

# SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE



## AQIP SYSTEMS PORTFOLIO

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# 2015



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## AQIP ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

### Institutional Overview

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Southwestern College, founded in 1885, is a comprehensive, private, nonprofit institution. It is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Southwestern offers associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees and serves a student population that includes traditional-age students studying full time on the college's residential campus in Winfield, Kansas and adults who earn undergraduate and graduate degrees through part-time study on the residential campus, at the college's Professional Studies Center in Wichita, Kansas, at instructional locations on military installations in Kansas, and online.

Because some of the college's programs for adults are offered in six-week and eight-week sessions, with adult students "stopping out" as work and family commitments dictate, the college thinks of headcount enrollment in two ways: headcount enrollment at any given time is about 1,700 students; while the total number of students served in a typical year is about 2,500.

Undergraduate instruction on the college's residential main campus is provided by 44 full-time and 52 part-time faculty. Instruction in the college's Professional Studies and graduate programs is provided by full-time faculty and 205 adjunct faculty members. The college also employs 127 administrators and staff members.

Southwestern's 83-acre residential campus in Winfield provides a beautiful and updated academic setting for students and faculty. Located on a hill overlooking the Walnut Valley, the campus is notable for an abundance of trees and its native limestone buildings. Capital campaigns over the past 25 years have supported dramatic improvements in the college's facilities, including construction of the Beech Science Center, Richard L. Jantz Stadium, and Cole Residence Hall, and significant renovations of Deets Library, Mossman Hall (a classroom and faculty office building), and creation of the Richardson Performing Arts Center within the Christy Administration Building.

Undergraduate student life on the residential campus combines study in a wide range of academic majors in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, business, communication and computer science, and the performing arts, with participation on athletics teams, in performing arts ensembles, and in service learning activities. The majority of students live in campus residence halls and apartments. Students enjoy treasured traditions – including the Moundbuilding ceremony, Builder Camp, the Jinx, and Stau Bau – in an immersive living experience.

Professional Studies administrative offices and classrooms are located in Wichita, the largest city in Kansas. Additional instructional sites are at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita and at

Fort Riley, in Junction City, Kansas. Professional Studies employs accelerated learning in six-week and eight-week sessions to accommodate the needs of busy working adults, more than half of whom are active duty military personnel. Programs are explicitly career-focused, focusing on business, management, information technology, nursing, Christian ministries, and security administration.

The college's programs in nursing, teacher education, music, and athletic training maintain specialized accreditation with CCNE, CAEP, NASM, and CAATE respectively. The college is accredited by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church.

The college has made significant investments in the innovative use of information technology. For over fifteen years the residential campus has featured "laptop learning," with undergraduate students and faculty using college-issued laptops on a ubiquitous wireless network. The college's people use information technology to provide online instruction, multi-media online instruction, and to support hybrid instruction models that combine intensive residential study with online work.

Southwestern College's United Methodist heritage and its commitment to "leadership through service in a world without boundaries" have led to a culture of service that pervades the college. Leadership development is stressed throughout the curriculum, along with critical thinking, ethical reasoning, communication, and career preparation.

The college's student body is increasingly diverse, reflecting the growing racial and ethnic diversity of its geographic service region, the national student body it serves through its online programs, and its commitment to serving international students, the largest groups of which come from China and Saudi Arabia. About 1/3 of Southwestern students are American minority or international students.

Southwestern is governed by its Board of Trustees, which currently includes 35 members. Members serve three-year terms that may be renewed for up to 12 consecutive years of service. The Board meets three times a year and does its work through the following standing committees: academic affairs, audit, business affairs and endowment investment, facilities and technology, institutional advancement, and student life. The Board's executive committee includes elected officers, chairs of standing committees, and at-large members. The board meets three times a year and meets in a board retreat every third year.

Administrative leadership for the college is provided by the Administrative Council, which includes the president, provost, vice presidents for communication, enrollment management, finance, information technology, institutional advancement, planning and new program development, and student life, and the director of athletics. At the time of this writing the college is going through a transition in presidential leadership, as the current president departs to lead another institution. The college has completed the search for its next president, who will assume his duties during the summer of 2015.

## CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

**Context.** Work to improve academic outcomes assessment has been the focus of a number of Action Projects since Southwestern College began participating in AQIP. Progress has been uneven, in large part because of challenges posed by the makeup of the college's student body. The academic program of the college's main campus in Winfield is designed for a pedagogical environment with a stable pool of students; the learning environment for Professional Studies is andragogical and serves adult transfer students. The orientations of these two student populations have meant that unified academic outcome measures are difficult. Through AQIP Action Projects, the college developed curriculum maps and rubric assessments. The college has also worked to find meaningful ways to assess two of its outcomes: leadership and career preparation. The main campus academic program has explored using the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) and instituted a four-year advising sequence that was focused on career preparation. Professional Studies instituted a capstone course with a portfolio assessment.

Recently, the college adopted a provost/dean model of administration. That change enables greater coherence in operational aspects including assessment and student support services. For instance, the college has now extended its use of IDEA assessments from the main campus to the entire academic portfolio, yielding normed data at the institutional, program, and course level. Similarly, the main campus MBA is being aligned with the PS MBA. In the summer of 2015, the college's two academic deans will align the general education curriculum.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Processes.** This restructuring has had the college moving toward "*aligned*" status on two discrete tracks. Unifying the academic portfolio means resetting the processes by intentionally taking a step back toward a "*systematic*" stage.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Results.** At present "*systematic*" best reflects our results.

**Priorities for Improvement.** The following are priorities for improvement:

- The college will continue to provide enhanced resources for mathematics instruction and quantitative learning and will evaluate impacts on persistence and retention.
- The college will continue work to develop a unified main campus and Professional Studies program of academic outcomes assessment.
- The college will develop direct measures of academic program quality that can be deployed across the entire portfolio.
- Main campus academic advising will be improved by more careful matching of skilled academic advisors with students whose academic preparation heightens their risk for academic difficulty.
- Early alert mechanisms regarding Professional Studies learners who are experiencing academic difficulty will be more fully developed and their impacts on persistence and retention measured.
- The college will explore the assessment of leadership and career preparation through a unified measure that is shared between Professional Studies and the main campus.



## 1P1. Common Learning Outcomes

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Southwestern College chose academic outcomes assessment as a focus in its first round of AQIP Action Projects. The outcomes were determined by members of the assessment goal task force, which comprised representatives from the residential academic unit and the Professional Studies unit. In order to ensure both efficiency and maximal participation the task force involved the following groups in the process: main campus assessment committee, faculty senate, academic division chairs, Professional Studies academic council, and academic administrators (3B2, 4B4). The outcomes and expected knowledge and skills (3B2, 4B1) are shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Academic Outcomes

Institutional Outcome	Knowledge and Skills
Critical Thinking	The ability to analyze information to arrive at a reasoned judgment of what to do or believe
Ethical Reasoning	The conscious practice of accepted standards of fairness and integrity in all endeavors
Leadership	The ability to create and communicate a vision that inspires others to act or achieve a desired goal
Communication	The ability to communicate effectively using reading, writing, listening, behavior, media, quantitative data, and technology
Career Preparation	The cultivation of knowledge, attitude, and creative skills, to excel in life's chosen work

The college's learning outcomes (seen in Table 1.2) are correlated strongly with language in the college's statement of mission and vision (3B1, 3B2). The mission, vision and outcomes are codified in the institutional strategic plan, which is publically promulgated, and are regularly affirmed by the college's Board of Trustees as a part of the planning cycle.



Table 1.2 Academic Outcomes in Vision and Mission

Institutional Outcome	References in College Vision and Mission Statements
Critical Thinking	Commits to an academic program that emphasizes intellectual growth; oral and written communication skills; creativity; wellness; historical, cultural, and environmental understandings. Offers programs for the emergent learning society that stress enrichment, enhancement, and personal growth.
Ethical Reasoning	Affirms the role of individual Christians in shaping a world that preserves honesty and integrity and nurtures communities of service and care.
Leadership	Describes the college as a learning community committed to leadership through service in a world without boundaries. Challenges students to take responsibility for the future of society.
Communication	Emphasizes oral and written communication skills.
Career Preparation	Offers programs leading to degrees that serve as foundations to professional development, and envisions a learning community committed to career preparation. Offers specific programs for degree completion, and encourages those employed full time to continue their learning.

The college infuses the outcomes into the curriculum in order to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve them. The outcomes on the main campus are contextualized for the general education program which includes two additional outcomes related to quantitative literacy and respect for cultural diversity. The general education program follows AAC&U guidelines providing both outcomes and disciplinary perspectives in order to ensure both proper breadth and depth. General education outcomes are defined in the [college catalog](#) and the relationship between those outcomes and the institutional mission are also clearly stated (p. 10). Although general education is not intended to be a regular program offering for adult transfer learners, some general education is offered through the Professional Studies unit and is codified in that [unit's catalog](#) (p. 30). The Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile has been helpful in ensuring that those outcomes are aligned with all majors in Professional Studies. PS general education competencies include "analytic inquiry, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, communication, and applied learning." At this time, PS does not have a stated general education outcome of respect for cultural diversity. Nevertheless, one outcome of the most recent comprehensive program reviews reinforced the importance of cultural competence in professional preparation of our graduates (4A1). Thus, business program revisions were developed to integrate elements of cultural respect and competence throughout the program (3B4, 1C1).

Although all general education offerings have not been assessed as a unified educational program, efforts are underway to do so. In 2014 the college instituted a new provost/dean academic administrative structure. At the direction of the provost, the academic deans presiding over the main campus and Professional Studies academic units will build a unified assessment



plan for all general education offerings. The work is expected to go quickly because whether courses serve general education or major offerings, curriculum maps are used to show that institutional outcomes are aligned with program-level outcomes. In addition to demonstrating alignment with institutional and program level outcomes, these maps also align outcomes at the course level for major course requirements. The college ensures that the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with broader community needs through both its institutional planning process and program review processes which include discipline specific program reviews and a five-year review cycle (4B1).

Southwestern College designs and delivers co-curricular programming that supports learning. In the pedagogical environment, a Service Learning Council oversees the work of Leadership Southwestern, Discipleship Southwestern, and the Green Team (3E1, 3E2). The different programs that are associated with the Service Learning Council engage in program level assessment, e.g. Leadership Southwestern tracks leadership by means of the LPI (Leadership Practices Inventory) and the measure of community service aligns with ethical reasoning. Active community partnerships and advisory councils help to ensure that the programming for these co-curricular programs remains relevant and that the outcomes are aligned with community needs. As an adult-serving unit, Professional Studies has few co-curricular activities. Rather, as is typical with andragogical learning environments, adult learners are involved in local communities, churches, work, and professional organizations. The diffuse nature of this aspect of the adult learner's lives makes direct assessment difficult. Nevertheless, some indirect assessment is captured through 'home-grown' surveys and NSSE. In January 2015, a national Student Veterans Association was instituted and serves students in both contexts. All of this programming does speak to the institutional outcomes (3B1, 4B2) particularly with regard to leadership, career preparation, and ethical reasoning.

In order to both ensure and demonstrate that Southwestern College graduates evidence the outcomes, many methods are employed to assess levels of efficacy. To that end, the college uses a variety of measures, both direct and indirect, such as IDEA, NSSE, exit surveys, the ETS Proficiency Profile and rubrics (4B2, 4B1, 4B4). These instruments are deployed on a regular schedule. The data derived from these instruments are then shared with the president and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. The data are also fed back for program improvement through both curriculum review and faculty evaluation processes (4B3).

## 1R1. Common Learning Outcomes: Results

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Our direct measure of learning is the Proficiency Profile which is published by ETS. We administer the exam to new freshmen upon their arrival at SC. The same exam is given again four years later to the same students, allowing us to assess using a method of matched pairs. (This method excludes Professional Studies learners from the assessment because, by definition, they are transfer students.) Observed change in the exam scores allows us to document improvement in the SC student population. After our students have completed their tests, our scores are compared nationally to those from other four-year institutions using the



ETS Benchmark report (see Table 1.3). In other words, our senior scores are compared to those of more than 93,000 students from 252 other institutions, tested between 2008 and 2013. This comparative perspective permits the college to see what it is doing relative to similar institutions in the educational sector. The decision to assess using a method of matched pairs, however, has meant that generating a mass of data sufficient for a meaningful comparison of results with those from other colleges has required the time necessary to complete several four-year cycles for each data set (the time it takes a freshman to become a senior). Taking this time, however, has been advantageous because it also means that the college has been able to ensure a valid point of vertical elevation before attempting to engage in competitive benchmarking. As the college continues moving toward a *competitive* benchmarking process, it has nevertheless been able to view its benchmark data *functionally*. That is to say, results are compared to those of other colleges in order to ensure that our progress on educational productivity is consistent with sector performance. As the following table illustrates, the scores indicate that the college's performance is on par with that of other institutions in the comparison group. The implication of the data is that the college does have room to improve and can, in the coming year, begin to set targets. Since our assessments are designed as a system in which data aggregates up to the institutional level, such targeting will have to be done relative to the institutional planning process and in relation to targets that are set at the divisional/program level.

Table 1.3 ETS Benchmark Report

ETS Benchmark Data - Comparison of Average Final Scores		
	Average SC Final Score	Average Benchmark Final Score*
Total	447	448
Critical Thinking	113	113
Reading	119	119
Writing	115	115
Math	114	114
Humanities	115	116
Social Sciences	115	114
Natural Sciences	116	116
*Of 4-yr institutions included in ETS database		

While the benchmark data permits the college to track its productivity relative to the standard of what similar schools are accomplishing, the data that are used to constitute the SC average score in the benchmark report are used to track performance internally. The ETS data provides the college with a total score, four skills scores, and three context-based sub-scores for



humanities, social science and natural science. All of these scores are longitudinally tracked and the skills align with our institutional learning outcomes of critical thinking, communication, and career preparation. Again, the students are assessed using a method of matched pairs so the data reveals the learning that took place only with students who were exposed to the SC curriculum. As the data indicates, many of our students did improve their basic skills while studying at SC over a four-year period. (See Table 1.4.)

Table 1.4 ETS Proficiency Profile

% of Matched Pairs By Cohort Demonstrating ETS Proficiency Profile Score Improvement					
	48	43	61	42	
Scores	2006	2007	2008	2009-10	All Cohorts
Total	65%	67%	67%	74%	68%
Critical Thinking	56%	53%	57%	67%	58%
Reading	58%	58%	52%	71%	59%
Writing	60%	65%	52%	62%	59%
Math	48%	42%	51%	60%	50%
Humanities	52%	44%	51%	43%	48%
Social Sciences	60%	53%	54%	45%	54%
Natural Sciences	50%	53%	38%	60%	49%

While the ETS Proficiency Profile is a direct measure of learning, the college recognizes that the data above does not provide any evidence to suggest that improved scores are the result of intentional instruction. In order to meet that demand for validity, the above results are correlated with institutional level results from IDEA. When the ETS data are viewed in light of the information provided by the IDEA assessments, the implication is that improvements in both the context sub-scores, which are foundational to professional development, and in more overtly labeled outcomes such as critical thinking, owe directly to the teaching emphasis that is placed on those outcomes in the courses that are taught.

It is important to note that IDEA and ETS rely on data from two discrete pools. As such, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the two instruments. Nevertheless, it is still possible to draw useful correlations. As the data in Table 1.5 below illustrates, the instructors at the college choose to emphasize methods in their courses that strongly suggest that their efforts positively influence the ETS data. Of the courses at SC that have been surveyed over the past five years the methods of gaining factual knowledge, learning fundamental theories, and applying course material are overwhelming selected as either important or essential classroom teaching objectives. These same objectives correlate with both the ETS skills data and the context sub-scores. To be concrete, the 58% of all cohorts that improve in the realm of critical



thinking per the ETS data likely owes that improvement to the fact that 55% of courses evaluated with IDEA in the previous five years emphasized the critical evaluation of ideas as essential or important to the work undertaken. So, too, the fact that faculty primarily choose to emphasize factual knowledge and fundamental principles helps to account for improvement in the context subscores of natural science, social science, and humanities.

**Table 1.5 Classes Addressing Faculty-Chosen Objectives**

<b>Average % of Classes Addressing Top Faculty-Chosen Objectives</b>					
	<b>n=512</b>	<b>n=125</b>	<b>n=135</b>	<b>n=101</b>	<b>n=106</b>
<b>Institutional Top 5 Objectives</b>	<b>SC Norm*</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Gaining factual knowledge	81%	86%	81%	78%	86%
Learning fundamental principles, theories	75%	76%	72%	82%	79%
Learning to apply course material	69%	64%	72%	75%	63%
Developing specific professional skills, competencies	51%	51%	49%	48%	45%
Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas	55%	57%	46%	55%	48%
<i>*per IDEA, institutional norms based on courses rated in previous five years</i>					

There is some slight variation in the data relative to how the different years relate to the norm. This is accounted for, in part, by sample size but is also likely due to changes in personnel and changes in the courses surveyed. Nevertheless, the data does show a consistent aggregate picture of what the faculty think is essential or important in their courses and it is that consistency that speaks to the change in student learning as evidenced in the ETS data.

The outcomes of Leadership and Ethical Reasoning are not taken into account by the standardized measures above. In order to assess leadership, the college has deployed the Leadership Practices Inventory 360. This is a questionnaire containing 30 leadership statements and correlates a self-assessment with an appraisal of leadership traits from selected observers. In the aggregate for AY 12-13, the top three of 30 leadership behaviors were 'treating others with respect' (observers' average 4.9); fostering cooperative relationships (observers' average 4.9) and actively listening to other viewpoints (observers' average 4.9). There is not yet a large enough body of data to meaningfully correlate these results with information from other instruments. For instance, the NSSE data shows little variation in the ratings relative to having a serious conversation with students of a different race or ethnicity (NSSE score of 2.69 which equates to such conversation occurring only 'sometimes') so it is hard to understand why students would rate themselves so high on the LPI especially with regard to active listening. The college also relies on NSSE for an indicator of progress in the area of ethical reasoning (see



Table 1.6). Neither the LPI nor NSSE are direct measures of student learning but the college can correlate the findings of these surveys with the learning outcome information in IDEA which does provide converging and convincing arguments for learning that does or does not take place. For instance, few faculty select 'developing a clearer understanding of personal values' or 'acquiring a skill to work as a member of a team' as essential or important to their course work. The lack of emphasis in these areas of main campus undergraduate courses likely explains why student responses in NSSE show little variation from year to year:

**Table 1.6 NSSE Results: Personal Code of Ethics**

	Question	SC	Plains Private	Carnegie Class	NSSE
2012	Developing a Personal Code of Ethics	FY 2.95 SR 3.02	FY 2.92 SR 2.88	FY 2.81 SR 2.85	FY 2.76 SR 2.81
2014	Developing a Personal Code of Ethics	FY 2.8 SR 2.7	FY 2.8 SR 3	FY 2.8 SR 2.9	FY 2.7 SR 2.8

## 111. Common Learning Outcomes: Improvements and Planned Improvements

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Observed results for critical thinking, both at SC and at the national level, are concerning. Moreover, we were able to see in our data that Math 105 Intermediate Algebra was a course with high enrollment but low achievement (52.7% with D's, F's or WD's). In order to improve that score (and the attendant score in critical thinking) additional faculty were hired to teach quantitative literacy starting AY 2015 (4B3). We hope that these efforts will both increase the success rates for the students and improve the scores in the relevant categories of the Academic Profile. In the coming years, SC will also be looking for a direct measure that aligns with the ETS data but is designed for adult transfer students. The fact that Professional Studies students transfer widely varying amounts of credit to Southwestern College and do not study in cohorts makes valid assessment of their learning through the ETS model very difficult. The college will also be exploring ways to assess them without violating the existing method. Also, IDEA recently launched an online form of its assessment tool which will make it the first instrument that is fully available for institution-wide deployment. As we continue to refine our assessment project with valid institutional measures, we will be in a better position to set institution-wide targets.

Over the coming year, we will reconsider the use of the LPI 360 and determine whether we want to continue using it. As an indirect measure, we may opt for an instrument that provides more objective data such as that gathered through use of the ETS Proficiency Profile. It is also the case that the college does not have a systematic or robust approach to assessing graduate programs. The challenges entailed in assessing that aspect of the curricular offerings are that paper assessments and proctored assessments do not work well with the online community. Nevertheless, the college has recently taken steps to address this by changing to the online



version of IDEA assessment. This will help to bring the assessments of graduate programming more into line with the college's other assessment efforts. As data starts to become available from IDEA, the academic deans of main campus and Professional Studies will be better positioned to think about how the data from program level assessments might integrate and provide an institutional level picture of student achievement.

## 1P2. Program Learning Outcomes

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Program level outcomes are identified within individual programs and are aligned with the institutional outcomes. Oversight for program level outcomes and assessment resides with the academic deans of Professional Studies, teacher education, and the main campus, and with division chairs. SC reserves two days each academic year specifically for assessment and the college deploys a wide range of instruments including ETS Proficiency Profile, IDEA, rubrics, and exit surveys. In cases where a program is governed by a specialty accreditation additional outcomes and variations to review schedules and data collection processes exist (4B2).

In response to a desire to centralize data, ensure active engagement in assessment, and have a documented feedback loop that tracks changes, the main campus academic divisions have engaged in an annual planning and review process (4A1). A common format for the plans was developed and data from the institutional research office was provided for purposes of reflection and goal setting in the spring of every year. The plans are housed on the college intranet so they can be accessed by all stakeholders.

General education is not a discrete academic division and, as mentioned above, SC measures two outcomes in addition to those required by the institution. Those two additional outcomes are quantitative reasoning and respect for cultural diversity. For main campus undergraduate programs, the full set of outcomes follow AAC&U guidelines, were selected by the faculty, were approved by the trustees and (along with the disciplinary perspectives that they support) are listed in the catalog (4B4). In Professional Studies, general education has unfolded more organically in response to learner needs. In both locations, the assessment of general education is uneven. On the main campus, it has been undertaken largely by the full-time faculty using rubric assessment. Data were collected but the college's small size created instability in data collection methods and resulted in unreliable information. The college is also aware that the general education classes offered through Professional Studies were not taken into account. The plan for assessing those courses was part of the AQIP Action Project in 2010. Nevertheless, the administrative structure at the college changed in 2014 and, after a trustees' retreat, the new dean of main campus was charged with constructing a new plan for general education assessment. With that in mind, the deans of main campus and Professional Studies programs will coordinate efforts to develop aligned robust general education assessments that include targeting.

Under a new comprehensive assessment plan, each program specifically designed for Professional Studies undergoes a full program review in a five-year cycle (4A1). A program review includes additional work on curriculum maps to align institutional outcomes with

program-level outcomes and the additional layer of course-level outcomes. In addition, industry experts, graduates of each program, and (if applicable) graduate school representatives are invited to serve on advisory councils to ensure that program-level outcomes remain relevant and align with student, workplace, and societal needs. As noted above, the review process was developed through an AQIP Action Project and we are making revisions as it is applied. For example, after the most recent program reviews, we realized the current capstone rubric only focused on institutional outcomes and did not include program outcomes. In addition, the capstone portfolio was not particularly useful for adult learners in the professional world or of interest to employers such as those professionals in our advisory committee. Thus, we are planning more focused and relevant capstone work and/or culminating projects. We are also planning to incorporate signature assignments within courses in order to assist with the annual reviews and allow for more fine-tuning via assessment within the courses (3B3, 4B3).

Professional Studies program-level outcomes will be directly assessed using a capstone or culminating course project and a common rubric. In addition, indirect assessment of program-level outcomes will be mapped to the NSSE, graduate exit surveys, and a five-year alumni survey. Outcomes assessment was an AQIP Action Project for adult learning programs in AY 13-14. The result of that project is that Learning Assessment Plans (LAP) now exist for each program that has been reviewed and are currently in the form of Excel spreadsheets. The LAP records important information about a program and associated curriculum and is a key document used during a program review. The LAP has two primary functions – curriculum map and change map. The document includes six pages: overview; institutional-program-course alignment; course to assignment alignment; capstone rubric; indirect assessment alignment; and changes from program review.

