improvements, and carryover.
8P7b	O	No process of data recovery risk is identified. Risk assessment may be improved by including research on trends and competitive growth in distance learning.
8P8	S	The institution has identified four areas of focus in developing their continuous improvement processes. They are: communities of practice; decision-making processes; leadership planning and effective meetings;

and intentional management of information. Focus on these areas may provide for some more concrete processes and forms of assessment in very important areas.

8R2a	O	Issues are identified and strategies created, but performance results do not appear to be readily available and utilized. Assessment information on what occurred as a result of a particular strategy may inform future activities and help the planning effort.
8R2b	OO	Of the eleven sample performance results from the Student Services report in the portfolio, nine are from 2003 or earlier; the other two are from 2004 and 2005. This suggests a need for developing means to track, evaluate, and report recent and current performance results for accomplishing organizational strategies and action plans.
8R4-8R5	O	The portfolio does not present comparison data for results or evidence of the effectiveness of the planning process. Comparison of results to peer institutions may help to foster communication of the plan, establish expectations for individuals and groups working to implement the plan, and measure effectiveness of implementation processes.
8I1	O	SCCC/ATS has altered its Strategic Plan development process to move from a task-development activity to establishing broad, guiding vision elements. While broad measures are important, it is not clear how tactical efforts will be created and communicated.
8I2	O	SCCC/ATS acknowledges that it is still in the early stages of its AQIP journey, but that it has "emerging practices that are purposeful and should lead to establish processes for improvement." An important aspect of its new strategic planning process will be how it sets targets for improved performance results in Planning Continuous Improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It

examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item   Critical Characteristic

OVIa   SCCC and Southwest Kansas Area Technical School merged in July 2008 as a result of legislative action directing technical schools to merge with a degree-granting institution. This resulted in expanded opportunities for career and technical education programs.

OVIb   SCCC/ATS is a public comprehensive two-year technical college located in Liberal, Kansas, in the extreme southwestern corner of the state. The main campus and 10 outreach centers serve a seven-county area in Kansas and draws students from nine border counties in Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado.

OV8   The area's industrial base supports many low-wage, low-skill jobs where post-secondary education or training is not viewed as necessary for employment. Most local employers do training in-house instead of turning to SCCC/ATS.

OV9   SCCC/ATS fosters numerous partnerships and collaborations with K-12 and post-secondary institutions, business/industry, local area and communities, donors, consortiums, and suppliers.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as SCCC/ATS's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships.

Item   S/O   Comment

9P1   S   SCCC/ATS creates and prioritizes relationships with organizations in accord with its strategic planning processes, existing performance and accreditation expectations, and the needs of area students.

9P2	S	Effective articulation processes appear to be in place – both to serve learners and to collaborate with other educational institutions. SCCC/ATS maintains effective, collaborative relationships with business partners appropriate to learner and institutional needs.
9P5	S	SCCC/ATS employs a variety of approaches to build relationships with external partners, educational institutions, agencies, and the community. These approaches include supporting employee and trustee involvement, participation in professional and community organizations, sharing resources for on-line educational opportunities, and involvement in organizations with planning and development functions.
9P7	S	SCCC/ATS uses its broad-based committee structure to help build relationships and facilitate communication within the institution. Committees also play an important role in fostering commitment to quality improvement.
9R1-9R2	O	The System Portfolio does not present a formal process for collecting and analyzing performance results for creating, prioritizing, and building relationships. The college has an opportunity to establish such a process, which will contribute to measuring organization effectiveness.
9I1a	S	SCCC/ATS is improving its collaborative relationships with competing institutions by sharing instructors among colleges for low enrollment courses.
9I1b	O	The college has an opportunity to develop performance indicators to measure effectiveness of these and other collaborations to strengthen the programs and the relationships.