As the college adopted a provost/dean model, it also commissioned a dean of education. In that unit, programming aligns learning goals to the various state standards for each licensure program. The unit is sub-divided into learning teams led by main campus faculty. The dean is the chair of the professional core learning team which aligns its learning goals to the recently adopted Kansas Professional Education Standards and InTASC standards. The professional core learning team examines five main assessments common among each of the licensure areas: unit and lesson planning portfolio, teacher work sample with student performance/growth data, student teaching evaluation package (eWalkthrough tool, cooperating teacher, and field supervisor evaluation), exit interview, and course-based grades for specific courses aligned to state program standards (4B2).

Data from each of the above assessments is collected, analyzed, and discussed. It is then used to guide decisions about program improvement (4B3). This occurs at the program level for each program and the unit level. The unit historically utilized an exit interview process. In 2012-13, the unit revised its mission and conceptual framework. After the alignment was adopted in the spring of 2013, the unit began the work to realign and revise assessments. For example, the exit interview process incorporated questions about InTASC Standards and Kansas Professional Education Standards, organized into each of the five concepts within the conceptual framework. A “meets expectation” narrative for each concept was developed after interview evaluators were asked to rate the candidate on a four-point scale. Raters were asked



why they rated the responses as “meets expectations.” All comments were unitized and arranged in themes. These themes were crafted into statements and used as a rubric narrative description for the next administration. Data are presented from the exit interviews by concept. Exit interviews also asked candidates to highlight changes that need to be made to the program, based upon candidates’ experiences with student teaching. Those narrative comments are shared among faculty and have been used to enhance field experiences, course delivery, content alignment, and stage advancement (4B3). Concerns noted by multiple candidates have been used to understand and map curriculum in targeted areas.

## **1R2. Program Learning Outcomes: Results**

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As mentioned above, the college makes use of the ETS proficiency profile as a direct measure of student learning for undergraduates on the main campus. Recent changes in federal law related to the privacy of the test takers have made it possible for the college to rearrange the data of individual test takers by academic discipline. The advantage in doing this, as opposed to finding a variety of unrelated program level assessments, is that it shows areas within the college where performance improvements need to be made but does so in a systematic way relative to the institutional level data. For instance, while 58% of all cohorts showed improvement in critical thinking skills at the institutional level, that score was positively influenced by the contributions of the social sciences and communications units, which scored higher in critical thinking. By contrast, the lower scores of the business and education programs likely had a negative effect on the institutional score and suggest that those units need to improve in order to be more competitive in the broader educational sector. Results from this profile are seen in Table 1.7.



Table 1.7 ETS Proficiency Profile Score Improvement

<b>% of Matched Pairs Demonstrating ETS Proficiency Profile Score Improvement 2006-2013</b>								
		<b>n=34</b>	<b>n=22</b>	<b>n=42</b>	<b>n=33</b>	<b>n=36</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=15</b>
<b>Scores</b>	<b>All SC Cohorts</b>	<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>Communi- cation</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Natural Sciences</b>	<b>Perf. Arts</b>	<b>Other (BGS, Nurs)</b>
Total	68%	82%	55%	71%	48%	69%	75%	80%
Critical Thinking	58%	71%	64%	55%	48%	50%	50%	80%
Reading	59%	68%	55%	67%	45%	61%	58%	53%
Writing	59%	76%	55%	50%	45%	69%	58%	60%
Math	50%	47%	36%	43%	52%	61%	58%	60%
Humanities	48%	59%	36%	43%	45%	44%	58%	60%
Social Sciences	54%	59%	64%	62%	39%	47%	33%	67%
Natural Sciences	49%	59%	27%	45%	52%	53%	42%	60%

Just as it is helpful to understand where the different majors stand within a broader educational context, so, too, it is helpful for the college to understand which areas should be targeted for improvement and how much improvement is required to bring a reasonable level of parity to the academic experiences that the college offers. In order to accomplish this, the college compares results of ETS data across the main campus undergraduate portfolio. By looking at the data relative to that which is generated internally, it is possible to better gauge the impact of the different programs. As the Table 1.8 below illustrates, the business and education programs have lagged significantly in nearly every skill and context sub-score. The presentation of the data by unit has made it possible for the deans to spot where deficiencies exist and to have focused conversations with faculty about strategies for improving scores (4B3).



**Table 1.8 ETS Proficiency Profile Scores Compared to SC Average**

<b>% of Division Matched Pairs At Or Above SC Average Scores 2006-2013</b>								
		<b>n=34</b>	<b>n=22</b>	<b>n=42</b>	<b>n=33</b>	<b>n=36</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=15</b>
<b>Test Area</b>	<b>Average SC score</b>	<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Natural Sciences</b>	<b>Performing Arts</b>	<b>Other (BGS, Nurs)</b>
Total	447	71%	59%	31%	15%	72%	58%	47%
Critical Thinking	113	53%	59%	29%	24%	56%	75%	47%
Reading	119	74%	64%	43%	36%	64%	58%	67%
Writing	115	62%	68%	31%	33%	67%	67%	60%
Math	114	44%	41%	45%	39%	83%	50%	33%
Humanities	115	59%	55%	43%	33%	58%	58%	60%
Social Sciences	115	62%	59%	33%	27%	61%	50%	53%
Natural Sciences	116	79%	64%	36%	45%	75%	67%	47%

Just as with the institutional level data, IDEA batch summary scores are used to measure progress on learning outcomes.

## **112. Program Learning Outcomes: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

Part of the improvement process is making sure that the data are in the hands of the people who can adjust operations appropriately. With that in mind, the main campus academic divisions recently began an annual planning cycle that incorporates program level data from both ETS and IDEA. Plans for the coming year are developed each spring and reviewed in the fall when faculty return from summer break. At that time, the Office of Institutional Research is able to provide the latest data for inclusion in the plans and any goals can be adjusted in light of new information as part of a revision process. It is an expectation from the provost that the plans are public and that information is shared with key stakeholders such as trustees, advisory councils, etc. A priority in the coming year is to achieve a reasonable level of parity across the academic portfolio relative to the skills data found in the ETS Proficiency Profile. The college has already taken steps to improve the scores in the business program by changing personnel, aligning graduate curriculum between Professional Studies and the main campus, and instituting co-curricular programming, e.g. Enactus (4B3). These changes are setting the stage for the unit to



pursue a discipline specific accreditation, which should help to further focus efforts on quality improvement. Moreover, by aligning efforts on the main campus with those in Professional Studies, the business faculty can begin to explore whether or not the ETS major field test would be a helpful addition to their assessments, especially as a means for ensuring that they are keeping pace in the broader marketplace. We anticipate a decision on the adoption of that instrument by the end of the fall semester 2015.

As noted above, the scores in teacher education also lag in comparison to other programs on campus. Unlike the other programs, teacher education has undergone tremendous growth in a short period of time. With that in mind, one hypothesis is that staffing contributed to the problem. This past year, the college added two new faculty lines (one in curriculum and instruction and the other in early childhood) (4B3). Steps have also been taken over the past year to empower faculty members to take more control over instruction offered by affiliate faculty. By deploying full-time faculty in a role that is akin to a sub-unit coordinator, we anticipate a greater level of quality control over instruction. As these units take steps to improve their contributions to the aggregate, it will become easier to set consistent/meaningful targets at the institutional level. That said, it is important to note that the college may not see significant change in the ETS data until the end of AY 2017 because of the time needed for students to work their way through the curriculum.

### **1P3. Academic Program Design**

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The college was approved to offer a doctoral degree in teacher education and has made the support and development of that program an AQIP Action Project since 2012. In terms of program design, the Southwestern College Ed.D. program advances a scholar-practitioner paradigm. Graduate programming considers in-field needs and finding shared collaborative spaces for field experiences, where undergrad preparation programs intersect with in-service teacher preparation. This past spring, the education division surveyed all Kansas school district superintendents and principals to determine in-field and teacher preparation needs. Responses from the survey were triangulated against exit interviews and student satisfaction surveys. Triangulation resulted in claiming three goals formulated to improve all undergraduate experiences, field experiences, and graduate programs. Baseline data are shared and discussed with faculty, students, and in-field practitioners. This summer, faculty and in-field practitioners will meet to compile a brief vision for actualizing each of the three goals. Also this summer, the new doctoral cohort will limit its initial literature review to understand the best practices within the three goals. Working in teams, the doctoral candidates will work with faculty to compile a literature review that will inform the development of all three goals. Their collective work will enhance the strategic planning process as timelines are established for the 2015-16 academic year.

For all other programs, the college follows two different program review processes. On the main campus, there is an established schedule for program review (4A1). The review process is initiated by the academic dean and the division chair oversees the creation of the program self-study. The size of Southwestern is such that it is often more appropriate to review by academic



division and consider multiple programs at the same time. Once the self-study is complete, it is sent to external evaluators for feedback. Those evaluators are experts in the fields under consideration and sometimes are alumni. The evaluator's report is then returned to the division chair, who has the responsibility for implementing changes and requesting any budgetary considerations. The review process is posted on the campus intranet along with the review schedule, and a sample self-study. Programs that are tied to a discipline-specific accreditation, e.g. teacher education, are expected to follow the review processes of that body. Professional Studies programs are designed for working adults so a Program Advisory Council composed of stakeholders is formed. The council includes community members and expert professionals in the fields as well as students who have graduated from our programs. We convene a focus group to discuss the program, the needs in the field, the expectations for graduates from the program, etc. After the Program Advisory Council meets and concerns are identified, a curriculum committee composed of faculty members takes the information and combines it with their content expertise to revise or create courses within the program (4B3).

Within the college's new administrative structure, the college has created an Administration Innovation and Management Team that combines both academic and enrollment management expertise. It is expected that this group will be instrumental in building new programming. The group has established timelines for the development and approval of new programs and adopted a template that will be used to measure the viability of new programs. In particular, the template requires answers relative to primary audience and delivery modality; program differentiators; marketing plans; market research including evidence of study and employer demand; implementation schedule; estimated enrollment impact; and evaluation/control. In short, the template and development processes are a more formal way of capturing the information from stakeholder groups that help the college to determine educational needs. These templates can serve as a baseline for subsequent program review and they can set targets (a weakness at SC) for tracking both growth and development. In the past, the program review cycle was out of sync with the budget/finance cycle at the college. With that in mind, the committee has also re-established some timelines so that new programs are not disadvantaged and improvements are appropriately funded.



### 1R3. Academic Program: Results

As mentioned above, the Ed.D. program surveyed professional educators to determine in-field needs. The results of that survey shown in Table 1.9 are still being collected but preliminary results include the following:

**Table 1.9 In-Field Needs Survey**

<b>Southwestern College: In-field Perceptions of Potentially Shared Services and Needed Endorsements: A P-20 Approach to Teacher Education</b>						
<b>In-Service Teacher Re-licensure/Professional Learning</b>						
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Immediate Need</b>	<b>Pressing Need</b>	<b>A Future Ideal</b>	<b>Not a Current Need</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
In-district Graduate Credit for Teachers through Workshops	61	141	79	83	2.49	364
In-district Graduate Credit for Teachers through Course Delivery	52	130	99	81	2.42	362
PDC alignment/tracking	32	104	59	167	2.00	362
Early Career Teacher Mentoring	60	123	73	106	2.38	362
In-service/Professional Learning Support	40	141	68	113	2.30	362
Conference/Speaker Attendance	19	87	114	143	1.95	363
Assessing Student Performance	56	143	62	101	2.43	362
Adjusting Instruction Based Upon Student Performance	87	150	53	73	2.69	363
Integrating Technology into Instruction	83	173	45	62	2.76	363



These results will be considered by the teacher education faculty and will shape improvements that are discussed below (4B3). For other programs, the results of the program review process over the past few years are shown in Tables 1.10 and 1.11:

**Table 1.10 Program Review Actions (Main Campus)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Main Campus Program</b>	<b>Action</b>
2009-2010	Physics	Closed
2010-2011	Philosophy/Religion	All philosophy/religion programs advised to unify mission and intent of educational project
	Campus Ministry	
	Worship Outreach	
	Discipleship SC	
	Athletic Training	Continuing Accreditation awarded 2011. 1 AFI corrected and accepted by CAATE
2011-2012	CCNE self-study Nursing	BSN closed. Program reprioritized and refocused as BSN completion
2012-2013	NASM Self-Study; all music programs	Deferred action. NASM seeking clarification.
2013-2014	Teacher Education: all programs.	KSDE Approved, fall '14. CAEP visit forthcoming



**Table 1.11 Program Review Actions (Professional Studies)**

<b>Professional Studies Programs Reviewed</b>	<b>Program Review Stakeholder Feedback</b>	<b>Implemented Improvements</b>
<b>2013-2014 Program Reviews</b>		
Bachelor of Arts in Ministry	Had lost some relevancy to the current field, especially regarding military chaplaincy.	Combined with BAYM into Bachelors of Arts in Christian Ministry with many overlapping courses and two tracks for 4-5 separate courses.
Bachelor of Arts in Youth Ministry	Had some overlapping coursework with BAM.	See above.
Master of Arts in Theological Studies	Low enrollment and competition with United Methodist seminaries was not sustainable.	Program closed
Master of Specialized Ministry	Low enrollment and competition with United Methodist seminaries was not sustainable.	Program closed
<b>2014-2015 Program Reviews</b>		
MBA	Alignment with main campus MBA program was desirable, as was addition of soft skills and global perspectives.	Some courses modified, some added, some removed from the program.
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	Addition of soft skills and global perspectives was desirable.	Some courses modified, some added, some removed from the program.
Master of Accounting	Low enrollment program, and field had changed since launch to limit usefulness of degree.	Program closed.
Executive Certificate in Accounting	Low enrollment program, and field had changed since launch to limit usefulness of certificate.	Program closed.
Bachelor of Science in Accounting	Completion of existing program did not qualify Kansas graduates to sit for CPA due to missing requirements.	Some courses modified, some added, some removed from the program to align with Kansas CPA board guidelines.
Health Care Administration	Lack of specialized knowledge relevant to health care in the areas of accounting, management, and no marketing course.	Some courses modified, some added, some removed from the program.



The adoption of the new administrative structure combined with the timeline and templates provides the college timely means for assessing results. The template also established a baseline and provides for projected enrollment and ROI that can be tracked (4A1). As the system is new, we do not have numerical data to report at this time.

### **1I3. Academic Program Design: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

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As the Ed.D. program continues to mature under the newly-appointed dean, we intend to partner with the field to provide ongoing training for in-service teachers in assessing student performance, adjusting instruction based upon student performance, and integrating technology into instruction. While we intend to accomplish this through graduate programming and workshop delivery options, we also will bolster our undergraduate programs to ensure our candidates graduate with expected skills in these needed areas. All of our programs have field experience requirements. We also intend to incorporate additional activities into field experiences that address these areas.

The new provost/dean model is also helpful as the college plans to standardize review processes for other programs. For instance, we have been working to align business programming between main campus and Professional Studies. The main campus program is planning to fall under the assessments and review processes of Professional Studies (3A3). This kind of alignment will allow us to take advantage of the two review processes, take advantage of combined resources/expertise, and develop a unified calendar. Also, at a recent meeting of the Administration Innovation Management Team, a number of possible new programs were identified along with the persons responsible for investigating the viability of each possible new program. Over the course of AY 15-16 the programs will be researched and submitted according to the newly-established timelines and template. This will also help us to establish a more unified schedule for program review and assessment (4A1).

### **1P4. Academic Program Quality**

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Because outcomes assessment has been discussed above, this portion of the college's response to Category 1 queries focuses on the policies and procedures that ensure quality across all programs, modalities, and locations. The college catalog is a primary source for articulating the standards and compliance. Levels of preparation for each degree program are clearly communicated to students through the college's catalogs as part of the admission requirements (3A3). The college catalogs also describe the organization of each program of study as including a core of essential major courses, a group of cognate courses, and the latitude to select courses that support the student's growing intellectual curiosity (p. 13; PS undergraduate p. 38). Where specific preparation is required for an area of study – teacher education, athletic training, or nursing – those standards are cited with the catalog description for the major. Individual courses that presuppose a specific body of knowledge are marked as

requiring prerequisite and those prerequisites are enforced at the point of registration through 'Self-service,' the student portal. In the case of course-to-course transfer, [a list of transfer articulations](#) is kept by the registrar's office to ensure acceptable substitutions.

Due to the accelerated nature of compressed schedules in online graduate programming, the college articulates both attendance and participation requirements for the students. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for MBA, M.Acc, M.Ed., and M.A.T. programs, and a 2.5 is required for other programs. In order to ensure the integrity of the degree, all graduates must successfully complete 30 hours of SC graduate credit. Entrance into the education doctoral program requires a 3.25 GPA on the last 60 hours of course work, initial licensure with eligibility for principal licensure, and a cooperating school district. Past course work must be recent and a continuous study policy is in effect. The doctoral program must be completed within five years.

Program rigor is assured across all modalities through a load definition and credit hour seat-time policy that follows the same definition for federal financial aid ([catalog p. 83](#)). In cases where a calendar is compressed or where courses are offered online, a rubric is deployed to ensure consistency (3A3). Transfer credit is awarded for transcripts from institutions recognized by CHEA, although the college does not accept credit for either varsity sports or remedial work ([main campus catalog p. 92](#)); transfer policies for Professional Studies (undergraduate catalog p. 10, [graduate catalog p. 9](#)). Issuance of credit for prior learning is codified in the catalog and the college has partnered with CAEL for the purpose of determining the prior-learning credit awards (4A3). Special accreditations for teacher education, music, athletic training, and nursing provide an extra level of quality assurance and the college is in good standing with each of these specialty accreditations. The college does not offer many dual credit opportunities. Those that do exist are tied to the teacher education program and are subject to standards prescribed by both state and federal regulation (4A4).

Since the Professional Studies program does not employ full-time faculty, a new review process has already allowed Professional Studies to consider the rigor of the programs that have been reviewed. As existing programs are revised and new programs developed, we have instructional designers work with subject matter experts. Our instructional designers understand best practices in curriculum and instruction and have knowledge of the Degree Qualifications Profiles. They help subject matter experts turn knowledge of their disciplines into courses appropriate for the different degree levels and online or on-ground delivery. Affiliate faculty, who are subject matter experts for Professional Studies course development, select and design the details of the assignments within the courses that are used as the course-embedded assessments in program reviews. As the program review curriculum committees meet during the program review process, they may also develop guidance for the methods and instruments to use for certain courses within a program given the course content. For example, they may suggest that a particular course lends itself to case study analysis or simulation. They may then indicate that type of an assignment should be included as an assessment at the program level.

## 1R4. Academic Program Quality: Results

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As this category is interpreted to be focused on ensuring consistency across the educational enterprise, the assumption is that the results would be those items that attest to the validity and enforcement of the policies noted above. The profile of many Professional Studies learners, i.e. persons directed toward study by their employers or transferring in under established agreements, means that most at the undergraduate meet the criteria for admission. As such, the Professional Studies program has not tracked admission rejections. For main campus undergraduate admission, less than 1% of those who complete their admission application do not meet our requirements. For 2014 fall, 56 main campus undergraduate applicants were denied admission. There have been a few students who were denied admission to the main campus graduate programs but those numbers are currently unreported. Nevertheless, those few rejections do suggest that the college does take responsibility to communicate and enforce the policies relative to student preparation for entry into curricula, programs, and courses. In addition, the uniform expectation of quality in the form of the suspension and probation index is both sufficient and enforced. The college does not presently have a report that longitudinally tracks the number of students placed on academic probation or suspension and such a report is not especially desired since knowing *that* institutional standards were enforced is not as germane to academic quality as understanding *why* those students were unsuccessful. The latter is addressed better at 1P1 and 1P2 where tools have been selected to measure and track program rigor.

As noted above, the college maintains a number of specialized accreditations (4A5). Perhaps the best recent showcase program for academic quality is the nursing program. That program was established as a BSN program with an RN to BSN track. The college took steps to refocus that program as an online RN to BSN degree that is offered through Professional Studies. In 2012, CCNE reviewed the BSN program and pronounced it sound. Given that the RN to BSN track was to be recrafted into a full degree, however, the accreditor returned for another site visit in 2014 to evaluate the new offering. Although the visiting team did find a few items for improvement (such as dedicated clerical support for the unit head) that program was also found to be sound and the transition has been declared a success.

In 2013, the college underwent a regularly scheduled site visit for NASM accreditation. The outcome of that visit was positive although the National Association of Schools of Music deferred action pending clarification related to issues such as vocal health. The required rejoinders have been filed with NASM (4A5).

The teacher education program recently underwent program reviews with the State of Kansas. On January 13, 2015, the Kansas State Board of Education acted upon the recommendation of the Evaluation Review Committee and approved all program areas through 2021. The result is that biology, chemistry, early childhood, elementary, English, history, math, music, P.E., and speech/theatre have all been reviewed by an external body and pronounced sound. Teacher education will undergo a CAEP review next year (4A1, 4A5).



The college uses an alumni survey of [recent main campus graduates](#) (those who graduated within the past year) that yields data concerning preparation for employment or advanced study. Results are shown in Table 1.12. Response rates for this survey have been low, and efforts to increase the number of respondents are underway.

**Table 1.12 Graduate Survey Results**

**Main Campus - Graduate Survey**

**Aggregate Summary**

Division	N	Attending Graduate School	Satisfaction with Preparation for Graduate School	Employed	% Employed in related area	Satisfaction with Preparation for Employment	Neither Enrolled nor Employed	Overall Satisfaction
Business	15	53%	3.6	33%	100%	2.6	13%	3.1
Communication	17	59%	3.3	41%	86%	3.3	0%	3.5
Education	5	40%	3.0	60%	67%	3.7	0%	3.6
Natural Science	12	50%	3.1	25%	33%	2.7	25%	3.5
Nursing	5	0%	-	100%	100%	3.8	0%	3.6
Performance Arts	4	25%	4.0	50%	100%	2.0	25%	2.3
Social Sciences	7	71%	3.2	29%	50%	3.5	0%	3.2
Aggregate	65	49%	3.3	42%	81%	3.1		3.3

Overall Response Rate 28%

Scale: 4=Very Satisfied; 3=Somewhat Satisfied; 2=Somewhat Unsatisfied; 1=Very Unsatisfied

The data show that the vast majority of the college's graduates are in a graduate program or employed during the year after graduation. There is some variation, by the academic division in which students completed their majors, in graduate satisfaction with preparation for work and advanced study. These results have been shared with academic division chairs and have stimulated improvements, most notably the development of an internship program for the business division (4B3, 4A6).

#### 114. Academic Program Quality: Improvements and Planned Improvements

As mentioned above in 1P1 and 1P2, the college has selected IDEA in an online format to be deployed across the entire academic portfolio. The deans of the main campus and Professional Studies will also be working toward a unified assessment of the general education offerings over the course of this summer. The college recognizes that another instrument needs to be selected in order to gain nationally normed data for Professional Studies learners but the selection requires some care. The deployment of that instrument must align with the data that can be gleaned from the ETS Proficiency Profile in a way to avoid disrupting institutional level findings. The instrument must also respect the method that is already in place to test the curriculum at SC. The newly-appointed provost identified credit hour/seat time as an issue in Professional

Studies offerings and, as such, a rubric was selected and is being applied at the point of course revision as a means to ensure that all courses are consistent in rigor.

The college's academic divisions will continue work to strengthen outcomes measurements and reporting. These efforts, combined with work to improve response rates for the alumni outcomes survey, will yield improved data. Professional Studies will work to develop a similar alumni outcomes survey. We expect this issue of academic program quality and alumni outcomes assessment to be the topic of a forthcoming AQIP Action Project (4A6).

## **1P5. Academic Support Services**

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To ensure that students are prepared to undertake academic work at Southwestern College, applicants are screened through the admission process. Once admitted, main campus students are advised into first-term courses by faculty advisors who conduct one-on-one academic advising sessions with students to create a term of study that fits with their interests, career and major goals, and level of academic preparedness (3D3). All incoming freshmen are enrolled in a first-year experience course that is aimed at providing skills and resources for academic success.

The intake process is similar in Professional Studies with unofficial transcript evaluations completed during the admission process; however, students are assigned to an academic success coach for continued academic advising and student support. Admission personnel work with each student individually to provide direction regarding the admissions process, unofficial evaluation of prior learning, and registration for the first semester. As part of this process, an individual appointment is scheduled with the students' academic success coach no later than the first week of classes. This time is used to provide the learners with an overview of resources available, introduce the student and coach, and review the degree plan generated in admissions. Professional Studies is currently in the process of adding a series of videos to enhance this orientation process and provide students with an informational resource that is available 24/7. Topics will include use of the rotation schedule, student Self-Service portal, Blackboard, financial aid, etc. (3D3).

During the first week of each session, PS reports are generated on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday indicating students who have not participated in their online course. Admissions and coaches reach out to students and resolve issues such as difficulty logging in as well as reminding students of the necessity to actively participate. Students who do not sign in and participate in class activities during the first week of each session are administratively withdrawn.

Regardless of where a student chooses to study at SC, underprepared and at risk students may either self-identify or can be identified through a review of their transcripts and the Learner Status Alert systems. In those cases, admission counselors, success coaches, and faculty members work with them to identify the necessary resources (3D1).





In order to ensure active engagement in retention efforts the college deploys a number of instruments. For instance, on the main campus, data from the CSI is interpreted and analyzed with regard to each student's overall retention risk, acknowledged academic needs, apprehension index, and receptivity to specific forms of assistance, demographics known to have a negative impact on academic resilience and responses to Southwestern College-specific questions (4C3). The associate academic vice president for advising and student success uses that data to create highly-personalized and detailed advising sheets for each new student. The advising sheets are one-page summaries prepared for faculty advisors and coaches that interpret information received from the CSI in conjunction with standardized test scores, high school class ranking, college transfer work, and sports/activity participation. Assessments are made with regard to each student's strengths as well as challenges to resilience.

In Professional Studies, too, faculty are the front line for student success. Faculty are told in their orientation and follow-up materials that they are expected to respond to students' inquiries within 24-48 hours and engage in the online discussions, providing feedback and helping students to think more deeply about the material covered in the discussions. Faculty need to provide some direct instruction in their courses through a live Collaborate session, Lync meeting, etc. These sessions are recorded so students can access them after the session or if they were unable to participate synchronously. Faculty are also given quality checks to ensure they are engaging with students. If faculty are found to be low or lacking in student engagement and responsiveness, they are given a warning and assistance if there are misunderstandings or uncertainty on what they need to do. These faculty are then followed up with later to ensure there was improvement. Faculty who do not improve in this area are not rehired.

In order to meet the needs of academically deficient students, the college has designed two main campus courses (called Essential Skills). One of these serves to mentor students on academic probation; the other monitors students who apply to the college with less than minimum admission requirements and have been conditionally admitted. The students who fit the latter group are reviewed by the Conditional Admission Committee. The committee is composed of one faculty member, one staff member from residence life, and the associate academic vice president for advising and student success. The basis for their determination for admission includes a review of all admission- and academic-related materials submitted by the candidate and a meeting with the student to discuss a plan for academic success at Southwestern College. Conditionally admitted students are automatically enrolled in Essential Skills; other students are admitted only by consent of the associate academic vice president for advising and student success (3D2).

Professional Studies students placed on academic probation are enrolled in Academic Success, a not-for-credit course designed to assess time management, achievement, and motivation. The course is facilitated by an academic success coach who specializes as a success advocate for learners on academic probation or with high at-risk indicators. The success advocate coordinates the student's academic success coach to identify academic at-risk factors. The advocate engages the student with personal assessment tools and assists students to develop a time management plan, identify and address obstacles, and create both short- and long-term goals to enhance the possibility of academic success and degree completion. With approval of

the director of learner support and academic success, academic success coaches may refer students not on academic probation to Academic Success on an at-need basis (3D1).

On the main campus, any student with a math ACT score of 17 or lower is also eligible to register for Math 099 Elementary Algebra. Students whose standardized test scores are at or below 19 are advised into Math 105 Intermediate Algebra (3D2). Both populations of students are expected to make good use of the college's Quantitative Literacy Center (QLC), a program that assists students in all courses involving numbers. Under the new provost/dean model, some planning is now underway to ensure that support services for quantitative subjects are also extended to students in the Professional Studies programs.

After grades have been submitted for any given term, the Office of the Registrar develops the official probation and suspension list for academically deficient students. Undergraduate students whose semester grade point average is below 2.0 for two consecutive semesters (regardless of whether both were in residence at Southwestern College) and whose cumulative grade point average is below 2.0 are regarded as not making adequate progress toward degree and are suspended from the college. Additionally, a student who completes a semester with an "F" average is suspended. The accelerated calendar in the Professional Studies program follows the spirit of the same process but includes a 'warning' step prior to probation. This step allows academic administrators to adjust academic schedules and marshal support but is necessary because without it, a student can easily meet the threshold for suspension while simultaneously fully engaging in the next course. The processes for graduate students are similar although the standard for progress is higher. Graduate programs require either a 2.5 or 3.0 in order to maintain satisfactory progress. Failure to meet these standards results in probation or suspension as described in the college catalogs.

Probation and suspension lists are reviewed by the faculty Academic Affairs Committee on the main campus and by the academic dean for Professional Studies as appropriate. After review, students who are on academic probation or have been suspended from Southwestern College are notified of their status via email the same day followed by a certified letter sent three days later. Students on probation who intend to return to SC the following term are required to enroll in the Essential Skills course that is designed for probationary students (3D2). They are also limited to 13 semester hours of enrollment unless they are graduating at the end of the term while Professional Studies students may be limited to one class per six-week session.

Southwestern College monitors student learning over the course of every semester. A new, automated early alert system was implemented on the main campus during fall 2014. The system allows faculty to provide immediate feedback (positive or negative) regarding a student's performance and/or participation in a course. Faculty can initiate a report at any time during a term, with two regularly-scheduled campus-wide reports requested at the end of the fourth and 12<sup>th</sup> weeks of the semester. Information generated from reports is directly conveyed to the student, the student's coach (if an athlete), the student's faculty advisor, the dean of students, the campus housing director, the associate academic vice president for advising and student success, and the assistant director for advising and student success. If the alert is for an international student, the report is also sent to the director of international programs (4C2).

Professional Studies also uses an early alert system. In their orientation, affiliate faculty are trained on the use of the learner status alert system. The alert goes to the students' academic success coaches who then follow up with the students to talk with them to identify if the problems are situational (illness, unexpected work conflicts, family problems) or skills/ability based. Then the coaches work with the learners to provide them with support and available resources to foster success. Alerts may be submitted at any time during the class and are strongly encouraged for students not participating or with a grade of C or below. Alerts are required during the final weeks of Foundation courses. Foundation courses such as Comp I, Comp II, College Algebra and Information Literacy are included in this requirement. This allows proper advising for class selection and referral to resources early in the student's academic career.

Because the main campus is a learning environment that is pedagogically driven, the college takes additional steps to ensure that students are aware of the range of support services available to them. Each student identified by the Office of the Registrar as being academically deficient at mid-term is contacted individually via email by the associate academic vice president for advising and student success with a prompt to seek academic assistance in the Center for Learning and Student Success (1<sup>st</sup> CLASS)( 3D1, 3D5). 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS professionals have years of experience in higher education and hold advanced degrees in counseling and college student personnel services. At least once a year, staff members keep current with best practices and related training opportunities by attending national annual conferences such as The First-Year Experience and the National Academic Advising Association. Coaches in Professional Studies also are appropriately qualified and supported. Although adult students do not require (or appreciate) such close levels of supervision, the coaches are hired with at least a bachelor's degree, and several have master's degrees. They are also provided with multiple training opportunities throughout the year covering topics such as the retention plan, financial aid, degree planning, how to pay for college, and the learner status alert system.

The Professional Studies program developed an Online Writing Center to support students who have difficulty with writing (3D1). Under the new provost/dean model, efforts are underway to relocate that service under the associate academic vice president for advising and student success. The aim is to capitalize on the strengths of 1<sup>st</sup> Class in deploying tutors and combine that strength with the online expertise in Professional Studies in order to provide an institution-wide resource for learners. That transition is underway and should be complete by the summer of 2015.

## **1R5. Academic Support Services: Results**

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In Professional Studies, the data on the use of the Online Writing Center suggests that we currently have sufficient capacity to meet our learners' demand. Usage is averaging 46% of possible appointments per week. As the Online Writing Center moves to an institution-wide platform, we expect that usage to increase. The writing center is part of a larger focus on session-to-session persistence in Professional Studies programs. We have increased our



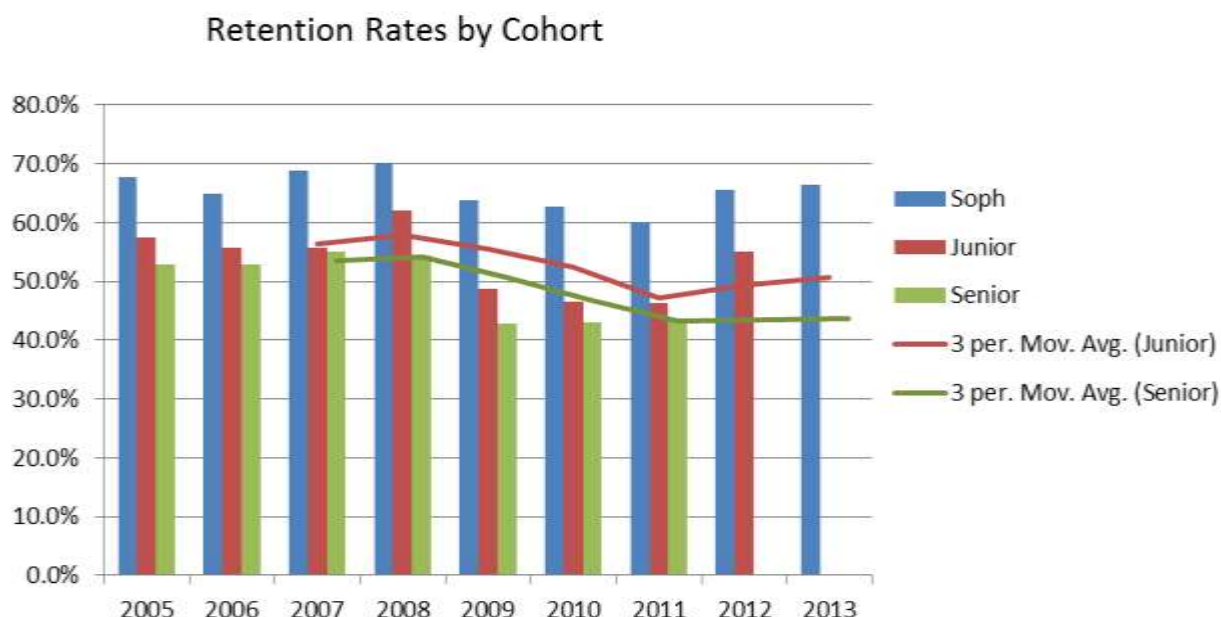
persistence rate from 66.6% to 68.4% during this past year for fall classes. Continued attention to persistence with the processes we have in place should increase session-to-session enrollments.

The college has established clear and attainable retention goals (4C1):

- Fall to spring retention: 90%;
- Fall to fall retention: 75%;
- Six-year graduation rate: 60%.

The data reflecting the college's efforts to attain those goals are seen in Chart 1.1:

**Chart 1.1 Retention Rates by Cohort**



In the 2014-15 academic year Southwestern College improved its retention rate for first-year freshmen students by 3%, which met the college's 90% fall to spring retention goal. This increase represented the highest retention rate since 2002 (4C2).

***Fall to Spring Retention:***

2009 Cohort – 87%  
 2010 Cohort – 88.9%  
 2011 Cohort – 87.5%  
 2012 Cohort – 88.5%  
 2013 Cohort – 88.3%  
 2014 Cohort – 90%

***First to Second Year Retention:***

2008 Cohort – 70%  
 2009 Cohort – 64%  
 2010 Cohort – 63%  
 2011 Cohort – 60%  
 2012 Cohort – 65.5%  
 2013 Cohort – 66%



We believe that the positive change in retention resulted directly from the reorganization of the Student Success Center that took place in the summer of 2014 (4C3). In fall 2014, Southwestern College had a new freshman enrollment of 116 students. Of those students, a total of 28 ended the term on probation and two were suspended. Almost 26% of these new students were academically deficient. Per the CSI, however, the 121 new freshmen and transfer students revealed that:

- 52.7% thought they would be “B” students
- 21.7% were first-generation college students
- The score on “study habits,” which measures the student’s willingness to make the sacrifices needed to achieve academic success, *was the lowest measure* of academic motivation
- The “attitude toward educators” overall score was also surprisingly low. This factor measures the student’s attitude toward teachers and administrators in general, as acquired through pre-college experiences. Students with poor academic achievement often express a general hostility toward teachers and this attitude often interferes with their work. The national average is 50%; SC students came in at around 38%, which is statistically significant.
- Most SC students indicated a *higher than average* sense of personal support and openness to academic assistance, career planning and financial guidance.

With that data in mind, the college opened the 1<sup>st</sup> Class Academic Success Center and began providing a more systematic form of tutorial services (4C3). Table 1.13 (following page) shows a week-by week summary of the services provided to students.



Table 1.13 1<sup>st</sup> Class Usage

Fall 2014 WEEK:	# STUDENTS SERVED	# STUDENTS TUTORED	# HOURS UTILIZED
09/02-09/06	136	10	680
09/07-09/13	137	14	685
09/14-09/19	140	18	700
09/21-09/26	101	13	414
09/28-10/03	120	13	480
10/05-10/10	134	16	583
10/12- 10/17	133	12	532
10/19-10/24	97	9	228
10/26-10/31	118	11	462
11/02-11/07	102	11	449
11/09-11/14	99	19	424
11/16-11/21/14	73	10	313
11/23-11/25/14	17	11	32.5
12/01 - 12/05/14	56	16	195
<i>Finals Week: A handful of students used 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS services during finals week.</i>			
<b>NOTE: Three students on probation utilized 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS tutoring services in the fall 2014 term; ALL of these students were off of the probation list at the end of the semester.</b>			

Thus, while the students rated their academic ability higher than what the group statistically was able to demonstrate, the new efforts, combined with existing processes for identification and remediation, seem to track with student receptiveness for help.

## 115. Academic Support Services: Improvements or Planned Improvements

A new initiative currently under development for implementation in the 2015-16 academic year is intended to enhance the quality and consistency of academic advising for all students on the main campus. While strides have been made in increasing the effectiveness of advising by implementing a major-based faculty advising program, this has predictably increased the variation in advising loads as well as producing some inconsistencies in the quality of advising in lower- and upper-division courses. 2014 NSSE data indicate dissatisfaction among senior students related to receiving information about important academic deadlines and understanding academic rules and policies.

Also, Professional Studies is building on the learner status alert process to identify at risk categories among the learners. Once identified, new targeted support initiatives will be implemented. The Professional Studies unit is also nearing the completion of an academic

success coach microsite. This will provide online orientation for new learners, screencasts, and tutorials explaining what students need to know to navigate and succeed at SCPS.

## **1P6. Academic Integrity**

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Southwestern College assumes the academic integrity of its learners. In cases where integrity is in question, both the types of infraction and the processes and policies for dealing with them are codified in the [college catalog](#) on the main campus p. 82, and in [the Professional Studies catalog on](#) p. 12. Further, the policy manual governing residential students stipulates that students may not provide knowingly or recklessly furnish false information to the college (8.1.1.5). In cases where academic work violates the integrity policies, instructors have a range of options. In circumstances where an instructor determines the violation to be more intentional than accidental, proper documentation is secured and filed with the administration in case subsequent infractions are encountered (2E3). In Professional Studies, Safe Assign is used regularly and affiliate faculty are frequently engaged on the topic of plagiarism (2E1). As the college is primarily a teaching institution, the policies relate more directly to student assignments. The policies governing faculty do, however, speak to the expectations of ethical behavior, especially through the faculty statement of responsibility (4.5.3.3), scholarship requirements for faculty evaluation (4.7.1.3), and academic freedom for affiliate faculty members (6.4.9).

## **1R6. Results for Academic Integrity**

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The college does not have robust data related to infractions of the academic integrity policy. To date, the review of faculty academic portfolios has not yielded violations of ethical behavior in scholarship or teaching. For the AY 14-15 the main campus posted one infraction in the academic dean's office for a flagrant violation. There were 23 academic integrity violations (roughly .09%) by students in the adult programs.

## **1I6. Improvements or Planned Improvements for Academic Integrity**

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Since the number of academic integrity violations is acceptably low there does not seem to be much change needed in this area. We will continue to offer faculty development opportunities related to academic integrity and continue to inform students on what integrity violations are and how to avoid them.

## CATEGORY 2: MEETING STUDENT AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

**Context.** The student body of Southwestern College has grown in size and diversity over the past 15 years. Key groups of students include residential traditional-age undergraduates who are U.S. citizens, residential undergraduates and graduates who are international students, non-traditional undergraduate adult learners, and graduate students. International students are the group most recently added to the college's student body.

The college's residential American students come primarily from Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, though roughly 25 U.S. states are usually represented in this student population. The two largest groups of international students – at both the undergraduate and graduate levels – come from China and Saudi Arabia. The college also serves students from other parts of Asia (Singapore and Malaysia) and from Africa. The college's non-traditional adult learners are served by the college's Professional Studies programs, which are offered on ground at several locations in Kansas, and online. The majority of Professional Studies learners are served by online instruction, and come from all over the United States. About 60% of these learners are active duty military personnel, meaning they are studying all over the globe. The college's graduate programs are offered on ground and online. Most graduate learners are working adults who are seeking an advanced degree for professional development and career advancement.

The diversity of the college's students requires the college to employ multiple means to determine student needs and to evaluate the college's effectiveness in meeting those needs. Much the same is true of the college's efforts to provide support for students and improve persistence, retention, and graduation. The college is devoting considerable effort to improving retention and outcomes and there is evidence of progress.

While the college works actively with a number of other stakeholder groups, it is less effective in systematically seeking understanding about the needs of these groups and evaluating whether these needs are being met.

Information on complaint collection and processing has improved, but only a few units of the college are currently gathering and analyzing complaint data.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Processes.** Regarding its processes for students, the college's processes can be characterized as "aligned." Concerning a comprehensive approach to perceiving the needs of all its key stakeholders, the college's processes are barely systematic, particularly with respect to the college's alumni.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Results.** The college is between systematic and aligned in its measurement and use of data concerning results for students. It is barely "systematic" with respect to other key stakeholders.

**Priorities for Improvement.** The college will take focused steps to strengthen assessment of satisfaction among stakeholders other than the college's students. The college will work to systematize its gathering, documentation, and analysis of stakeholder complaints.



## 2P1. Current and Prospective Student Needs

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Identification of key prospective student groups is a collaborative task involving the academic affairs, enrollment management, and student life units of the college. The college actively scans its environment to determine unmet academic and instructional needs, to identify student groups it can serve effectively, and to attract targeted student groups to the college. Cross-functional teams are the norm in the work of identifying prospective student populations, attracting students to the college, and offering academic and support programs that meet their needs. The AIM Team – which includes the college’s provost, main campus and Professional Studies academic deans, and the main campus and Professional Studies vice presidents for enrollment management – is a key venue for evaluating new academic programs to reach new groups of student and learners.

The enrollment management program of the main campus purchases the names of prospective freshmen from two companies. These purchases help the college focus its attention on prospective students whose high school grade point averages and ACT/SAT scores match our recruitment profile. Information on student interest and intended college major is also used in order to better target students who will be a “fit” for Southwestern. Admission staff travel across Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma to attend admission fairs, visit high schools, and speak with individuals who would like more information about Southwestern. When the college receives high school grades and or ACT/SAT test scores for students who do not meet our admission standards we counsel them to retake college placement examinations but also to consider other institutions – often community colleges – that may be a better fit. The main campus admission committee annually considers admission appeals from a very small number of students who do not meet the college’s standard admission criteria. The committee includes members of the admission and student life staffs, and members of the college’s faculty.

The college has long welcomed international students, most of whom up until six years ago, came to the college through its international church network. In the past six years the college has acted with greater intention to instill a global perspective in its students and to create a main campus residential student body that includes larger numbers of international students. The two largest groups of international students on campus are from China and Saudi Arabia. Chinese students began to attend Southwestern as the result of partnerships forged by Chinese employees of the college with institutions in Hefei Province in China. The success of these early efforts has allowed further partnerships to grow, so that American students and faculty from Southwestern are now frequent visitors to China, and a growing population of Chinese citizens is attending Southwestern for undergraduate and graduate studies. The college has worked with a number of English language schools to attract Saudi Arabian students. The supportive environment Southwestern has provided for these students has prompted other students to begin undergraduate and graduate studies at the college. Key ingredients of this support include

the addition of a student life staff member to support international student programming, addition of an ESL faculty member to assist with language acquisition, and the development of an extensive network of Winfield host families who provide friendship and support for many international students (3D1). The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission is also a valuable partner and provides support for tuition, academic advising, and Arabic-based counselling services if needed.

The college's Professional Studies programs embrace prior learning and facilitate career progression for working adults, members of the armed services, and persons in transition. Professional Studies was established specifically to serve the needs of adult learners. Adult learners are highly focused on timely, relevant and practical learning and our programs address employer needs and career demand. For Professional Studies, specific leadership in identifying and working target markets is provided by a business partnership manager whose primary responsibility is to work directly with business and industry to provide credit and non-credit learning options to assist with organizational goals. This is primarily customized learning based specifically on the organization's needs. Educational partnerships are coordinated through an individual who works directly with our educational partners and who also integrates efforts with admissions staff in Wichita and Oklahoma City. These efforts are targeted toward students who are completing associate degrees and wish to continue to earn their bachelor's. The director of military affairs provides direction to all admissions, coaches and marketing personnel regarding the recruitment and retention of military personnel.

Examples of programs and practices that meet marketplace and learner needs: the college's RN to BSN program is a result of growing local and national demand for registered nurses to gain a bachelor degree in nursing to increase the level of patient care; Professional Studies has recently launched an acquisition and contract management program to prepare individuals for national certifications in this career field; Southwestern is a Tier 1 Air University Associate to Baccalaureate Consortium school, which means the college will transfer the credits earned by Air Force personnel in their Community College of the Air Force associate degree program and apply them toward a bachelor's degree, utilizing their prior learning toward completion of a bachelor's degree.

The college uses multiple means to identify and respond to changing student needs. Among these are use of surveys and focus groups, benchmarking, awareness of best practices through study of national association publications, engagement in professional development and training opportunities, issue tracking, resident assistant reports, interaction with students in the student government association, and more or less constant conversations with students and adult learners.

To better support prospective main campus students as they consider Southwestern, the college has added a family financial planner to the staff of its main campus admission office. This position was added so the college may respond to prospective students with timely,

accurate information about the cost of attending Southwestern and ways to meet that cost. We believe this service is helping students – particularly those from low-income families – make a better-informed college choice. Financial aid employees are, similarly, part of the Professional Studies staff, and work actively to assist prospective and current PS learners handle financial issues related to their enrollments and plans of study.

The college has created two committees to assist in providing services that are needed by main campus students. The International Student Services Team and the Student Services Team work to identify subgroups of students who have unique issues and problems requiring attention and resolution. For international students these issues often involve visa status, arranging payment of tuition and fees, housing and food issues at the holidays, etc. The college has developed an extensive foster parents program to help support international student and ensure that they are having a rich inter-cultural learning experience. The Student Services Team addresses process issues concerning course selection and registration, enrollment holds due to unpaid fees, and a multitude of issues dealing with registration, financial aid, and billing. These committees, interacting closely with college faculty members, administrators, the 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS support center, and athletic coaches/activity directors, provide a network of support for main campus students (3D1).

Meeting the needs of Professional Studies learners is a key task of PS Academic Success Coaches (ASC). ASC's assist learners not only with course selection, registration, and degree audits, but also connect learners with needed support regarding financial aid, military tuition assistance, and managing the complicated demands of work, family, and study (3D1). Through these interactions, Professional Studies staff identify changes in the external environment that are impacting learners. As an example, the American military is downsizing significantly. In interacting with base education officers and others, PS staff became aware of a growing number of military personnel coming out of active duty service who needed assistance in translating their military experience to the civilian world. In reviewing our current student needs through coach and admission conversations with military learners, PS staff understood that more students were pursuing degrees in preparation for their civilian careers rather than promotion in the military. As a result, the college has established a Virtual Veteran Services group, sanctioned by the national Student Veterans of America organization. This group provides our students and alumni with access to a variety of resources, articles and websites specific to the needs of this population in transition (3D1).

Staff members who provide non-academic support services are selected based on credentials and experience and receive additional relevant training that is focused on use of best practice and compliance with government regulations (Title 9, FERPA, etc.) (3G6). Staff members participate in onboarding and performance planning and evaluation programs that are described elsewhere in this document. Membership in appropriate professional associations is encouraged and supported with professional development funding.

As was noted in responses to Category 6, the college does not have a well-coordinated approach to the use of surveys, instruments, and other processes to learn about the needs or prospective and achievements of our students. The college uses the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI), the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), administration of National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), focus groups, informal one-off surveys, and young alumni outcomes and satisfaction surveys. NSSE and SSI results are studied with considerable care and are discussed by the Administrative Council in order to identify and set priorities for improvement, however this stops well short of being a comprehensive approach to evaluating the efficacy of the college's effort to meet students' needs.

## **2R1. Current and Prospective Student Needs: Results**

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Every third academic year the college uses the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Index (SSI) to gather and analyze information about student satisfaction with the college's academic, student life, and support programs. The college's internal target for results is to consistently outperform, across the many items evaluated, the national norm at four-year private institutions in terms of respondent satisfaction. The results of the 2012 administration of the SSI shows the college has met this target. Following in Table 2.1 are summaries of the results. Complete results are found at this link: [SSI 2011-2012](#)

**Table 2.1 SSI Summary**

<b>Southwestern College</b>		<b>National Four-Year Privates</b>		
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	
Student Centeredness	0.73	0.85	0.32	**
Campus Life	0.84	0.86	0.31	**
Instructional Effectiveness	0.89	0.94	0.19	
Recruitment and Financial Aid	0.88	1.15	0.48	***
Campus Support Services	0.43	0.67	0.35	***
Academic Advising	0.55	0.89	0.63	***
Registration Effectiveness	0.92	1.08	0.34	**
Safety and Security	1.88	1.28	-0.42	***
Concern for the Individual	0.71	0.92	0.41	***
Service Excellence	0.71	0.90	0.34	***
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations			0.43	**
Campus Climate	0.76	0.90	0.32	**



The number of strengths (seen in Table 2.2) identified far outnumbers the challenges (seen in Table 2.3).

**Table 2.2 SSI Strengths**

<b>Southwestern College - Strengths</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Import</b>	<b>Satis</b>	<b>Gap</b>
16. The instruction in my major field is excellent.	6.68	5.61	1.07
6. My academic advisor is approachable.	6.68	6.29	0.39
33. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.	6.71	6.22	0.49
68. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.	6.71	5.99	0.72
45. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	6.51	5.85	0.66
55. Major requirements are clear and reasonable.	6.59	5.79	0.80
58. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.	6.60	5.54	1.06
7. The campus is safe and secure for all students.	6.59	5.63	0.96
39. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.	6.57	5.82	0.75
14. My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	6.65	6.17	0.48
59. This institution shows concern for students as individuals.	6.42	5.78	0.64
82. Campus item: I respect the professional judgment of my professors regarding how well I mastered the content of my classes.	6.45	5.87	0.58
65. Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.	6.47	6.09	0.38
81. Campus item: Self Service is helpful for selecting and registering for classes.	6.52	5.88	0.64
2. The campus staff are caring and helpful.	6.47	5.66	0.81
3. Faculty care about me as an individual.	6.42	5.79	0.63
51. This institution has a good reputation within the community.	6.33	6.04	0.29
18. Library resources and services are adequate.	6.38	5.95	0.43
60. I generally know what's happening on campus.	6.07	5.69	0.38



Table 2.3 SSI Challenges

Southwestern College - Challenges			
	Import	Satis	Gap
66. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.	6.52	4.95	1.57
47. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.	6.50	5.25	1.25
23. Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable (adequate space, lighting, heat, air, etc.)	6.54	4.86	1.68
34. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.	6.64	5.39	1.25
17. Adequate financial aid is available for most students.	6.62	5.20	1.42
69. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.	6.53	5.32	1.21
25. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.	6.43	5.34	1.09
73. Student activities fees are put to good use.	6.36	4.70	1.66
74. Campus item: The college promotes sufficient opportunities for internships in my major.	6.49	4.98	1.51
36. Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.	6.55	4.63	1.92

Southwestern's students shows higher satisfaction in the items in Table 2.4:

**Table 2.4 SSI High Satisfaction**

Southwestern College	National Four-Year Privates	
	Satis	Satis
6. My academic advisor is approachable.	6.29	5.62
33. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.	6.22	5.61
45. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	5.85	5.51
47. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.	5.25	5.16
58. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.	5.54	5.48
5. Financial aid counselors are helpful.	5.75	5.04
14. My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	6.17	5.38
59. This institution shows concern for students as individuals.	5.78	5.30
2. The campus staff are caring and helpful.	5.66	5.50
3. Faculty care about me as an individual.	5.79	5.42
12. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.	5.28	4.87
51. This institution has a good reputation within the community.	6.04	5.57
1. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.	5.66	5.22
19. My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.	5.76	4.96
44. Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students.	5.62	5.23
37. I feel a sense of pride about my campus.	5.56	5.13
64. New student orientation services help students adjust to college.	5.69	5.18

Most important for the college is the opportunity provided by SSI results to identify areas in which performance needs to be improved. The 2012 SSI provided a cluster of concerning responses around the topic of affordability, value, and preparation for careers after graduation. When Administrative Council members reviewed these responses they confirmed readings from the broader environment of the college concerning the college's value proposition and stimulated several improvement steps that are described below.





The college's participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) permits the college to gauge student satisfaction with their educational experience and whether they would again choose to attend Southwestern College. The responses show a rather high level of satisfaction with the college, but the trend in satisfaction is not positive.

**Table 2.5 NSSE Satisfaction With College Choice (Main Campus)**

		2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
13. How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	FY	3.48	3.15	3.29	3.32	3.2
	SR	3.24	3.33	3.11	3.30	3.0
<i>Scale: 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent</i>						
14. If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	FY	3.55	3.28	3.24	3.18	3.0
	SR	3.28	3.39	2.96	3.21	3.0
<i>Scale: 1=definitely no, 2=probably no, 3=probably yes, 4=definitely yes</i>						

Very similar results are seen for the adults who are enrolled in the college's Professional Studies program (Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6 NSSE Satisfaction With College Choice (Professional Studies)**

		2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
<b>13. Satisfaction Scale (1 to 4)</b>						
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	SR	3.6	3.4	3.49	3.49	3.4
<i>Scale: 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent</i>						
14. If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	SR	3.65	3.5	3.52	3.57	3.4
<i>Scale: 1=definitely no, 2=probably no, 3=probably yes, 4=definitely yes</i>						

The college's Professional Studies program has used the Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) to evaluate the satisfaction of online learners with the college's instruction and support services. The results of the PSOL indicate that PS learners are more

satisfied than the national norm for online learners, and are particularly appreciative of the personal support and service they receive from the college. [PSOL Spring 2011](#) (3D1).

Professional Studies has conducted an exit survey with graduating students for a number of years. The results of the survey indicate quite high levels of general satisfaction among PS learners and positive evaluations of support for handling financial aid, ease of course registration, purchase of textbooks, and the convenience of course scheduling. Learners were less positive in their evaluation of academic support services provided to PS learners, and their evaluations of academic advising and support from academic success coaches have become slightly less favorable over the past five years. [Survey Results](#).

Professional Studies staff have focused a great deal of attention in the past two academic years on evaluation of ease of transfer from partner institutions to PS, allowing learners to seamlessly continue their education. PS staff have identified ten local institutions close to the college's Wichita location. Articulation agreements were reviewed and revised to ease transfers. Faculty developed many 2+2 agreements based on partner school faculty requests. These agreements outline a seamless transition from partner school majors to corresponding programs at Southwestern (3D2).

The number of students from these institutions is tracked through implementation of a new CRM (customer relationship management) software that allows more thorough tracking and ease of reporting. Compared to the prior year, inquiries from partner schools are up significantly as shown below:

	AY 14	AY 15
Barton Community College	2	14
Butler Community College	13	60
Cowley County Community College	7	31
Heritage College	0	59
Hutchinson Community College	0	18
Oklahoma City Community College	0	19
Pratt Community College	0	8
Rose State College	1	20
Vatterott College	1	35
Wichita Area Technical College	0	4

In reviewing the results with these particular institutions, significant gains have been achieved, though their scope varies a great deal. PS staff are currently in the process of identifying why some are performing better than others despite equal effort in promoting these opportunities.

Observed results for student satisfaction are encouraging, but they also indicate areas that need attention and improvement. On the main campus, the quality of student housing and the quality of student interactions with the campus security staff have been highlighted as needing improvement. A student focus group was convened to elicit feedback and guidance from students concerning housing issues. The [findings](#) of that group will be incorporated into planning for new and renovated housing options.

When serving adult learners, particularly those who are on active duty military service, flexible scheduling and responsiveness service concerning schedules, payment, tuition assistance, etc. are paramount. Survey results indicate adequate support is being provided, on the whole, but strengthened academic support services are needed.

## **2I1. Current and Prospective Student Needs: Improvements**

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Southwestern College recently became a member of the Competency-Based Education Network and is exploring implementation of some competency-based programs to serve adult learners.

The Professional Studies unit has identified instances in which onboarding learners were overwhelmed with all the processes involved in beginning their experience, e.g., with setting up Self-Service, logging in to Blackboard, accessing their email, etc. While the college provided instructions to these new students, the students found this material difficult to assimilate and often contacted an admission representative or academic success coach with follow-up questions. Consequently, PS is reviewing start up processes for new students and is developing short 'how to' videos that will be used as a resource and an online orientation for new students. These will be sent sequentially to new students so they can read and see demonstrations in smaller increments (3D1).

The college is currently realigning the work of admission, student life, and academic staff who have significant interactions with/responsibilities for international students. These students often have difficulty navigating college processes and, when advocating for themselves, tend to ignore settled processes while seeking a sympathetic ear and a favorable decision. Key processes will be reviewing and redesigned.

Results of the college-conducted student focus groups on student housing will be interpreted and will inform plans for both renovation of extant housing and construction of new student housing that are expected to be funded by an upcoming capital campaign.

The college's online writing center – formerly a part of the Professional Studies unit – has been shifted to become part of the 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS, the college's academic success center. This move will improve academic support for PS learners (3D1).

## **2P2. Retention, Persistence, and Completion**

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The Office of Institutional Research is responsible for the collection and analysis of the student retention, persistence and completions of the freshman cohorts for official reporting purposes which includes reporting to IPEDS and student athlete retention/graduation data for consumer information compliance. Retention, persistence and completion data on all students (main campus and Professional Studies) is collected and analyzed for internal reporting purposes by institutional research (4C1).

For official reporting of freshman cohorts the cohort is established every fall as of the official census date (20<sup>th</sup> day) and includes all first-time, full-time freshmen. The cohorts are based on coding used by the Office of Admission, verified by IR based on high school graduation and transferred hours from other colleges, confirmed by the admission office, then coded into the database by IR. Aggregated retention and completion data is maintained by semester for six years and published in the Fact Book on the IR's website. Data is maintained in MS Access tables for reporting to IPEDS.

Student athlete retention and completion data are based on the established freshman cohorts and includes those who received athletically-related financial aid for the initial enrollment and coded in the database as a subcohort. This was once required reporting in IPEDS and is now required for consumer information. The report is updated every year and made available on the school's consumer information web site (4C2).

Transfer student (main campus) data is not reported to IPEDS but is maintained for internal uses. Institutional research has tracked transfer student retention and completion rates, based on first-time enrollments at SC and subsequent enrollment and graduation.

During the college's participation in the Transparency by Design project, persistence and graduation rates for PS students were publicly reported. Persistence and graduation rates are now calculated for internal purposes. No standard measure of retention and persistence has emerged in the world of adult education. The college has focused on session to session persistence, finding such measures as semester retention and time to degree problematic to compute and difficult to compare to results for other institutions. Professional Studies tracks student persistence (session-to-session) for each enrollment period. This is used to determine student engagement, satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness. Persistence data is generated from our ERP and Power Campus at the end of each drop and add period. These reports were generated by the Office of Institutional Research. Persistence is measured by the number of

students enrolled for that session who return the immediately succeeding session. Data are also gathered on the number of stop-outs who reenter. This is a separate measurement with different strategies and tactics. This data was not previously tracked and so for the 2014-15 academic year, reentering student numbers are being collected for benchmarking purposes. Reenters are defined as those students who attended within the last 12 months, but were not enrolled during the session immediately preceding their re-enrollment. This data is also generated from Power Campus via reports written by institutional research (4C2).

Targets for main campus undergraduate retention have been established in the college's strategic planning process, based on benchmarking with other private colleges in Southwestern's region and similar institution's nationally. Those targets are: to achieve 90% retention for freshmen from first to second semester, 75% retention of freshmen from first semester to third semester, and to achieve a 60% graduation rate for freshmen, with those students completing their degrees in six years or less. Professional Studies has set, and exceeded, a goal of 65% session to session persistence by adult learners. The goal will probably be raised to 75% for the 2015-16 academic year (4C1).

Analysis of main campus undergraduate retention results is led by the college's associate academic vice president for advising and student success. As the director of the college's 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS academic support center, the associate vice president chairs several committees and working groups, representing key areas of the main campus, that are focused on achieving retention goals (4C4).

The position of associate academic vice president for advising and student success was created and filled in the fall of 2013. The person selected for this position has worked with great energy to strengthen the college's support services for student success, including the development of 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS (more information about the Center for Learning and Academic Support Services may be found at this link: [1st-CLASS](#) ) The arrival of the new associate vice president and the development of 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS coincided with the college's decision to work with a Noel-Levitz retention consultant to develop a stronger retention program. Dr. Charles Schroeder of Noel-Levitz asked the college to begin this consultation by completion of a [Retention Self-Assessment](#) (4C4).

Following a two-day visit to campus, Dr. Schroeder identified several key steps for the college to consider, including: doing a better job of communicating to academic advisors information gathered by the college concerning gaps in the college preparation and readiness of incoming students; altering advisee assignment practices to better match at-risk students with skilled advisors; strengthening tutoring and academic support services, particularly for students having difficulty with college algebra; creation of an advising and retention vision statement; and development of a standardized early alert process to identify students who are having academic difficulty.

Many of these prescribed changes have been implemented. The associate academic vice president created a process whereby incoming freshmen and transfer students complete the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI) before beginning their studies at Southwestern. The CSI aids students in evaluating and self-reporting their readiness for college and any particular anxieties or concerns they may have concerning achieving academic success. CSI results, combined with analysis of GPA and ACT/SAT scores, permit advisees to be directed to appropriate services and to begin courses in challenging areas, such as mathematics, at a proper level of difficulty (3D2). Tutoring services in 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS are now available 52 hours a week. The college has hired an additional mathematics instructor with experience in development math instruction to lead tutoring and teaching of math for at-risk students. The college's IT department partnered with 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS to replace a welter of disconnected "warning" systems, many of which were focused on attendance rather than attainment, with a comprehensive early alert system that permits faculty to report students having difficulty. 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS staff receive these alerts and seek to involve advisors, faculty, student life staff, and athletic and activity coaches where appropriate, in supporting students. 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS has recently added an additional staff member whose counseling background aids direct contact and conversation with students (3C6).

Work on retention issues is led by the Retention and Academic Achievement Committee (REACH), which functions as a steering committee and involves faculty, administrators, and coaches. Subcommittees of the group are focused on assessment in academic advising, international student retention, early alert, academic advising, sophomore retention, the Academic Athletic Council, and career planning and preparation (3D1).

The Professional Studies vice president for enrollment management meets regularly with the PS director of learner support and academic success, and with the success coaching staff, to review persistence results and discuss improvement strategies. A number of initiatives were implemented during the 2014-15 academic year to positively impact Professional Studies persistence. Changes to permit adult learners to register for classes for the entire semester (three six-week sessions) were specifically implemented to assist students to better plan their degree completion, funding, and external obligations. The Issue Tracking mechanism allows staff to log individual suggestions or concerns from students so that trends can be identified and addressed. Both these changes have proven to be helpful in servicing student (3D1).

Two additional proactive retention initiatives were implemented as well. Professional Studies has an Early Alert process for students who were struggling in classes. These alerts are sent to academic success coaching staff for follow up. Participation by faculty has been sporadic and the program is being evaluated.

In the fall 2014 semester, the PS director of director of learner support and academic success and PS director of faculty worked collaboratively to identify specific courses where students typically struggle. This was based on data showing 86% of the learners who were found to be Category 2 Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs

persistence risks did not successfully complete those classes. Data also indicated that students who do not succeed in these classes often did not participate in their initial coaching appointment. Courses identified include CORE 101, CORE 110, English 1 and 2, College Algebra, and Statistics. For these courses, the director of faculty sends weekly requests to faculty to identify all students in their classes who have an earned grade of “C” or below. These students are then contacted by their academic success coaches to discuss strategies for success. Coaches and faculty communicate regarding individual students to provide the optimal student support. Additionally, a more assertive effort was implemented in both admissions and success coaching to have all new students participate in their first coaching meeting. Although this is a new initiative, the results are extremely encouraging. The baseline measure was 86% non-completion. After the initiative, only 41% did not successfully complete their class (3D1).

PS has also implemented a more aggressive communication strategy with current students to keep them informed of deadlines, program changes, process changes and other timely information. Emails are sent to currently enrolled students during weeks two and four of each session. Students not enrolled for the upcoming session by week five are contacted by their lead faculty.

An initial goal of 65% session-to-session persistence was established (4C1). This goal represented an increase from prior years, but was an attainable first step toward matching peer institutions. As a result of these collective efforts, and others, session-to-session persistence has increased significantly over prior years as shown below.

Comparison to peer institutions indicates that we are on the right track. Leaders in online education with strong military enrollment typically have 75%-85% session-to-session persistence. As a result, additional programs will be identified and implemented in upcoming academic years.

Among new programs to be implemented is a more comprehensive discussion with students beginning in the admission process regarding tuition funding options and the advantages of continual enrollment. The majority of our students are using military tuition assistance (TA) or employer reimbursement. Both of these typically have an annual cap after which students tend to cease enrollment until the next fiscal year begins. This prolongs time to degree and decreases the likelihood that a learner will persist and graduate. PS staff are working with financial aid and student accounts to better understand all payment and funding options so that this information can be presented to students early in the enrollment process.

The Office of Institutional Research developed and regularly produces a number of standard reports concerning main campus undergraduate retention. The office developed specialized reports for use by the PS in tracking session to session persistence. To support the work of retention consultant Charles Schroeder, the Office of Institutional Research gathered and presented data as part of a retention self-assessment (4C4). The Department of Information



Technology partnered with 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS to develop an early alert system that permits analysis of the traits of students who are having academic difficulty. 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS has used the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory to help students self-identify weaknesses in their academic preparation or concerns about their ability to succeed academically at Southwestern College.

## 2R2. Retention, Persistence, and Completion: Results

The college has established the following main campus undergraduate retention and graduation goals: fall to spring retention—**90 %**; freshman fall to sophomore fall retention—**75%**; six-year graduation rate—**60%** (4C1). The data reflecting the college's efforts to attain those goals are in Chart 2.1 and Table 2.27:

Chart 2.1 Main Campus First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Graduation Rates, by Cohort

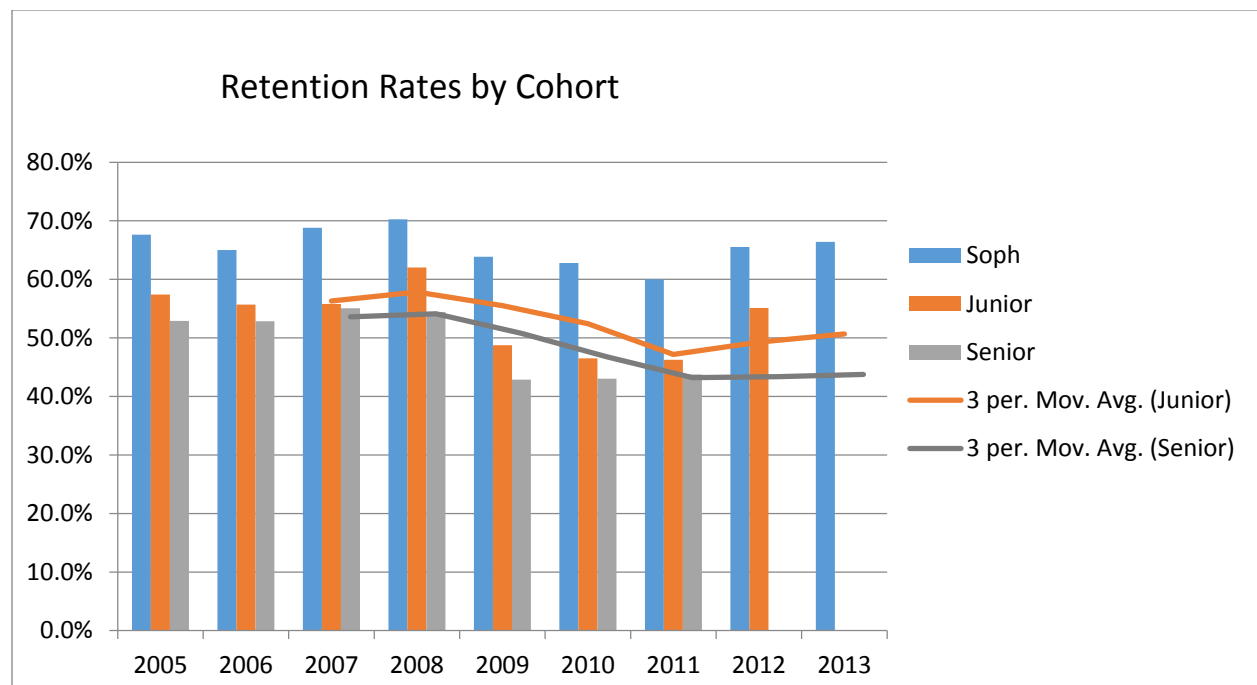




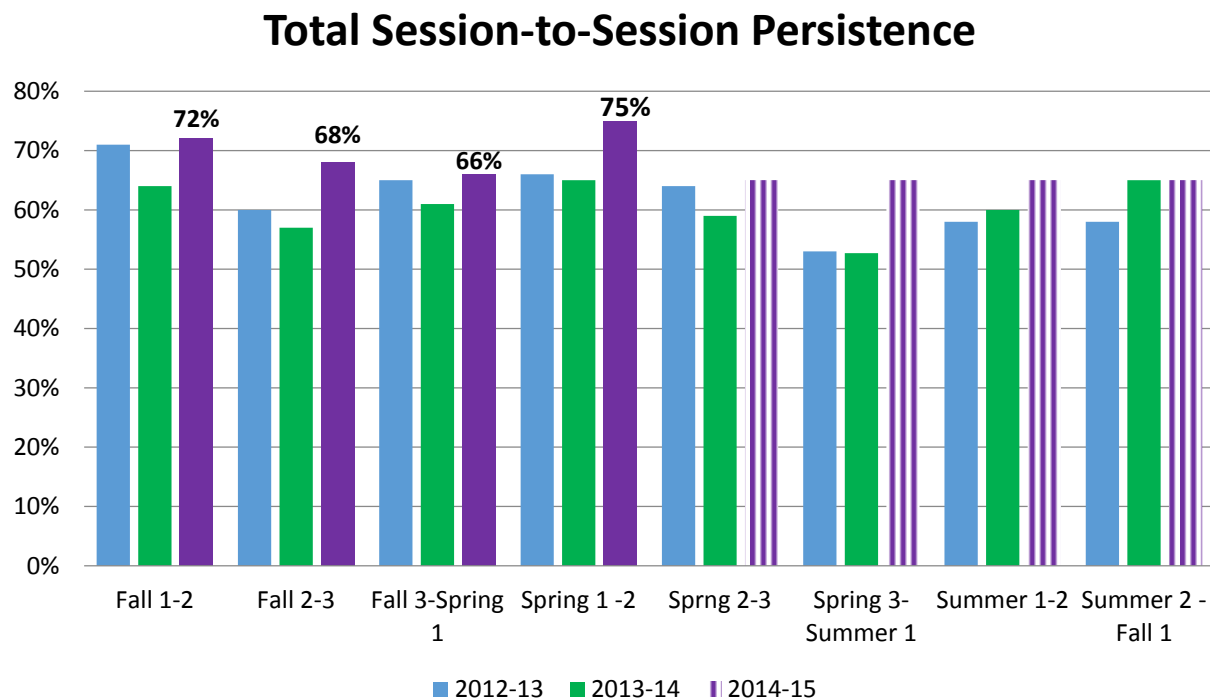


Table 2.7 Main Campus First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Graduation Rates, by Cohort

Main Campus First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Graduation Rates			
Cohort	4 Yr	5 Yr	6 Yr
2005	49.3%	56.6%	57.4%
2006	40.7%	50.0%	51.4%
2007	42.0%	50.7%	52.9%
2008	42.4%	53.2%	53.8%
2009	34.5%	42.0%	
2010	32.6%		

At present, the college is not achieving its main campus undergraduate retention and graduation goals. Data show improvement in fall to spring freshman retention. PS session-to-session persistence (as indicated in Table 2.2) is currently exceeding the college's goal of 65%. A higher goal is being considered.

Chart 2.2 Professional Studies Adult Learners, Total Session-to-Session Persistence



Concerning comparative data, the college compares its graduation rate data from main campus undergraduates to results reported by both private and public colleges and universities in our service area. The spreadsheet in Table 2.8 below provides an example of this comparison. The data show that Southwestern College is outperforming other private colleges of Kansas, and has better graduation rates than all but a few public institutions with which it is often compared.

**Table 2.8 White House Scorecard Results**

<b>White House College Scorecard Results, 2013</b>							
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Average net price</b>	<b>Average net price change 2007 - 2009</b>	<b>Six-year Graduation Rate</b>	<b>Typical Federal Loan Total</b>	<b>Monthly Repayment Amount for Ten Years</b>		
Baker University	\$ 19,445	Up 9.3%	55%	\$ 21,000	\$ 241		
Benedictine College	\$ 22,014	Up 3%	56%	\$ 20,000	\$ 230		
Bethany College	\$ 16,901	Up 8.1%	42%	\$ 15,870	\$ 182		
Bethel College	\$ 16,429	Up 5.5%	52%	\$ 16,125	\$ 185		
Central Christian College	\$ 16,102	Down 2.7%	41%	\$ 13,500	\$ 155		
Friends University	\$ 18,031	Up 3.7%	27%	\$ 19,250	\$ 221		
Kansas Wesleyan University	\$ 18,049	Down 2.2%	42%	\$ 15,870	\$ 171		
Manhattan Christian College	\$ 17,946	Down 6.2%	39%	\$ 11,000	\$ 126		
McPherson College	\$ 18,452	Up 5.4%	46%	\$ 17,500	\$ 201		
MidAmerica Nazarene	\$ 15,374	Down 11.4%	44%	\$ 16,273	\$ 187		
Newman University	\$ 16,551	Up 1.2%	27%	\$ 17,000	\$ 195		
Ottawa University	\$ 15,756	Up 5.7%	47%	\$ 17,924	\$ 206		
<b>Southwestern College</b>	<b>\$ 19,359</b>	<b>Up 2.9%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>\$ 19,300</b>	<b>\$ 222</b>		
Sterling College	\$ 16,975	Down 2.2%	48%	\$ 21,000	\$ 241		
Tabor College	\$ 19,985	Down .8%	53%	\$ 16,666	\$ 191		
University of St. Mary	\$ 17,034	Down 1.5%	42%	\$ 18,000	\$ 207		
Emporia State University	\$ 10,964	Down .03%	43%	\$ 14,795	\$ 170		
Fort Hays State University	\$ 10,549	Up 12.2%	40%	\$ 13,228	\$ 152		
Kansas State University	\$ 14,351	Up 9.8%	56%	\$ 19,625	\$ 225		
Pittsburg State University	\$ 10,072	Up 3.5%	47%	\$ 13,750	\$ 158		
University of Kansas	\$ 14,768	Up 12.1%	61%	\$ 18,625	\$ 214		
Washburn University	\$ 12,446	Up 7.8%	37%	\$ 16,108	\$ 185		
Wichita State University	\$ 8,079	Down 7.1%	43%	\$ 15,500	\$ 178		
Oklahoma State University	\$ 12,990	Up 11.4%	62%	\$ 17,330	\$ 199		
University of Oklahoma	\$ 15,289	Up 19%	67%	\$ 18,000	\$ 207		

Two additional comparative measures of the college's main campus graduation rate are available. The Chronicle of Higher Education completed an analysis of graduation rates for first-time full-time freshmen using data from students who graduated in 2011 to 2013. The [data](#) show that Southwestern has higher graduation rates than most of the other private colleges in

Kansas. Moreover, the college has the highest number of degree completions per 100 FTE undergraduates among private college in Kansas and leads this comparison group in terms of the efficiency (measured as cost per student) in producing graduates. The Higher Education Research Institute has published an online expected graduation rate calculator, which calculates expected rates based on the demographic and educational attainment characteristics of an institution's students. [Southwestern's results](#) match those of similar institutions whose data were used in building the calculator (4C2).

It has been difficult to gather comparative persistence and graduation data for our Professional Studies program. No standard measures have emerged for this sector of higher education, and very little information is made public.

Interpretation of these results indicates that the college is achieving retention results that are consistent with its "inputs," the characteristics of the students the college serves. The college has put in place a number of support programs that aim to improve these results, but the programs have not been in place long enough to permit longitudinal analysis of their impact and effectiveness.

## 2I2. Retention, Persistence, and Completion: Improvements

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Professional Studies will be adopting a review of key categories that affect retention in order to better understand and address retention factors. We will begin a new assessment during the 2015-16 academic year. As an example of how this will be utilized, particular classes and programs with high drop rates will be reviewed. Student data such as GPA, prior educational experience (e.g. number of credits transferred, etc.) will be reviewed to determine if any patterns exist. Academics input will be received regarding skill levels that may be required for successful completion. Once particular 'flags' are identified, programs will be put in place for each of the categories (prevention, intervention and recovery). This may involve implementation or revision of prerequisites, more intrusive advising, etc.

The associate vice president for advising and academic success has created a steering committee, called REACH (Retention and Academic Achievement) to guide the overall retention effort on the main campus. The committee will supplement the work of the faculty's Admission and Retention Committee and the Academic Athletic Council (which connects athletic staff with faculty members to work collaboratively on retention issues) (4C4). An expected outgrowth of REACH is the creation of a "one-stop shop" in 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS focused on providing campus-wide career planning services. 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS is also developing materials and programs to assist students with improving their financial literacy and their ability to manage their finances.

## 2P3. Key Stakeholder Needs

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Through the creation of its annual statement of Goals and Directions, in its mission statement, and in other ways, the college has identified a number of key stakeholder groups, including alumni, parents, employers, community members, the U.S. armed forces, and the United Methodist Church and its Great Plains Annual Conference.

The college's key stakeholders are organizations and individuals that send us students, organizations and individuals that receive and employ our graduates, organizations with a strong affinity with Southwestern based on shared missions and values, and individuals who have a strong affinity with the school by virtue of having attended Southwestern or having a member of the family who is attending, or has attended, the college. The college works actively to engage with all these key stakeholder groups and to understand and meet their expectations and requirements.

Alumni, as a whole, are served by the college's alumni program, which is part of the college's Department of Institutional Advancement. Programs for alumni focus on maintaining connections to the college, with college faculty members, and with other alumni. Many of the college's academic departments maintain active efforts to connect with alumni, including the use of advisory committees and halls of fame which honor distinguished alumni.

The parents of current students are served by many offices of the college – including student life, financial aid, and student services (billing, etc.) The departments of student life and communications collaborate to produce newsletters and email blasts to parents of current students. Similarly, the department of athletics works to keep parents informed about athletic contests and the achievements of the college's athletes.

The college's graduates are our principal product and both our students and employers expect the college to send well-prepared and employable people into the world at Commencement. The college's academic departments (through the work of advisory committees), director of internships, and director of organizational partnerships play key roles in reaching out to employers to understand their requirements.

The college serves two communities – Winfield and Wichita, Kansas – and works to understand and meet needs in both communities. In Winfield, the college is a principal provider of educational programs, athletic and artistic entertainment, and energetic student and employee volunteers for community service. Southwestern has partnered with the Winfield public schools, Winfield Recreation Commission, and City of Winfield to co-develop and manage a number of athletic and recreation facilities. The college partners with the local school district to provide teacher training experiences for teacher education majors. The college operates a highly-regarded laboratory preschool in downtown Winfield. In Wichita, the college has partnered actively with middle schools that serve minority and low-income populations with academic

enrichment activities – including summer academic camps on the Winfield campus – that encourage middle schoolers to begin planning for college. The college's Professional Studies staff is headquartered in Wichita and actively seeks to foster partnerships between the college and the Wichita public schools and Wichita-area employers.

Professional Studies celebrated 20 years of serving the needs of adult students in 2014. PS has a long history of working with the military and area businesses to meet the need for relevant degrees and specific skill training. In 2014-15, the PS partnership plan focused on four key partnerships: with other educational institutions, with the military, with other organizations (employers), and the general public. Each of these areas has been assigned a specific tactical leader who works with others to serve these markets.

All PS employees work with the general public in some capacity. However, our director of marketing, the public relations and social media coordinator, the vice president for enrollment, and the organizational partnerships manager are primary points of contact. All community activities were reviewed to determine those where Professional Studies could most contribute in a way that aligned with our mission of preparing students for careers, graduate studies and career progression for the working adult. Our representative in Oklahoma is active in the community representing Southwestern College in Rotary and the local Chamber of Commerce. Our educational partnerships manager represents PS in the Kansas City area Chambers of Commerce. In Wichita, PS is involved in key community activities such as the local Chambers (Wichita and Derby) of Commerce serving on several committees, Rotary, Wichita's annual Riverfest, and other strategic organizations.

The college's director of military programs oversees all activities specifically related to our military partnerships. This includes all military learners, veterans, military spouses, the Department of Defense, and other related governmental organizations such as the Defense Acquisition University (DAU). The director is active in national groups such as National Association of Institutions for Military Education Services (NAIMES) and state organizations such as the Advisory Council of Military Education (ACME). He also attends appropriate national conferences such as the Council of Colleges Military Education (CCME). These organizations provide direct communication with the Department of Defense officials overseeing tuition assistance, base access, and military educational needs (degrees and non-credit) and the contact allows Southwestern College to stay abreast of the changing needs and regulations associated with this constituency.

Additionally, the director regularly meets with the education services officers (ESO) at both installations where we have offices, McConnell Air Force Base and Fort Riley, to determine local needs and our ability and effectiveness in servicing their airmen/soldiers. He also actively works with prospective students, applicants and current students who are military, which provides a front-line familiarity with our ability to meet their needs.

The organizational partnership manager leads the efforts with our business and industry constituents. She is active in several community groups and professional organizations such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the SHRM subcommittee on diversity, and serves on the Achieve Kansas committee through the Wichita Chamber, Advance Kansas Diversity Leadership Initiative, and on the Cowley First Economic Development group. These organizations allow her to hear directly from employers about the skills they are seeking, educational opportunities (credit and non-credit) for their employees and changes in local industry trends.

In the past year, all organizational partnership agreements have been reviewed, revised, or retired. New partnerships are considered after identification of organizational needs and the ability of Southwestern College Professional Studies to meet those needs for individuals transitioning or those seeking career progression. Partner organizations and community groups are offered the use of our facilities for meetings.

We also work collaboratively with our education partners who are involved in serving business and industry. In particular, Cowley County Community College, Butler Community College and Wichita Area Technical College have very strong training departments. As specific training needs are identified in which Southwestern College does not have expertise, those training needs are coordinated with the appropriate partner.

On the main campus in Winfield, the different academic divisions craft partnerships that meet the needs of students. For instance, the college has appointed an internship coordinator to the business division. That person establishes relationships with local businesses to ensure opportunities for students from any major should they be unable to find a suitable site on their own. Since 2011, the department has established 32 sites and served 150 interns. Placement sites include banks in Winfield, fitness centers in Winfield, aircraft manufacturing in Wichita, Koch Industries Wichita, minor league baseball teams (Oklahoma City and Overland Park, Kansas), agriculture, insurance, construction, entertainment, financial advising, accounting firms, and retail (shops and restaurants) in Winfield. The performing arts division actively partners with area high schools for choral festivals and band competitions and is the home base for both a regional community/college symphony and a regional youth symphony. The teacher education division interfaces regularly with public schools in a variety of capacities including student teaching opportunities and in addressing state-level policy issues. A strong program in the religion and philosophy department places students in ministry-related internships.

The college has enjoyed growth in the number of international students. In order to better support those learners, the college has partnered with the U.S. Department of State for the establishment and maintenance of a J-visa program. That visa category enables the college to host visiting scholars from partner institutions. Those scholars serve as a resource for faculty and staff in learning about the challenges of supporting international students. As this aspect of the partnership is more qualitative, the college will produce a small monograph that contains the

Category 2 Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs

reflections of visiting scholars and the SC faculty who hosted them. That work will be shared with the Academic Programs Division in the State Department as evidence of effectiveness for the J-visa program. Additional partners who help to facilitate international partnerships include AMIDEAST, an organization dedicated to promoting understanding of the MENA region and the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission which provides tuition and support for students from that country.

The college actively collaborates with the Kansas Independent College Association, an organization dedicated to advancing the interests of area institutions. Officers of the member colleges meet regularly to explore consortium pricing, academic resources, academic trends and responses, and legal and legislative concerns within the state of Kansas. The college is also a member of the Council of Independent Colleges. That national organization represents the collective interests of its members and also provides a number of opportunities to enhance the academic environment. The college has actively participated in the Woodrow Wilson visiting scholars program; the chief academic officers meeting which ensures that administrators are up to date on legal and academic issues; and the division chairs workshops which provide professional development for the effective management of academic sub-units.

The college works with the United Methodist Church in a number of ways, including partnerships with board and agencies, the office of the Great Plains Annual Conference, local churches, youth groups, and at the Conference's nearby camp. Southwestern provides online classes to persons needing ministry-related training and spiritual growth, and we assist in worship at area churches as well as providing support for their youth groups and praise teams. This effort is overseen by the Church Relations Committee which is chaired by the campus minister and includes the division chair for the social sciences, the director of Discipleship, the director of worship outreach, the chair of the philosophy/religion department, and the executive director of the Institute for Discipleship.

The college is currently undertaking a survey of younger alumni to better understand what modes of communication they would like the college to use in building and maintaining relationships. This data will help the college as it works to build the right mix of communications efforts to better serve the community and large and our alumni base in particular.

At present, the college does not work systematically to evaluate and select instruments and methods for use in evaluating the satisfaction of the college's stakeholders. The creation of a committee to improve coordination in this realm is an improvement objective of the college.

## 2R3. Key Stakeholder Needs: Results

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In 2010 the college conducted an online survey of all the pastors in the Kansas West Annual Conference which has now merged into the Great Plains Annual Conference. Responses to the [survey](#) indicated a strong knowledge of the college's resources and positive feedback about them. A follow up study is planned now that the merger is complete. Also, an evaluation for each participant in an online class is provided and reviewed. Overall, high positive evaluations are received. Results of the college's survey of conference pastors is found in the 2010 AQIP Action Project on Distinctive Objectives. The area of the project that relates to our UMC stakeholders is found in the church relations section.

In 2012 the college surveyed the parents of current main campus undergraduate students to gain information about their satisfaction with the college, their satisfaction with particular aspects of the college (instruction, social, student safety, etc.), and how they were paying for college. Results are at this link: [Parent Survey](#). In 2013 the college sent a follow-up parent survey to learn more about parents' preferences for communication from the college. The survey asked questions about means of communication (print, email, text, etc.), substance (athletics, academic achievements, fine arts events, key financial aid and registration deadlines), and frequency of communication. [Results](#) were used to create and execute a plan for communication to parents.

A 2014 survey of college alumni, conducted as part of a feasibility study for an upcoming capital campaign, reports that 64.6% of respondents describe their educational experience at Southwestern as very positive, 30.7% describe their experience as positive, and 1.2% report a negative experience.

In the same survey, 53.9% of alumni report feeling very positive about the value of their Southwestern college degree, 36.6% feel positive, 9.5% have neutral or negative feelings. Concerning the college's leadership, 40.6% expressed very positive feelings, 37.8% were positive, about 20% were neutral, and 2% expressed negative feelings.

The college periodically conducts a SWOT analysis, which seeks the views of members of the local community, the college's alumni, et al. Results show the local community is highly appreciative of the role of the college in providing cultural programming and athletic events for the community.

Examples of key partnerships developed or being explored between the college's Professional Studies unit and employer and educational stakeholders include the following: 1) Development of a structured curriculum within the existing associate's degree in general studies to meet defined educational needs of T-Mobile call center employees. Management identified specific skills necessary for existing staff and also those on a leadership track. 2) Development and



implementation of a two-day workshop for Cowley County Community College leadership personnel for professional development tied to strategic planning, process for upcoming accreditation visit. 3) Currently in discussions with GE Aviation to continue plant-wide non-credit training around leadership, teaming, and business skills in process management. 4) Continuing discussions with the Mountain Plains Minority Supplier Council regarding development of a 'Business Boot Camp' for the membership. 5) Discussions with Kansas Global Trade Initiative, a group formed by the City of Wichita with area business (primarily manufacturing/ aircraft industry) and their Chinese counterparts to promote trade. Southwestern hopes to provide cross-cultural awareness, terminology, and partnership building to facilitate business development.

The college has not established internal targets or external benchmarks for its measures of non-student stakeholder satisfaction. Interpretation of observed results indicates fairly high levels of satisfaction with the college's programs among alumni, United Methodist clergy, and parents. The college has not systematically sought stakeholder satisfaction data from the employers it serves.

Professional Studies implemented an issue tracking system in late 2014. Any employee at PS may enter items. Issues are categorized by academic experience, customer service, equipment/technology/textbooks, facilities, and other and can be entered for tracking purposes only, or assigned to the appropriate individual for resolution.

A total of 50 issues were logged as shown in Table 2.9:

**Table 2.9 Professional Studies Complaint Resolution**

	Active	Pending	Resolved	Tracking Only		Total
Academic Experience			1	6		7
Customer Service		1	12	9		22
Equipment/Technology	4	1	15	1		21
Facilities						0
Textbooks			1			1
Other						0

The majority of issues in both Customer Service and Technology were related to our phone system and lack of ability to reach the appropriate individuals. The phone system at PS has now been replaced, additional lines added, voice mail is sent to email and we can now transfer to the Winfield campus.

Other consistent issues in Customer Services were the response time and lack of information or inconsistent information. We have now implemented guidelines that all emails and calls should

be returned within one business day. Weekly training for admission and academic coaches has been implemented on process and departmental information (academic programs, financial aid, student accounts). Additionally, we are in the process of designing an online orientation that will be available in the Student Resources section of our website. These will consist of short videos demonstrating to students how to log in to the Learning Management System, access Self-Service, access their email, etc.

### **2I3. Key Stakeholder Needs: Improvements**

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The college has begun to offer an expanded program of performing arts events to meet community needs and is undertaking more collaborative arts programming with local schools and other cultural organizations. A full-time director of camps, conferences, and special events has provided improved community involvement.

The college has hired an ordained member of the clergy of the United Methodist Church to serve as our full-time campus minister. Previous campus ministers had been teaching faculty or responsible for co-curricular offerings such as Discipleship Southwestern. We expect this realignment of responsibilities to strengthen ties between Southwestern and the United Methodist Church's Great Plains Annual Conference.

The work of the current Task Force on the Future of Southwestern College will be reporting recommendations in the fall of 2015 concerning ways the college may more effectively segment its communication with various age cohorts of college alumni and with alumni affinity groupings.

PS has identified other sub-groups we feel are underserved within the military market, or that PS has not purposefully sought to serve. These include National Guard (Air and Army), Reservists, Navy, and Marines. PS staff will actively work to understand and respond to the educational needs of these groups. Additionally, the college has reached out more purposefully to veteran organizations and have recently partnered with the VFW to be an active partner with our Virtual Student Veterans Association.

### **2P4. Complaint Process**

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Southwestern College has developed two separate complaint collection processes. One collection process was created for general complaints and the second process was created as a proactive response to governmental requirements and responsibilities regarding harassment, bullying, discrimination, and Title IX complaints.

For the general complaint process, a documentation site was created and is available to all departments. Administrative departments have been trained on the documentation site process

and have been asked to define what they want to track. Still many departments use their own systems, whether Excel spreadsheets or paper files. Here are a few examples of how the documentation cite is being used: Information Technology uses the system to track computer, printer, and other IT complaints; Professional Studies uses the system to track new students' issues with enrollment.

A website was created for Title IX misconduct reporting. The website explains to whom to report and how complaints are resolved. Southwestern also provides a campus conduct hotline to report harassment, discrimination, or other areas of misconduct. The conduct hotline is a confidential, independent, call-in service.

Those who use the general complaint documentation site are able to mine data to determine the source of complaints and follow-up. The IT department has used this function to note product defects and make informed decisions about laptop and printer purchase.

The Office of Student Life communicates the Title IX misconduct reporting process to students through a series of emails and through pamphlets during a Safety Week event. Student Life also provides a resource handout to complainants about the Title IX resolution process once a complaint is reported. Faculty and staff are also notified of the complaint process during Title IX trainings.

The Office of Student Life and the Title IX coordinator have been exploring campus climate survey options. These surveys would help evaluate the climate, including complaint resolution. However, at this time a valid and reliable survey has not been identified.

## **2R4. Complaint Process: Results**

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As stated, the IT department, due to the nature of their services, keeps extensive records of issues and complaints regarding technological issues in the college. This is also the pilot program for other departments attempting to implement a more robust and systematic approach after their initial training program.

This [attached document](#) has screen captures of some of the typical reporting of the system that is done to manage and analyze the results of the records.

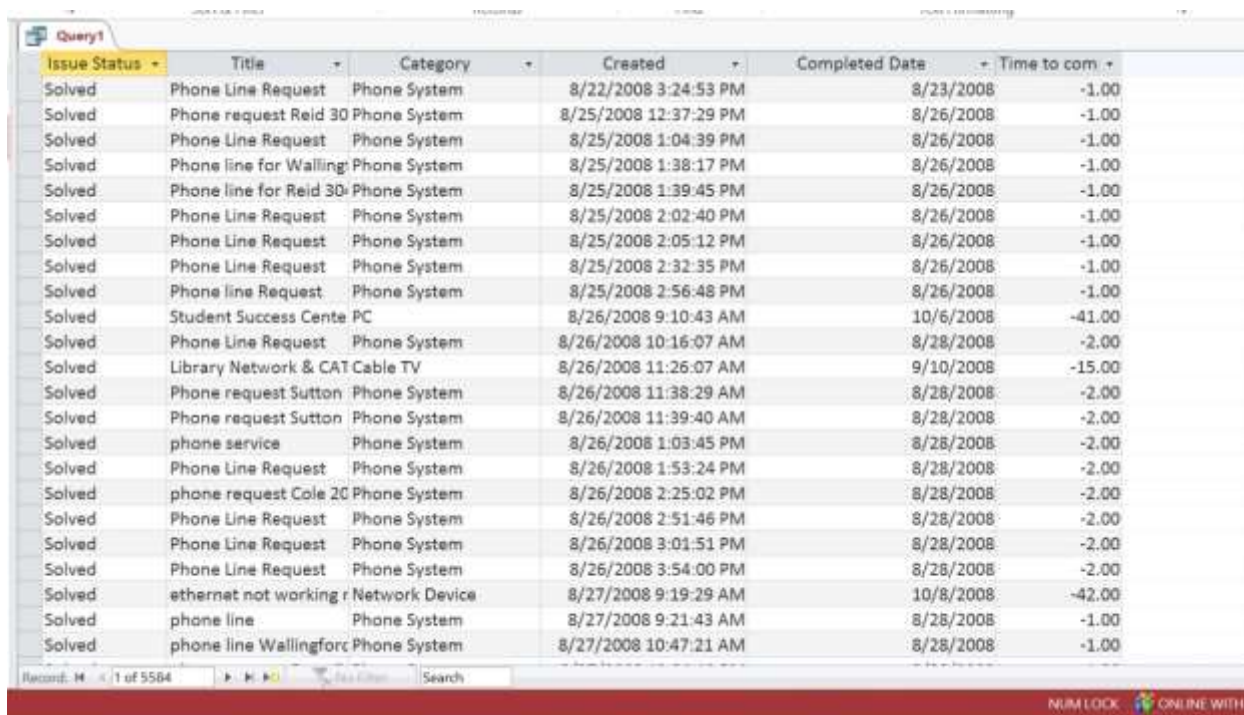
- Tracking measures:
  - Time to completion
  - Reporting person
  - Assigned to
  - Issue type
  - Issue category
  - Priority

- Status
  - Report by unsolved issues
  - In depth analysis by any category with cross references
  - Performance by period
  - Review by category
  - Report by requestor (people with problems)

Due to the fact that the system provides live, instantaneous drill down reporting, there are no specific paper reports used on a regular basis as we can obtain any report for any criteria as needed.

The reports and results are measured according to internal targets set with each individual. As an example, we can see which category of issues are taking a long time to solve and from there drill down to individuals, specific types of issues, and why. Generic and overall numbers are not as useful as drill downs to achieve specificity needed to solve a systemic problem.

**Illustration 2.1**



Issue Status	Title	Category	Created	Completed Date	Time to complete
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/22/2008 3:24:53 PM	8/23/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone request Reid 30	Phone System	8/25/2008 12:37:29 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/25/2008 1:04:39 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone line for Walling	Phone System	8/25/2008 1:38:17 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone line for Reid 30	Phone System	8/25/2008 1:39:45 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/25/2008 2:02:40 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/25/2008 2:05:12 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/25/2008 2:32:35 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Phone line Request	Phone System	8/25/2008 2:56:48 PM	8/26/2008	-1.00
Solved	Student Success Cente	PC	8/26/2008 9:10:43 AM	10/6/2008	-41.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/26/2008 10:16:07 AM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	Library Network & CAT	Cable TV	8/26/2008 11:26:07 AM	9/10/2008	-15.00
Solved	Phone request Sutton	Phone System	8/26/2008 11:38:29 AM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	Phone request Sutton	Phone System	8/26/2008 11:39:40 AM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	phone service	Phone System	8/26/2008 1:03:45 PM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/26/2008 1:53:24 PM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	phone request Cole 2G	Phone System	8/26/2008 2:25:02 PM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/26/2008 2:51:46 PM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/26/2008 3:01:51 PM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	Phone Line Request	Phone System	8/26/2008 3:54:00 PM	8/28/2008	-2.00
Solved	ethernet not working r	Network Device	8/27/2008 9:19:29 AM	10/8/2008	-42.00
Solved	phone line	Phone System	8/27/2008 9:21:43 AM	8/28/2008	-1.00
Solved	phone line Wallingfort	Phone System	8/27/2008 10:47:21 AM	8/28/2008	-1.00

Using this method we have, over the years, identified laptop models that break more frequently than others, printers as a major cause of long wait times, software vendors that are not updating their products, internet congestions, and many other operational improvements.

The Professional Studies program has also started implementing the issue tracking and management solution similar to IT but with a recent start, is not as extensive in their data collection. PS has also instituted a more limited form of tracking as their [desk procedure document](#) explains.

An example of their screen is available as Figure 7 in the [attached document](#). However, since it is in the same platform as IT's system, nearly all the analytical capabilities are available as well.

## **2I4. Complaint Process: Improvements**

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The complaint process training has been provided to all departments. The next level for improvement would be for some of the departments currently not using an electronic system for their process to start using the same platform as IT and PS. The analytical capabilities would be enhanced and allow for the college to better analyze the needs. However, that is a cultural change. The vice president for information technology will be working with each departmental vice president to work out a plan for the implementation of the platform in the next coming years.

## **2P5. Building Collaborations and Partnerships**

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The college seeks partners by actively scanning its local, regional, national, and international environment for partnership opportunities in which the college's academic and activities programs can meet the needs of individuals and groups. The process of selecting partners is somewhat informal and situational, and depends on the ability of the college and a partner to define and achieve mutuality around educational and service goals. The college also seeks partners who share, and wish to mutually further, the college's values as articulated in our statement of mission and vision.

There is no generally shared template or process for assessing the effectiveness of the college's partnerships. Those partnerships that achieve mutuality thrive and continue.

## **2R5. Building Collaborations and Partnerships: Results**

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Many of the college's partnerships center on recruitment and service to main campus students and Professional Studies adult learners. Thus, the effectiveness of recruiting partnerships is regularly monitored by the main campus and PS enrollment management units. In the communities served by the college, Southwestern seeks partnerships with individuals and

organizations that value the educational services and social activities and programming provided by the college, or that hire the college's graduates. The college's relationship with the United Methodist Church and other church organizations focuses on recruiting students, providing opportunities for Southwestern students to consider church vocations, and providing professional development opportunities for clergy and for lay leaders.

## **2I5. Building Collaborations and Partnerships: Improvements**

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The college will undertake an AQIP Action Project focused on creating a systematic approach to building and maintaining key partnerships and to measuring their effectiveness in furthering the mission of the college.



### CATEGORY 3: VALUING EMPLOYEES

**Context.** Through completion of an AQIP Action Project and in response to Systems Appraisal feedback, the college has taken significant steps to create a competent and professional Office of Human Resources and to strengthen its human resource processes. Attention has been given to ensuring that the operational activities of the HR office are aligned with the college's strategic objectives, which include training, compliance, and compensation.

- Cross-training of all HR staff members
- Creation of an anonymous online reporting mechanism concerning employee misconduct
- Ongoing assessment to gain feedback about how well the HR office functions in areas of compliance, communication, customer service, and delivery of benefits
- Establishment of a policy for background checks implemented as part of the hiring process for all new employees and current employees moving to new positions.
- Documentation — by means of process mapping, updating policy, and the creation of procedure manuals — of significant functions of the HR office.
- Implementation of an integrated human resources information system (Paycom)
- Coordinating and conducting training initiatives at all levels of the college, including Board of Trustees, Administrative Council, faculty, supervisors, and support staff (3C6)
- Establishing fiduciary processes for the college's 403(b) retirement plan
- Coordination of annual employee performance evaluation and goal setting.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Processes.** The college's personnel management processes have moved out of the *reactive* phase and into the *systematic* phase. Improvement continues to be made in areas of evaluation, benchmarking, and unit planning.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Results.** The college's personnel management results have moved out of the *reactive* phase and into the *systematic* phase. While not yet able to integrate measures, metrics, and benchmarks into all of its HR processes, the college can track indicators of increased employee engagement and improved performance.

**Priorities for Improvement.** Priorities for improvement include:

- Review and revision of position descriptions for all levels of college employees in order to establish performance expectations and plans for evaluation of performance.
- Continued efforts to strengthen performance planning and evaluation efforts, with particular emphasis on a) linking individual, unit, and strategic plans, and b) including process improvement goals in the performance plans of all employees.
- Completion of a hiring and compensation/benefits study to identify hiring areas in which the college is having difficulty attracting and retaining well-prepared employees and to address related issues in compensation.

### 3P1. Valuing Employees: Hiring

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The college has improved its hiring and orientation processes to include a more comprehensive approach to the onboarding of all employees. This enhancement involves the collaboration of the HR office, supervisors, and peers as a means to integrate new employees into the organization. Onboarding at SC now includes communication about organizational culture and norms, organizational goals and directions, specific functions of the organization, departmental and job expectations, organizational resources and tools, and the college's performance management system.

The college realizes the importance of having a quality training and onboarding process in place as a means to improve job satisfaction and employee retention. Within the HR office, improvements in this area include adding a staff person to assist with the recruiting and onboarding processes, implementing documentation processes for the onboarding function, and creating a comprehensive employee handbook which is now distributed to all new employees.

Effective [employee onboarding](#) serves three interrelated purposes. First, it ensures that the new hire feels welcomed, comfortable, prepared, and supported. This leads to an employee's ability to make an impact within the organization, both immediately and over time. In addition, employee success leads to satisfaction and retention, which allows the college to continue to meet its mission

The recruitment, hiring and orientation processes for college employees are detailed in [Volumes 4](#) (faculty) and [5 \(administrators and staff\)](#) of the policy manual, as well as in the [employee handbook](#). This information is presented by HR personnel and addressed to new employees as they enter the college's workforce. While the policy manual is a comprehensive document that details every aspect of organizational policy, the employee handbook has been specifically designed to familiarize our employees with basic organizational policies and benefit programs, as well as the general expectations of the college.

Prior to hiring for a position, the college completes a position analysis and a written job description with specifications that outline the qualifications needed for the position. Position postings for administrative and staff positions contain information regarding essential functions, primary responsibilities, qualifications, and requirements of the position, which allows for strategic alignment between the candidate's skills, ability, and knowledge to the overall values and needs of the organization (3C6).

The college's long-term goal concerning faculty compensation is to reach the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of faculty salaries at Carnegie IIB church-related institutions. To support faculty monitoring of this goal, the college provides data to the appropriate faculty liaison(s) for the purpose of completing the annual American Association of University Professors (AAUP) salary survey. Each year the



college strives to provide annual salary increases for faculty and staff at or above the Consumer Price Index.

Credentialing standards for faculty are codified in [Volume 4.1](#) of the policy manual (3C1, 3C2). Again, the job analysis component requires that the specifications needed for each faculty position are documented.

The college uses comparisons to other IIB church-related institutions to ensure proper ratios of faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom programs and activities (3C1). The college uses enrollment data and comparisons to other Kansas Independent Colleges Association (KICA) colleges to ensure sufficient ratio of staff to support student services.

The college also provides employees with a variety of indirect compensation pieces that are designed to reward continued employment, promote loyalty to the organization, and help to protect the financial and physical well-being of our employees and their families. In addition to a comprehensive benefits package which provides retirement contributions, life insurance, long-term disability, and group health and dental coverage, the college offers an attractive tuition benefit for dependents towards the completion of an undergraduate degree. In the past five years, 13 dependents have attended SC tuition-free.

### 3R1. Hiring Results

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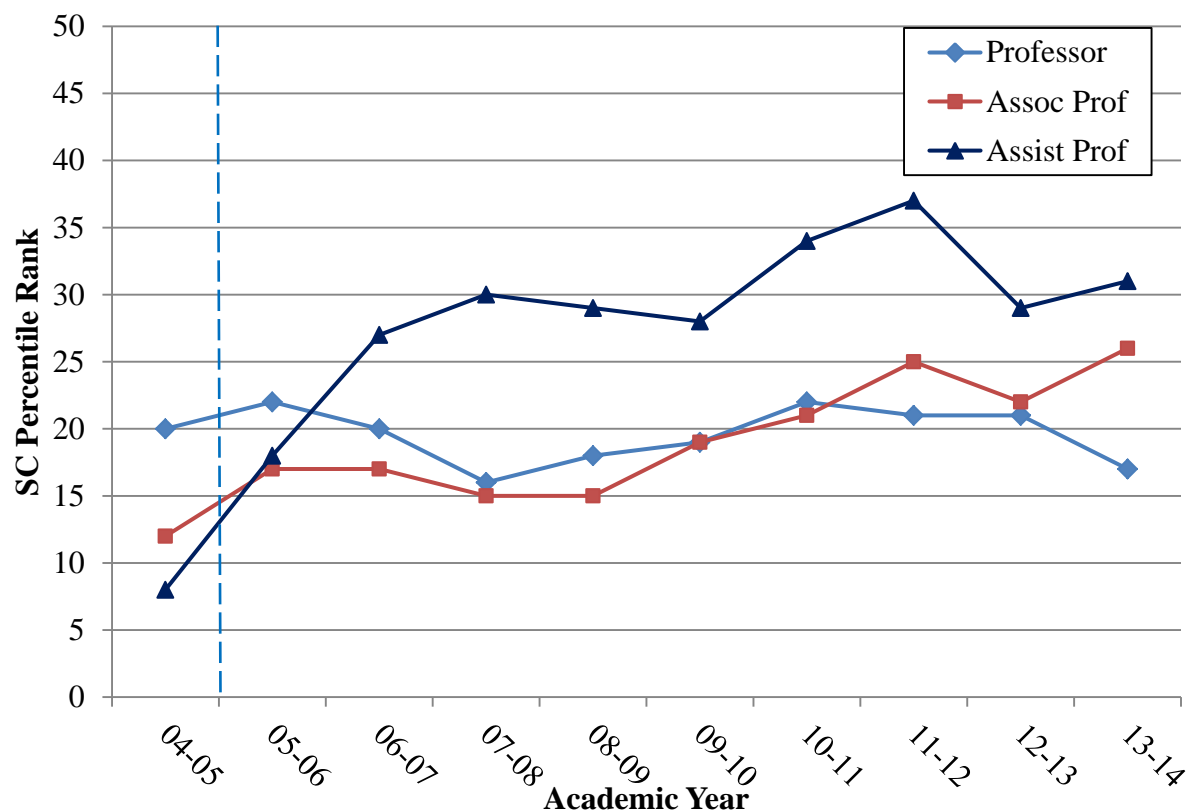
One of the chief sources of information reported in this document concerning the attitudes and perspectives of the college's employees is the [Are We Making Progress? survey](#). This Baldrige-influenced survey has been used, at regular intervals, to gather information from the college's employees about their work, their interactions with stakeholders, difficulties they encounter in their work, training needs, and their overall satisfaction with working at Southwestern College. In addition, the college's human resources department uses individual exit survey results to assess the effectiveness of its personnel practices. Employee response from the survey administered in 2014 indicates that 94% of employees were satisfied or highly satisfied with working for the college. A key survey finding concerning hiring and onboarding indicates (with a ranking of 3.83 out of 5) that the college needs to provide prospective and current employees clearer statements of position requirements.

Data from the [exit surveys](#) indicate that the college received the most favorable reviews in regard to employees enjoying their work activities, being appropriately recognized, being challenged by their jobs, and having clear work assignments and responsibilities. Data from the same exit surveys indicate that the college received the least favorable reviews in regard to their supervisors demonstrating fair and equitable treatment, having job descriptions that accurately reflected their jobs, and having opportunities for advancement within the organization.



As mentioned above, the college has a faculty salary report that is prepared annually in consultation with the president, provost and faculty personnel committee. The results from that report are in Table 3.1:

Chart 3.1 Faculty Salary Report



Faculty are aware that changes in the data are complex and are often due to retirements, movement within the faculty relative to changes in rank, and market forces. It is also the case that the sample size of comparable institutions within the AAUP data set varies and has some impact on the results.

Faculty salaries at SC have lagged somewhat behind our comparison groups. In order to address that shortcoming the administration made an effort to increase salaries at the assistant professor rank, particularly when hiring new faculty. This approach has stretched the college a little but it has also helped faculty members to keep from falling further behind as they move up in faculty rank. That is to say, the pay increase that comes with an increase in rank is modest but the rate of pay stays closer to the benchmark because the faculty member was hired in at the right level. This strategy is the best approach to remediating the salary problem until enough revenue can be generated to address the issues more fully. One down side of this strategy is that it has created some salary compression. It is particularly noticeable in the full professor

rank. The drop in salaries for that rank, however, is also partially due to the college's choice to close its pre-licensure clinical nursing program, which permitted reallocation of the salaries of two very senior and well-paid full professors.

### **3I1. Hiring: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

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Based on feedback gathered from the above-mentioned surveys, the college will continue to focus on improving documented processes per department/division for onboarding and orientation of new faculty, administrators and staff as well as updating job descriptions for all organizational positions.

### **3P2. Valuing Employees: Evaluation and Recognition**

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Performance management and recognition helps the college's employees meet organizational, departmental and/or individual goals. The evaluation and reward processes the college has in place are designed to offer fair performance feedback and meaningful recognition so that our employees feel valued for their contributions to the organization. Efforts in this realm of personnel management have included a series of ongoing [supervisor training](#) initiatives to assist supervisors in translating the college's goals and directions and performance standards into individual employee goals (3C6, 5A4). This process calls for consistent interaction and feedback from supervisors to help the college's employees feel personally connected to their work and how it contributes to organizational outcomes.

The college has methods in place for the annual evaluation of all of its employees. The process for administrators and staff has continued to receive dedicated focus in the way of supervisor training and improved methods of distribution and documentation. This training, led by outside consultants in 2009 and again in 2013, dealt specifically with how to best conduct employee evaluations and align them with institutional goals, as well as how to effectively use performance improvement plans to assist employees who are not meeting performance expectations (3C6, 5A4).

On-going communication between supervisors and direct reports is expected to take place throughout the year to assess progress and reinforce expectations regarding performance. Offering consistent communication and feedback helps to improve productivity, identify training and developmental needs, and reinforce expectations.

The [performance evaluation](#) process is directly linked to the college's stated goals and directions through the [SMART Goal](#) portion of the annual evaluation process. This activity

clearly outlines specific objectives, measurable outcomes, attainable goals, and realistic expectations for improvement and timely completion.

All administrators and staff use the same format and scoring metric for their evaluations to ensure consistency and equity. Faculty evaluation policies and procedures are outlined within [Volume 4](#) of the policy manual (Volume 4, Section 4.7) (3C3).

Faculty are evaluated through a portfolio review process that is open and collaborative. Division chairs gather data and the faculty portfolio is subject to peer review (3C3). Tenure and promotion are recommended by the faculty personnel committee. That recommendation is accepted or rejected by the dean, provost, and president with the final decision confirmed by the Board of Trustees. The process is codified in volume 4 of the policy manual. An excerpted version of the evaluation policy is posted on the [intranet \(MySC\)](#) in order to facilitate ease of faculty use.

The Professional Studies program does not have full-time faculty. Nevertheless, affiliate faculty who teach online are monitored and their continuation with the college is largely dependent upon classroom engagement which is measured using analytics within the course delivery system (3C3). Affiliates in on-ground settings are also monitored but not formally evaluated per se. All affiliates are subject to a handbook with which they are familiarized at the time of onboarding. Per that handbook, a formal evaluation may take place every third year if the affiliate is hired repeatedly.

Employee recognition occurs throughout the year at planned employee-themed events, with the Employee Recognition Reception being the most prominent. At the reception, employees are recognized for achieving significant anniversaries of service to Southwestern. In addition, the college announces recipients of four outstanding employee awards each of which provides an honorarium of \$500. The Kopke Award for Excellence in Teaching, presented at Commencement, provides an honorarium of \$5,000 to an outstanding faculty member (3C4). Employees also have the opportunity to submit professional and personal accomplishments to the college's quarterly alumni publication, which has a wide audience of alumni, board members, donors, current students and employees.

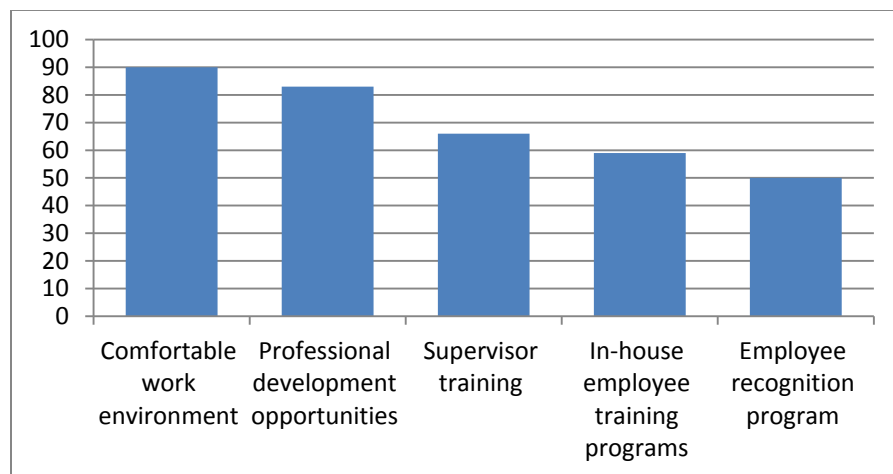
### 3R2. Evaluation and Recognition: Results

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As was noted above, the college's primary source of information regarding the college's performance evaluation processes is the ***Are We Making Progress?*** survey. Results gathered indicated a 4.22 (with 5 being the highest possible score) result concerning whether working for Southwestern College gives employees a sense of personal accomplishment. A survey item regarding whether college employees feel appropriately recognized as individuals for their contributions received a score of 3.17 (out of 5). Clearly, this is an area for attention and

improvement. However, it is worth noting that, when asked to rate areas of importance from most important to least important in regard to employee engagement and feeling valued, the college's employee recognition program was not deemed to be important, with the college's efforts in the realms of providing a comfortable work environment, professional development opportunities, supervisor training, and in-house training all being scored as being more important than employee recognition. Results are seen in Chart 3.2.

**Chart 3.2 Employee Survey Results**



Results from the survey also indicate that some college employees don't see/aren't making connections between their personal performance goals, their department's unit plans, and the broader strategic goals of the college. They also do not clearly see how the college's goals and plans affect (or should affect) their work. The college has tried to address this with administrators and staff by tying together individual goals, unit plans, and goals and directions, but some of these connections are evidently still not clear.

A schedule for faculty promotion and tenure is posted on the college intranet (MySC) under the faculty evaluation tab. The chart clearly illustrates where each faculty member is in the process of tenure, evaluation, and promotion.

### 3I2 Evaluation and Recognition: Improvements and Planned Improvements

The college will continue to give employees opportunities and venues to express their views about the college and its programs and ways we can improve our performance in the areas of evaluation and training. An example of employee engagement on the subject of performance and evaluation was the recent (Spring 2015) collaboration of administrators and faculty to

update Volume 4 of the college's policy manual to better reflect and clarify expectations concerning professional credentials, professional development, and evaluation of faculty.

The ultimate goal of the employee evaluation process is to measure how well the college is performing in relation to achieving its stated goals and directions. Evaluation and performance management will require flexibility to allow for corrective change as the organizational environment and available resources change. This will require ongoing communication between supervisors and their direct reports to ensure that a strong connection between personal performance plans, unit plans, and the strategic plan are all aligned with the college's stated mission.

The college plans to use its annual employee recognition event(s) to highlight those individuals who have demonstrated exemplary work that clearly advances the mission of the college. This will require a much more strategic approach in determining the criteria, rationale and process for identifying who those top performers are.

### **3P3 Development**

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Professional development opportunities are a key factor in increasing employee engagement, loyalty and motivation. In creating the framework for development opportunities, the college has worked to incorporate professional development goals into individual performance plans, allocate budget to help achieve those initiatives, and monitor employee performance to evaluate and provide feedback on their enhanced knowledge and skills based on conversations with the employee and how those align with organizational objectives. The key component is the process of assessing what available training options will best meet employee, departmental, and organizational needs. Options at SC have included in-service training, offering a tuition-free course benefit to employees for degree completion, online training, and encouraging involvement in affinity groups and professional organizations that offer conferences and workshops specific to employee functions. All of these options have the potential to build capacity in our employees while enhancing job satisfaction and ultimately their level of engagement (3C6).

Each administrative department of the college has budget funds allocated towards professional development. The academic dean maintains budget lines for faculty development and advanced degree completion (3C4, 5A4). The process for faculty evaluation and promotion includes specific content related to providing evidence of their instructional content and academic processes (3C4). Student support staff members are expected to maintain the proper level of certification and/or coursework in order to effectively perform their duties related to financial aid counseling and advising. Each financial aid counselor is expected to engage in weekly training on a topic related to their job responsibilities per their individual SMART goals. Emails

highlighting regulatory changes are distributed to financial aid team members on a regular basis and are discussed with the director of financial aid to ensure compliance. The college's financial aid team also utilizes self-guided certification modules provided by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Specific individual goals related to professional development are included in the annual evaluation/SMART Goal process for administrators and staff (3C6, 5A4).

The academic dean of the main campus has three main budget lines that are designated to support faculty and key academic staff. All lines are adequately funded and the first is specifically used for securing appropriate credentials, e.g. terminal degrees or specialty certifications such as CELTA certification. The second budget line is designated for faculty development and used to provide financial relief for faculty attending conferences, placing publications, etc. The third line is reserved and allocated to the faculty development committee (see volume 1 governance). The committee works in collaboration with the dean to provide programming such as 'lunch and learn' relative to issues such as ADA or teaching international students (3C4).

When the college administers the **Are We Making Progress?** survey it appends a number of Southwestern-specific questions to the body of the survey. Some of these questions ask employees to identify specific training needs. The director of HR annually meets with the college Administrative Council to review results from the survey and to set priorities for training. Most recently, this resulted in focused training concerning advanced use of Excel software and targeted training on use of PowerCampus, the college's administrative software system (3C6, 5A4).

### 3R3. Development: Results

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The primary mechanisms for determining employee perspective regarding assistance and support towards their professional development are through the annual employee satisfaction survey and the annual SMART Goal setting process for administrators and staff. Ongoing communication between employee and supervisors is crucial in determining this outcome.

The college's tuition waiver benefit, which allows employees who are at least three-quarter time status up to nine credit hours of continuing education on either the undergraduate or graduate level, continues to be a well-utilized opportunity to further individual development. On the following page is Table 3.1 showing the amount of tuition remission and total credit hours provided by the college to its employees over the past five academic years (3C6, 5A4):

**Table 3.1 Tuition Waiver Recipients**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>
MBA	8 @ \$55,224	11 @ \$61,215	7 @ \$37,776	9 @ \$51,615	11 @ \$52,047
MEd	7 @ \$16,744	3 @ \$8,655	5 @ \$21,288	3 @ \$15,012	6 @ \$34,645
MSM	1 @ \$7,722	3 @ \$18,168	4 @ \$20,436	2 @ \$14,103	0
PS UG	11 @ \$51,736	13 @ \$34,912	9 @ \$22,524	5 @ \$7,500	2 @ \$1,354
MSL	8 @ \$38,382	10 @ \$40,407	12 @ \$50,766	4 @ \$20,553	3 @ \$11,898
<b>Total Credit Hrs</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>

Faculty members who receive advanced degrees during their tenure at the college are much more likely to utilize those degrees to enhance their roles and status within the organization, while it's not uncommon for those on the administrative side to choose to leave the organization within one to three years after completing a course of study (based on assessment of exit survey feedback and contract renewal trends).

### **3I3. Development: Improvement and Planned Improvements**

Following review and revision of position descriptions to more clearly state position requirements, and as part of future training to strengthen performance planning and evaluation processes, the college will work to more systematically gather information concerning the training needs of college employees. The employee survey has been helpful, but a more explicit focus on training as part of the performance planning and evaluation process is needed.



## CATEGORY 4: PLANNING AND LEADING

**Context.** The year 2000 was a pivotal year in Southwestern College's approach to planning and leading. In that year, the college completed its first statement of Goals and Directions and a booklet presenting the institution's strategic plan was printed and distributed to all employees (1B1). The booklet also contained a trustee-approved outline of the college's annual and multi-year planning cycle, which greatly improved alignment between the vision and mission of the college and the strategies for improvement that were needed for the school to more fully realize its purpose. The following year, responsibility for planning was assigned to a vice president of the college, cementing the commitment of the college to a continual planning, implementation, and evaluation cycle.

A number of processes, policies, procedures, and practices have occurred to bring the college to where it is today. Clearer alignment of the vision, mission, goals, directions, unit plans, and individual performance goals is now in place. The college's strategic planning process is linked to and aligned with the college's quality improvement processes. Processes and timelines are in place to link college budgeting processes to the planning process.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Processes.** While there are both positive and negative exceptions, the bulk of the Processes in this area meet the standard of *aligned*. We have well-documented processes that have been in use for several years. Both vertical and horizontal communication and coordination are built into the management of the college.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Results.** With regards to Results, *systematic* best expresses the college's current stage of development. While data feedback loops are in place, in many cases they have not existed long enough to produce the clear longitudinal data needed to foster improvement. Small sample sizes have given us pause as to how much to value some of our results. We expect our ability to document and improve results will advance to the *aligned* stage in the next few years.

**Priorities for Improvement.** Looking ahead, we anticipate increased leadership development and training both within and across work areas, more frequent requests for feedback from a larger circle of stakeholders, and more robust planning. Succession plans for senior administrators will be created. Work will continue to link individual, unit, and college strategic plans. Alignment activities and further improvement in the college's use of data for decision-making are key priorities on the improvement agenda.

## 4P1. Mission and Vision

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The core of the college's current mission statement was developed and approved by the Board of Trustees on May 17, 1991. A major revision of the mission statement was approved on October 16, 2009, and a minor revision was approved on October 3, 2014. An extensive process resulted in the approval of the college's vision statement by the trustees on November 15, 1996 (1A1). This vision statement – which restates, in brief, the college's mission – has been reviewed and retained since that time.

The college communicates its values through its actions, and more explicitly, in its communications to both internal and external audiences. Ensuring the college's values are reflected in action involves clearly stating the values, assuring that the values are communicated to all stakeholders, and that accountability measures are in place and utilized.

The vision statement of the college is posted in several locations on campus, in school-related documents, on the website and in each yearly strategic planning booklet. The mission statement also is on documents, the website, and the annually published statement of the college's Goals and Directions (1B1).

The vision and mission statement are a part of the strategic plan (Goals and Directions) and, as such, are reviewed and approved yearly by the Board of Trustees at the spring meeting.

The values of the college are expressed through its traditions, policies, and in orientation programs for new faculty, students, administrators, and trustees. Many of the college's values can be traced to its founding in 1885 and are ingrained in alumni, donors, and friends of the school. The transparency of the college and the open access of stakeholders to the leadership of the college assist in the maintaining of its values.

The college's Board of Trustees ensures that the college's academic programs align with the college's mission through review and approval of all majors and degrees, and by receiving the results of administrative reviews of academic programs (1A2). Several trustee committees provide active oversight for the college's services and programs.

The college's budgeting process is an extension of the college's strategic planning process and aligns program expenditures with the college's mission and values (1A3).

## 4R1. Mission and Vision: Results

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Southwestern College's vision, mission, and values are lived out through the college's strategic plan as well as through its day-to-day decisions and processes. Maintaining a focused and responsive alignment of the college's activities with its mission, vision, and values is accomplished by checking the work of the college with the stated values the college upholds. The basic question "Does the college live out its stated mission each day?" is addressed by

starting our planning process with these vision and mission statements. Short term directions, action plans, and budgetary decisions are made with these values as a guide. In the stakeholder wide SWOT analysis process that is conducted every three years, a wide variety of college stakeholders are invited to give input that shapes the work of the college to more fully live out its mission.

Five years ago, information gathered in an alumni outcomes and satisfaction survey highlighted concerns about the quality of Southwestern's efforts to prepare main campus graduates for employment after graduation. In particular, the college's business programs were singled out as an area that needed improvement. Because career preparation is a key component of the college's mission, the president made career preparation a focal point of the work of the Task Force on the Future of Southwestern College. A number of changes have resulted from the work of the task force, including development of a career-focused PREP curriculum, the hiring of an internship coordinator for the business program, and restructuring career-related advising and support for students.

In addition to seeking to fully live out its mission, the college also explores whether its mission remains relevant and timely. In 2010 the college completed a major review and revision of its mission statement. This process involved surveys, college-wide input sessions, a task force and involvement with a wide range of stakeholders. As a result of this exploration, the college's mission statement was revised by the Board of Trustees to include a new statement, committing the college to live by and teach a sustainable way of life (1A1). The addition of this line to the college's mission statement both reflected new concerns about how we live out the "responsible citizenship" value in our vision, but also a growing concern for the environmental and economic viability for the campus, community, and world. Today, the college has a Climate Action Team, a College Sustainability Council, a scholarship-supported student activity program called the Green Team, an Environmental Compliance Council, a minor in sustainability open to students of all majors, and is currently planning to launch a "Sustainability Center" on campus.

The majority of ongoing data is found in the feedback loops involving students. The large community is engaged every three years on a large scale with smaller program specific ongoing feedback loops throughout the college. The results of the 2014 stakeholder input is summarized in an [executive summary document](#).

Communication about the college's mission and values occurs within and between levels of the college in a variety of ways:

Three times during the school year, the college holds gatherings for faculty and staff during which the president provides updates on what is happening at the college and introduces new faculty and staff members to the college community. The college-wide planning council, the work of college-wide committees and councils, and the operation of the main campus faculty committee system facilitate effective communication within the college (5B3). The president sends frequent updates to the Board of Trustees and, through quarterly newsletters, to the college's "mission partner" alumni and friends (1B1).

The vice president for communications reports directly to the president. Communication methods are utilized across a wide spectrum of formats, including a daily e-newsletter for college employees and students. A recent hire has been a person focused primarily on social media. The president provides the campus a review of each Board of Trustees meeting. Many cross-departmental meeting assist in the web of communication that is vital in the life of the college. Our current Task Force on the Future of the College is conducting research on the ways our alumni wish to stay connected to the college. Current communication methods include a quarterly tabloid, an institutional webpage that is updated multiple times each week, email, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube), and personal contact through regional meetings and in-home visits.

The provost meets with deans and vice presidents for enrollment management on a bi-weekly basis and reviews how the college is doing with regard to academic outcomes, retention, enrollment, and meeting budgeted revenues. The main campus academic dean and division chairs are then responsible to meet with the faculty of their departments on a regular basis. The professional studies academic dean also meets weekly with her academic staff. The president and provost also report to the faculty at monthly faculty meetings. Each trustee committee is joined by at least one member of the Administrative Council during trustee meetings, which are held three times each year (5B3).

The student services team is an important venue for communication between administrative departments. Issues regarding services to the students are brought before the team that seeks solutions to problems and ways to enhance and improve services ranging from admission to billing services to financial aid services to registrar and billing functions. As needed and as appropriate, the team brings recommendations to the Administrative Council. Information from the team's meetings is passed along to the president and shared with the appropriate vice president(s). The student services team also has recently become the venue through which departments are made aware of federal regulations that need to be implemented or processes that should be updated. This team has taken on the responsibility of assisting in the oversight of the school's compliance (5B3).

The college's overall planning process, along with its processes for performance evaluation and planning, are vital means by which much communication is achieved.

Other activities include but are not limited to recognition of employees for outstanding performance, recognition of department and programs with publicity, receptions, and awards.

The college annually asks its employees to complete a modified version of the Baldrige ***"Are We Making Progress?"*** survey. The results of the survey are analyzed by the college's Administrative Council to identify strengths, problems, and opportunities for improvement. Responses are also discussed in focus groups, by college staff, and by administrators and the results of the focus group discussions feed into Administration Council evaluation of steps to be taken for improvement.

Four questions under the leadership section of the employee satisfaction survey specifically relate to our employee's understanding of the college's mission and values. Employees were asked to rate each statement depending on their level of agreement, with 5.0 being the highest score. Scores from the 2014 survey were as follows:

- I know the college's mission (what it is trying to accomplish) (4.09)
- The college's leaders use the college's values to guide us (3.79)
- The college's leaders share information about the organization (3.77)
- The college lets me know what it thinks is most important (3.64)

Data from the 2010 survey on these specific questions are not available, however, comparison results for this section of the survey indicate that there was a 2.9% decrease in agreement to the questions posed in this section between 2010 (3.79) and 2014 (3.68). This decrease indicates that there is an opportunity for better communication between the higher levels of administration and college employees regarding the college's values and priorities. Employee behavior and performance is directly related to the college's ability to align individual goals with its overall organizational goals in order to accomplish the desired outcomes. The college will continue efforts to improve alignment of goals at all levels of organizational structure (individual, unit, organizational).

#### 4I1. Mission and Vision: Improvements and Planned Improvements

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Results of the ***Are We Making Progress?*** 2014 survey is at [2014 Employee Survey](#). A comparison of the [2010 and 2014 results](#) with benchmarking results from other organizations has resulted in a major effort to update all college job descriptions with an intentional effort to make them clearer and link them to the overall mission of the college. The Administrative Council has evaluated results of the ***"Are We Making Progress?"*** survey. This evaluation, in addition to the expert knowledge of the group, has led to the adoption of several priorities for improvement. These are:

- The human resources office has responded with increased efforts to assist in cross-training, collaboration and coordination throughout the college.
- The college has made good progress in addressing the training, policy, and process development needed to meet a wide variety of compliance issues. A complaint process has been built and is functioning.
- All faculty departments have well-developed unit plans and the college at large is much more adept at planning.
- Improvement has been made in the use by all college employees of performance metrics, particularly those that measure satisfaction of stakeholders.
- Communication has improved between levels of the college to identify and remove obstacles to employee performance.

- An ongoing priority for improvement is to strengthen links between personal employee performance plans, unit plan objectives, and the college's goals and directions. Survey results indicate that employees often do not see clearly how their performance relates to, and advances, the college's goals.

## 4P2. Strategic Planning

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Basic overviews of the college's planning processes are found in a number of [strategic planning](#) summary documents. The current strategic plan and archives of past plans are posted on the school's website at [strategic-plan](#).

The strategic planning process that has emerged and been routinized during 12 years of AQIP participation results in an annual review and endorsement of five-year goals, three-year directions to meet these goals, and one-year steps that advance the directions. The process is accomplished by trustees, administration (president and Administrative Council), and working groups. Every three years the college conducts a stakeholder-wide SWOT analysis. This process helps to assess risks both internal (items of concern within the SC community) and external (issues in the environment that might threaten the college's future) (5C4, 5C5). Input is fed into the ongoing planning process to assist the college in its efforts to stay relevant in the years ahead.

Two groups are charged with overall guidance of the planning process—the Task Force on the Future of Southwestern, and the Planning Council.

Every three years the president forms a Task Force on the Future of Southwestern which reviews the vision, mission, and goals of the college. This task force is a key group in which opportunities for growth and improvement are sought. It includes trustees, administrators, alumni, and faculty whose work supports a major improvement opportunity for the college (5B3). The work of the task force is augmented by the completion on a regular cycle of a SWOT analysis that solicits the opinions of community members, alumni, and friends of the college. The college also scans the environment for opportunities through advisory councils whose members include alumni, friends, and corporate and community leaders (5C3). These councils are organized around disciplinary and career-path interests (e.g., natural science advisory council, performing arts advisory council), on a regional basis (e.g., Wichita advisory council, Kansas City advisory council), and by Professional Studies sites. The college periodically convenes ad hoc advisory groups as it explores possible program and degree offerings, reviews extant program offerings, etc.

The Planning Council acts as a peer review function for all of the directions, reporting yearly to the Administrative Council and ultimately to the Board of Trustees. Every year the Planning Council provides a status report on the directions to the campus and the trustees. The unit plans are more short term in nature and come from the divisions and departments of the college. The

length of time a direction takes depends on a wide variety of issues such as funding, personnel, and policies. As a basic rule, multiple-year projects are sequenced in such a way as to have some measurable progress each year.

The college's planning process is designed to reflect the dynamism of the college, combining the formulation and articulation of a vision by the college's leaders with the development of bottom-up information, recommendations, and implementation plans. A wide variety of input mechanisms, formal and informal, show college work groups the needs and desires of stakeholders. These stakeholders include potential students, current students, former students, and others (5C3). The trustees and administration, most notably the president, work to provide the direction as to how the college will respond.

**Trustees:** The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for approving the strategic plan. Every year the Board of Trustees reviews the goals and directions at its January meeting and approves future goals and directions in its April meeting.

**President and Administration:** The president of the college heads the administrative leadership team of the college. He is assisted by the Administrative Council, and all of the college's faculty and administrative staff report directly or indirectly to members of the Administrative Council. The [organizational chart](#) illustrates the reporting structure.

**Work Units:** Persons who lead work units, administrative departments, and academic divisions align the yearly steps and three-year directions of their units with the vision, mission, and goals found in the strategic plan of the college. This review occurs annually. Supervision is focused on performance goals of each employee, which are formally reviewed yearly and less formally reviewed each quarter. Individual performance plans – emanating from [position descriptions](#) and interaction with supervisors – form the foundation for the college's strategic plan.

**Employees:** Each employee is provided a copy of the strategic plan each year and through interaction with supervisors the alignment of individual efforts with those of the college as a whole is established and reinforced. Each direction has accountability within the Administrative Council for its execution. The [unit plans](#) and individual performance expectations guide the work of the college's employees.

Faculty, administrative, and staff job descriptions and performance evaluations provide additional assistance in aligning needs for resources, training, and workloads. The college provides training for supervisors designed to strengthen their ability to assist with employee alignment. Supervisors work through performance expectations and evaluations and are encouraged to look for gaps in the capacity of the employees. Remedies may include training sessions and educational opportunities. On the main campus, the Faculty Development Committee oversees a process for faculty development and nurture. (One area remaining for improvement is with main campus adjunct instructors.) Supervisors have significant discretion regarding the expenditure of their budgets and are encouraged to evaluate the needs of their



staffs for training, professional development, etc. Professional Studies faculty development sessions are held throughout the year.

Work areas, departments, and programs assigned responsibility for various outcomes within the college select the assessment tools that best provide the feedback and data they need. Performance expectations flow from the expectations set in the strategic plan. Each process requires yearly measurable targets. Metrics are coordinated through the [Office of Institutional Research](#).

The following key information sources and reports are used in the decision-making processes, and in tracking progress toward accomplishment of goals, directions, and steps.

**Finance:** Budget, three-year financial model, monthly budget compliance report. To monitor budget status, the college's vice president for finance distributes monthly reports to budget managers. Budgets with spending overages are discussed by the vice president and the relevant budget manager and adjustments are made as needed. A high degree of transparency in monitoring budgets has essentially eliminated spending overages at the college. The president and Administrative Council work, with input from budget managers, to construct annual budgets for approval by the Board of Trustees. The budgets are built with information from previous years, estimates of available revenue, and with reference to identified objectives in the college's annually updated statement of directions and steps. The Board of Trustees monitors the college's long-term financial health, and provides input and guidance for future budget development by monitoring the college's [three-year budget model](#). Use of this information in goal setting has allowed the college to significantly reduce its reliance on endowment earnings income, improve cost controls, and focus resources on programs that generate revenue for the college.

**Institutional Advancement:** Weekly gifts paid report, campaign gifts and pledges report, prospect tracking report, LYBUNT report. The president, the vice president for institutional advancement, and advancement staff use these [reports](#) to establish giving goals for endowment, unrestricted annual fund, and donor participation.

**Enrollment management and financial aid:** Weekly report of applications, acceptances, and deposits; semester retention reports (main campus); [daily enrollment detail](#), [enrollment overview](#) reports, enrollment reports by academic success coach (Professional Studies). On the main campus, these are used to support decision-making by the president and the admission and retention council, which includes the vice president for planning, director of admission, associate director of admission, director of financial aid, provost, vice president for student life, and associate vice president for retention and student success. In addition to setting annual enrollment, retention, and financial goals, the council deals with issues related to admission, handling of students conditionally admitted, tuition discount rate, and retention. The director of admission and director of financial aid produce weekly reports on [admission applications](#), [financial aid offered](#) and accepted, and status of admission prospects for distribution to college employees (coaches, activity directors, academic program directors) to support recruitment



efforts. The associate vice president for retention and student success directs an early warning program that issues reports concerning students in academic difficulty. Professional Studies reports are reviewed daily to support decision-making by the president, PS vice president for enrollment management, and other relevant staff who monitor course enrollment projections and admission staff workload and efficacy. Academic success coaches review their reports to monitor retention and progress toward degree.

**Student Life:** [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#), focus groups with students. These are used by the vice president for student life, dean of students, director of housing, and others on campus to support decision-making about a broad range of student services on the main campus. SSI identifies performance gaps related to student perceptions of which services are important and whether those services are being adequately provided. Student focus groups annually support staff processing of performance gaps and staff design of responses aimed at improving performance evaluations on subsequent SSI administrations.

**Academic Affairs:** National Survey of Student Engagement; IDEA, teaching evaluations. These are used by the provost, deans, division chairs, and faculty committees to support decision-making about instruction, curriculum design, faculty evaluation and development. These reports permit the provost to oversee a process to develop performance goals and improvement plans for faculty members, to monitor performance by instructors, to identify issues, and to design professional development opportunities for instructors as a group and for individual instructors.

**Facilities:** [Facility Condition Assessment](#) and building/activity project spreadsheet.

**Technology:** Various [reports](#) are used by the Department of Information Technology. These include performance reports from issue tracking; progress reports from project tracking; individual performance document; system logs (various systems). These are used to manage work load, projects, performance of people and systems.

**Budgetary Reports:** Trial balance report; internal budget allocation report. These are used to manage budget, spending and project costs

**Process Reviews:** Process Maturity Model Matrix; individual performance plans. These are used to manage group process improvements and individual process improvements

**Additional Reports:** Term aggregate enrollment report; term course enrollment report; year-to-date enrollment and income report. These are used by the president, vice president for finance, and provost to support decision-making about enrollment and finance matters in the college. These reports are used to communicate to admission counselors, recruiters, and advisors and to elicit feedback about ways to improve results. Course and faculty evaluations are used by the Professional Studies academic dean and Professional Studies director of faculty to support decision-making on evaluation, continuation, and faculty development activities (5C2).

## 4R2. Strategic Planning: Results

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### Key results achieved:

- The college's operating budget is now routinely balanced through a combination of tuition revenues, income from auxiliary operations, charitable gifts, and an appropriate (5% per annum) draw on endowment income.
- The college's net tuition per student has increased from about \$6,300 in 2004 to about \$9,800 in 2013.
- Charitable giving to the college has increased, surpassing \$4 million in each of the past two fiscal years. This is a record level of philanthropic support for the college.
- Disappointingly, the number of donors to the college has declined to about 900 in 2014 from a high of 1,478 in 2004. Poor participation by younger alumni is the primary reason for this decline. The college's advancement staff is implementing programs to reverse this decline.
- The college's enrollment has declined slightly, mostly due to weakness in enrollments in the Professional Studies unit. The enrollment management staff of Professional Studies are implementing measures to reverse this decline.
- The college's tuition discount – calculated as total institutional aid provided divided by gross tuition and fees – was 28.5% in 2014, about 12 percentage points lower than the median discount rate for all private small colleges nationwide.
- Results from the most recent Student Satisfaction Index (SSI) show that the college's students are more satisfied with their experience at Southwestern than is the norm nationwide.
- Results from IDEA show that, on average, courses surveyed emphasize gaining factual knowledge (82%), learning fundamental principles (76.8%), the application of course material (68.6%) and the critical analysis of ideas as essential or important (52.2%). Moreover, the data indicate that the frequency of these instructional methods are both sufficient and effective for making progress on relevant objectives. In the IDEA system the institutional scores typically exceed 60%, which is the threshold for inferring that instructional effectiveness is unusually high in comparison to national results. These data are further corroborated by the results of the ETS Proficiency Profile which indicate that every cohort tested improved in key areas of critical thinking, communication, and quantitative literacy after exposure to the curriculum. To be precise, 59% of all cohorts improved in written and oral communication, 58% improved their scores in critical thinking, and 50% made progress with quantitative literacy. Finally, NSSE data lends additional convincing information which suggests that the students perceive the level of intention behind the curriculum. For instance, when asked if they have examined the strengths and weaknesses of their own views, a question that presupposes the critical analysis of ideas, the student scores improved from freshman (2.64) to senior (2.67).

- Six-year graduation rates for first-time full-time freshman at the college have declined, since 2008, from slightly more than 50% to 45%. Actions to address this decline have yielded increases in fall to spring retention for freshmen and have stabilized first to second year retention. Improved six-year graduation rates are expected to follow.

A 2014 survey of college alumni, conducted as part of a feasibility study for an upcoming capital campaign, reports that 64.6% of respondents describe their educational experience at Southwestern as very positive, 30.7% describe their experience as positive, and 1.2% report a negative experience.

In the same survey, 53.9% of alumni report feeling very positive about the value of their Southwestern college degree, 36.6% feel positive, and 9.5% have neutral or negative feelings. Concerning the college's leadership, 40.6% expressed very positive feelings, 37.8% were positive, and about 20% were neutral, while 2% expressed negative feelings.

The college regularly administers the [Are We Making Progress?](#) survey to gather facts and opinion from the college's employees. The survey contains information about strategic planning, measurement and analysis, and process management. The compiled results of these surveys have shown only gradual changes, but the surveys have driven points of emphasis in the college's improvement efforts. In addition, the college's employees report high levels of satisfaction with their work at the college.

## **4I2. Strategic Planning: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

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Efforts have been undertaken, and will continue, to provide employees additional training to strengthen links between individual performance plans, units plans, the college's strategic plan, and the college's mission (1A2).

## **4P3. Leadership**

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Southwestern College is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. Members of this board are affirmed by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The trustees do their work through standing committees on academic affairs, institutional advancement, business affairs, endowment investment, facilities and technology, and student development. Members of the college's Administrative Council are assigned key liaison roles with the board committees. The Board of Trustees works in accordance with the [by-laws](#) of the college.

The Board of Trustees works actively to set policy and direction for the college. Trustees annually approve the college's budget, monitor endowment investment and earnings, review

and approve all contracts, approve all new degree offerings, and review and approve the college's statement of goals, directions, and steps (2C1).

Each standing committee of the Board of Trustees is supported by, and has extensive interaction with, a member or members of the Administrative Council of the college. The executive committee includes board officers, standing committee chairs, and at-large members drawn from the board's membership. The board's Committee on Trusteeship, which includes a member from each standing committee and is chaired by the vice chair of the board, takes the lead in identifying and recruiting new trustees. It also annually proposes to the board a slate of board officers, committee chairs, and executive committee members. The Committee on Trusteeship also administers the board's policies on conflict of interest and excess benefits, ensuring that trustees note and declare conflicts and, when providing services to the college, that trustees are not receiving excess benefits (2C3). The Committee on Trusteeship annually organizes and carries out a program of orientation for new trustees. The board periodically evaluates its performance and develops plans for improvement (5B6).

President and Administration: The president of the college heads the administrative leadership team of the college (2C4). He is assisted by the Administrative Council, whose members include the provost; vice presidents for enrollment management (Professional Studies), enrollment management (main campus), finance, institutional advancement, planning and new programs, communications, student life, and information technology; and athletic director. All of the college's faculty and administrative staff report directly or indirectly to members of the Administrative Council.

Budgeting and academic affairs are among the most crucial college functions, and these are carried out collaboratively (5B5). The allocation of resources is an ongoing process of budgeting and budget management. Developed by the college's Administrative Council, a preliminary budget is reviewed by the trustees each October, and the yearly budget is set by the trustees in January. The FY of the college is July 1 to June 30. After the budget is set, the Administrative Council reviews the upcoming year's goals and directions in the strategic plan to assure that resources are available to carry out the efforts. If funds are not available, adjustments to the plan are made.

Major decisions involving academic affairs and faculty are guided by the provost in collaboration with the academic deans, division chairs, faculty committee chairs, and the chair of the faculty (5B7). Division chairs work with program directors and faculty within their divisions on decisions regarding divisional recruitment, budget proposals and expenditures, workload assignments and class schedules, curriculum development, and assessment. Division chairs meet monthly with the dean of faculty to report, discuss, and make decisions regarding the business of the divisions. Eight elected standing committees of the faculty meet monthly to discuss issues with which they have been charged by the faculty constitution or by the elected chair of the faculty. The chairs of these committees compose the executive committee of the faculty, which meets monthly with the chair of the faculty to report on the current business of the committees and

discuss proposals to be brought before the faculty at large at its monthly meeting. Occasionally, task forces may be created to address issues not within the purview of existing councils or committees. These task forces have varied membership and are limited in scope and length of existence.

For the Board of Trustees, development of leaders and planning for leadership succession is an ongoing necessity. Term limits on board service ensure that the membership of the board will change each year. The board's Committee on Trusteeship is charged with the identification and recruitment of new trustees, development of a proposed slate of board officers and nominees to the board's Executive Committee, and organization (every three years) of a board retreat. These activities, along with periodic rotation of serving trustees among standing board committees, help ensure that the board's members are well-acquainted with the many facets of the college (5B6).

This year the college has had the opportunity to experience a change in presidential leadership. After a successful 17-year tenure at Southwestern College, the current president has been named president at another institution. In consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, the board chair led a competitive proposal process and selected a search firm that specializes in helping colleges manage selection and transition to a new president. A search committee with board, administrative, faculty, and student representation was appointed and a search process began. Three finalists were recently interviewed and the college's next president has been elected by the Board of Trustees and will assume the presidency on July 1, 2015.

The college's plan for succession in other administrative leadership positions is centered on a commitment to open and active search processes when vacancies occur. While the college encourages internal applicants for administrative openings (a practice that promotes continuity), its paramount commitment is to find and hire talented and energetic administrators who are committed to the success of the college. In a number of key positions (academics, student life, institutional advancement, admission, business) associate vice presidents or associate directors provide expertise and understanding. In recent years, more cross training has occurred across work areas as well. All new employees participate in a college orientation program that acquaints them with the history and values of the college.

The college's Board of Trustees has expressed that the college needs to develop more formal succession plans for key administrative roles. A member of the board with experience in this realm has begun work with the president on this. That work will be temporarily suspended by turnover in the college's presidency, but will continue.

Internal leadership development is done primarily through continuing educational opportunities, training, faculty development, and the assignment of progressively more challenging leadership roles. Examples of this are committee assignments, task force roles, project management opportunities, and opportunities to represent the college in off-campus settings. The college's training program for supervisors focuses on performance evaluation, compliance issues, and

planning to provide supervisors an opportunity to develop bench strength through careful planning and cross-training. Participation in on- and off-campus educational and training programs helps employees develop expertise and confidence in their respective areas of responsibility. Participation in Southwestern College Improving Quality (SCIQ) involves many college employees in process improvement discussions that provide opportunities for leadership. The college's performance planning and evaluation processes also focus on developing opportunities for leadership.

Members of the college faculty develop leadership abilities through committee work undertaken in the faculty governance structure and as members of campus-wide committees and task forces. In addition, members of the college's faculty and staff provide leadership for meetings of the college's discipline-specific advisory councils, on community boards, and as members of state and national professional organizations.

### **4R3. Leadership: Results**

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A key indicator of effective long-term leadership of the institution is the tenure of the college's president. The college's two most recent presidents have served for a combined total of 27 years, more than a fifth of the college's 130-year history. During his 17-year tenure at Southwestern, the departing president has served alongside 54 colleague presidents of the other 17 private colleges of Kansas, some of which have had five presidents in the same 17 years. The college's experience with our recent search for our next president, which attracted over 60 applicants and a strong group of finalists, including two candidates who had been presidents of other institutions, indicates the continuing strength of the college's leadership.

The college's Board of Trustees has, similarly, been stable and effective, with board officers serving the full prescribed terms and a majority of board members achieving emeritus status by completing the permitted 12 consecutive years of service. The board has had no difficulty identifying and recruiting individuals to serve as trustees, notwithstanding the extensive commitment of time and financial resources that comes with such a role.

The board works actively to assess and improve its effectiveness, completing self-assessments on a three-year rotating basis. Assessment form can be viewed [here](#). While results of the most recent assessment are confidential and may not be disclosed in detail, they indicate trustee beliefs that: new members are effectively oriented; the board exercises effective oversight concerning the college's finances; roles of trustees are effectively defined and respected; the board regularly monitors and evaluates progress toward Southwestern's strategic goals.

The ranks of the senior administration of the college have also been rather stable. Though professional opportunities have, very naturally, caused some turnover, the average tenure of the college's vice presidents exceeds 10 years, providing leadership of the college that is rooted in a clear understanding of, and commitment to, Southwestern's mission.

### 4I3. Leadership: Improvements and Planned Improvements

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The college will develop a formal succession plan for senior administrators of the college.

### 4P4. Integrity

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Southwestern College seeks to ensure ethical practices as part of its mission of Christian service and education. College policies specifying norms of conduct are in place and are applied when needed.

Board of Trustees members and administrators who have been identified as having substantial influence over college affairs are required to annually sign a conflict of interest statement. This statement points out that signers “have a clear obligation to conduct the affairs of this institution and fulfill their responsibilities in a manner consistent therewith. All decisions of persons who have substantial influence over college affairs are to be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interests of the college (2C3). The integrity of the college must be protected and advanced at all times.” The Committee on Trusteeship of the Board of Trustees administers the college’s excess benefits policy, which provides oversight and accountability for instances in which the college and a trustee have a business relationship.

The college’s values and expectations regarding ethics, equity, social responsibility and community service are expressed in [the Vision and Mission of Southwestern College](#):

- “...Christian values” “...responsible citizenship” and “leadership through service...”
- “Strives to live by and teach a sustainable way of life.”
- “Affords a ...learning experience...with... activities that build social awareness and interpersonal skills and cultivate an ethos of service and leadership.”

Ethical values are further stressed through the inclusion of “Ethical Reasoning” as one of the five key curricular assessment outcomes for the college.

Expectations for the ethical behavior of faculty, administrators, and students are specified in many college policies, presented in the college’s policy volumes (2A).

In the event that students, faculty, or staff believe the college’s ethical standards are not being met, they have several avenues for expressing a complaint or concern. The Campus Conduct Hotline is a confidential, independent call-in service that provides a simple and anonymous way to help preserve the values and reputation of Southwestern College. This service offers employees and students a means to report activity or behavior that is harmful, unethical, questionable, or causes an individual personal injury, or may violate an individual’s rights. The Campus Conduct Hotline is available for anyone on campus who experiences or observes any of the following:



- Fraud or crime
- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination
- Safety or security risks
- Security and internet policy abuses
- Code of Conduct violations
- Workplace hostility
- Unethical grading practices
- Fraudulent financial or business practices
- Any other questionable behavior

The college has appointed its director of human resources to serve as Southwestern's Title IX Coordinator. In this role, she has trained a number of college employees to serve as investigators of complaints and has arranged for training of college personnel by knowledgeable experts on Title IX, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. The college actively disseminates information to its employees to educate them about their avenues for Title IX complaints.

An email is sent to all students each year reminding them of links that fulfill the [college's disclosure](#) and reporting requirements. Consumer information is found on the school's [web site](#).

Disciplinary actions are articulated in the college's handbooks, and processes are enacted as needed. Appropriate conduct is expected of all students, staff and faculty.

#### **4R4. Integrity: Results**

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In an average year, the college investigates a variety of complaints, the majority of which fall under Title VII and Title IX. The college has created and communicated the processes associated with generating complaints to ensure that concerns about experiences within the college community are addressed in an informed and appropriate manner. The college has created a [reporting matrix](#) so that complaints received by our anonymous reporting mechanism are forwarded to the appropriate office for investigation. The college works closely and proactively with its risk management team and legal counsel in order to identify and eliminate workplace concerns before they evolve into litigation. Experience has shown that the concerns and complaints addressed at SC have been best resolved in a collaborative way at the organizational level.

#### **4I4. Integrity: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

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The college has undertaken a number of training programs for employees and students concerning conduct and reporting of misconduct. This training and communication effort will be continued and expanded.



## CATEGORY 5: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

**Context.** The principal challenge facing Southwestern College as it began its participation in AQIP over a decade ago was effective marshalling of information to guide management of the institution and the effective deployment of its resources. We have made significant progress.

An important step forward was taken with the establishment of the Office of Institutional Research approximately 10 years ago. Initially, the college thought of this office in terms of its responsibility as the key holder for the IPEDS surveys, enrollment surveys, and for completing surveys such as *U.S. News & World Report* and the Common Data Set. When the college converted its main administrative software system to PowerCampus, the office began to develop an extensive battery of management reports related to enrollment management, advancement, and finance.

Much the same may be said of the college's systems for stewarding and deploying its fiscal and physical and technological assets, with the college moving from opacity and after-the-fact reporting to transparency and reporting to support management and planning with facts. The college's budget planning and managing has been revolutionized by the use of PowerCampus by a skilled business office staff. Trustees and employees from the president to administrative assistants now receive timely, accurate information concerning revenue, expenditure, and budget status. Outsourcing of buildings and grounds work to Sodexo Facilities Services has, similarly, strengthened the college's ability to see and understand the status and performance of its facilities and manage their use.

The Department of Informational Technology, led by a vice president who is also the campus quality improvement evangelist, has achieved similar improvements. Since PowerCampus went live in 2005, nearly every aspect of the college's information and dataflow processes improved.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Processes.** The college's processes are best characterized as being at the *systematic* level. Ingredients for alignment exist, but have not been realized.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Results.** The college's results are best characterized as being at the *systematic* level. Some processes show signs of alignment, but alignment is uneven.

**Priorities for Improvement.** Key priorities for improvement are:

- Maintenance of an active and current list of facilities' needs, categorizing projects and matching them with appropriate funding sources
- Development of a companion list of information technology needs
- Improvement of the fiscal literacy of the college's Board of Trustees and budget managers in order to maximize unrestricted assets
- Protection of organizational data security and personal privacy
- Projects focusing on the development of a mobile device management system, changing applications, systems/websites to support mobile device display limitations, bandwidth
- Improved external benchmarking concerning key cost categories
- Development of a coordinated approach to selecting vendors/reports that support management of the institution

## 5P1. Knowledge Management: Improvements and Planned Improvements

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The Office of Institutional Research regularly produces several standard reports that are provided to the Administrative Council, president, provost, and vice presidents of Professional Studies. These include enrollment reports at the beginning of the fall and spring terms up to the census date, revenue reports for Professional Studies (every six weeks) and for the main campus (monthly), and retention reports after each main campus semester. The college's Fact Book, which includes enrollment tables and retention tables based on the census data, is maintained on the [web](#). Reports for compliance with the consumer information requirements are also maintained by the IR office and available on the web under [Consumer Information](#). Data tables for the annual [Goals and Directions](#) booklet are also maintained.

In addition to preparation and dissemination of these regularly scheduled reports, the Office of Institutional Research completes a large volume of ad hoc reports, usually in response to a request from an academic division or administrative unit and usually involving retrieval, analysis, and presentation of data from PowerCampus.

On occasion, a unit of the college has worked with the Office of Institutional Research to develop a more comprehensive and concerted battery of reports and analyses. When the college Professional Studies unit engaged the services of a consultant to evaluate the processes of the admissions and advising units, institutional research built a series of reports using MS Access databases to track incoming students, retention, and graduation by each program. The data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the admissions personnel and the coaching staff. The reports were built so that the individual department heads can run the reports as often as needed with very little ongoing support from institutional research staff. Active early support from the Office of Institutional Research and the Department of Information Technology were needed in order to support the college's consulting relationship with Noel-Levitz concerning main campus undergraduate enrollment management.

The selection and use of research and data instruments provided by vendors outside the college continues to be, for the most part, decentralized, and is controlled by the individual administrative departments and academic divisions. Each department/division determines what data and data source is needed and should be used to make informed decisions. Some of the resources used include Great Plains (Business Office), PowerFAIDS (Financial Aid), Noel-Levitz's CSI and SSI, NSSE, FSSE (Professional Studies), ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey (2010), and IDEA (for assessment of instruction and academic outcomes). Data and data sources vary from academic division to division. The divisions also create and administer their own surveys of graduates from their respective departments.

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## **5R1. Knowledge Management: Results**

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The college has not developed processes for measuring and tracking outcomes related to the use of data, information, and performance results in college decision-making processes. It has not developed internal targets or external benchmarks. Though a number of regularly produced reports are analyzed, and employed in managing the college, there are not measures – beyond the purely anecdotal – concerning the use of this information.

## **5I1. Knowledge Management: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

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Development of a robust data warehouse – a cooperative undertaking of the Office of Institutional Research and the Department of Information Technology – combined with effective training programs to strengthen reporting and management capabilities of college units is planned. The data warehouse will allow specific units of the college to better access PowerCampus data for reporting and management.

The college plans to develop a coordinating body, chaired by the director of institutional research, to provide guidance and alignment in the selection and use of instruments and reporting and analysis of results that involve outside providers, such as Noel-Levitz, NSSE, etc.

## **5P2. Resource Management**

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The college's resource management process is rooted in its strategic planning process, the results of which are expressed in the college's annually updated statement of Goals and Directions. At the start of each fiscal year, the Planning Council reaches out across the college for updates on the status of current institutional goals in the then-current statement of Goals and Directions. A report on the status of these goals is then circulated to members of the Administrative Council, and by them to individuals in their units. Proposed additions/deletions to the goals – for new programs, new objectives, completed projects, etc. – are then returned to the Administrative Council as a result of unit-level reporting and planning. Proposed goals are reviewed, discussed and ultimately approved by the Administrative Council. Key inputs into this planning process concern projected revenues, anticipated continuing and new expenses for instruction, student support services, the status of the college's facilities, and needs of the college's information technology infrastructure.

Each fall, the Administrative Council reviews revenue projections and desired changes to the college's strategic plan (Goals and Directions), and develops an outline budget that is discussed with the Board of Trustees' business affairs and endowment investment committee and with the full board. Examples of historical enrollment, gift, and auxiliary revenue information and

projections are presented to the Administrative Council and the board in the [Ten Year Model Excel workbook](#). During the fall, directors of academic and administrative units are asked to submit budget requests to the vice president for finance. All requests are expected to state how additional funds will advance the college's mission and must be explicitly related to the then-current statement of Goals and Directions (5A2). Budget requests are reviewed by the Administrative Council and the president and choices are made.

In January of each year, the budget is finalized by the Administrative Council and forwarded to the Board of Trustees for review and approval at its late-January meeting. After this approval process is completed, the Administrative Council returns to the draft statement of Goals and Directions and aligns it with funds projected to be available under the just-approved budget (5A3). Once this process of alignment is completed, budget directors across the college receive completed, itemized budgets for the following fiscal year. Having these budgets in February for a fiscal year that starts in July provides budget directors opportunities to adjust their planned programs and related expenditures. At the board's April meeting, the updated statement of Goals and Directions is reviewed and approved by the board (5A5).

Key inputs into the budgeting process concern requests for funding for facilities, information technology, instructional staffing, and support services for students. The college has outsourced its facilities and grounds maintenance to Sodexo Facilities Services. This outsourcing decision was made in order to create a systematic and forward thinking – rather than reactive – approach to the maintenance and development of the college's facilities. Sodexo has completed several facilities condition assessments, the most recent being completed in 2013. This assessment yields a comprehensive list of needed facilities investment in such systems as roofs, windows, plumbing, electric service, etc.

The college's facilities maintenance services are provided by Sodexo Facilities Services. The director of plant operations (who is a Sodexo employee) and the vice president for finance meet each spring with representatives from across campus – including academic division chairs, faculty assistants, and athletics and student life personnel – to gather a list of potential equipment replacement and facilities projects for the coming year. Requests are also received directly by the president and vice president for finance. After all the requests are gathered, the president, vice president for finance, and director of plant operations meet to determine which projects will be completed in the next fiscal year based on time, money, future plans, and relative importance of the project. The college updates its list of needed [facilities projects](#) as projects are completed.

At Southwestern College, the Department of Information Technology addresses a wide range of responsibilities which can be categorized as follows: technology infrastructure (storage and transport), systems (content and functionality), and support (end-user/device and delivery). The IT department monitors the age of key pieces of equipment, the quality of network infrastructure, the status of software licenses, etc., and then seeks needed funding through the budgeting process described above. In the past several years the college has made significant

investments in the following projects: internet bandwidth was significantly upgraded; systems and records backup capabilities were upgraded; two new Dell servers and a Dell EqualLogic SAN for storage were purchased to meet hardware needs for the Power Campus upgrade; and the college's data infrastructure (wired and wireless networking), which was having difficulty keeping up with the ever-growing need for bandwidth, was upgraded with a new router and building switches and a 50% increase in number of access points.

The college is sensitive to both market forces and learning data and takes both into account when making adjustments in the allocation of resources. Through the responsible stewardship of resources, sometimes those adjustments lead to a reallocation of resources to support other academic areas. Other times, the college schedules and budgets for new increases in expenditures to support an endeavor. In the case of the former, the college recognized that classroom technology costs related to health sciences were increasing at the same time that area competitors were increasing capacity in their nursing licensure schools. This dynamic meant that the college's on-ground BSN program was not on a sustainable path. The college made the strategic decision to reprioritize the program and reintroduce it to the marketplace as an online RN to BSN degree. Fiscally, this meant reallocating three salary lines to underwrite improvements in other areas. An associate academic vice president of advising and student success was hired to enhance academic support services. Two instructors were also hired to teach lower division math courses, an area where assessment data clearly indicated a need. In response to the growing international student population, the reprioritizing of the nursing program also enabled the college to hire an ESL coordinator/instructor. That program was recently approved by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission for English language instruction which is an indication that the program is on its way to ensuring that international students receive the necessary preparation for academic success.

As the college has gained more experience with international students, it has also become better at listening to the needs of those stakeholders. Students from both China and Saudi Arabia have strong interests in early childhood education. As such, the college planned and approved the addition of a salary line to hire an additional faculty member in that area. Other popular areas of study are business and computer science. Although the college has open positions in these fields, the funding for positions in computer science and information management systems has remained in the budget and the searches have been extended so that the needs of the students in those areas will be met.

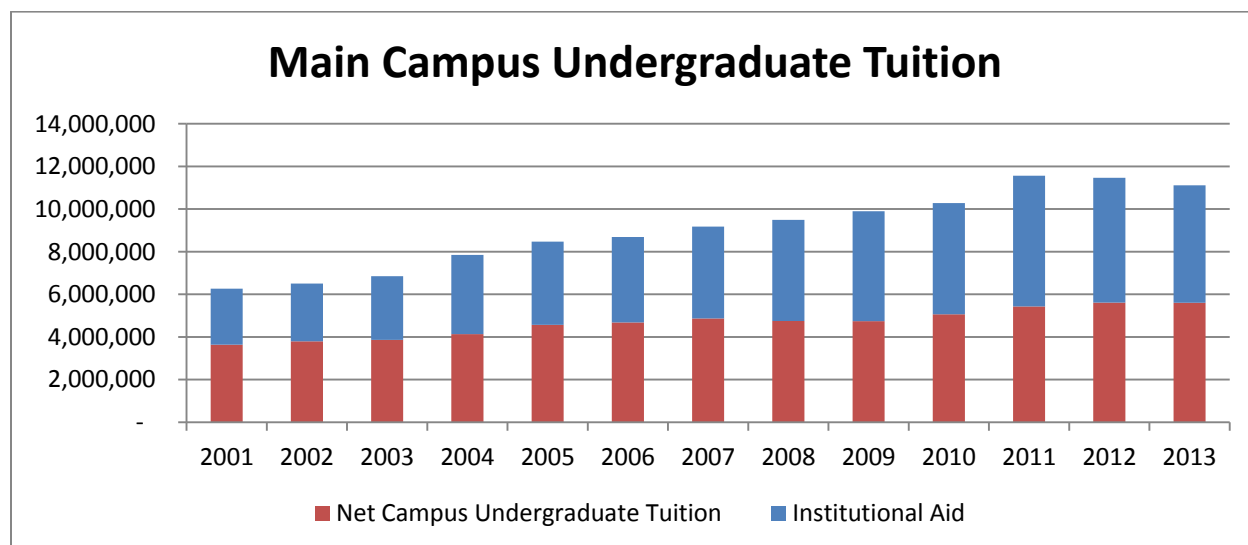
The college's budgeting and strategic planning processes align expenditures with the college's mission and goals, and assure that adequate funding will be provided for instruction, support services, information systems, facilities maintenance and other key programs while ensuring that the college's fiscal resources are not overstretched (5A1, 5A3).

## 5R2. Resource Management: Results

Over the past 15 years the college has been engaged in a planned transformation from its former status as an undergraduate institution devoted to serving traditional-age students in a residential setting into a new status as a comprehensive institution that serves both traditional-age students and non-traditional students in undergraduate and graduate programs through face-to-face, hybrid, and exclusively online instruction.

The following tables, with attached commentary, illustrate and discuss these changes.

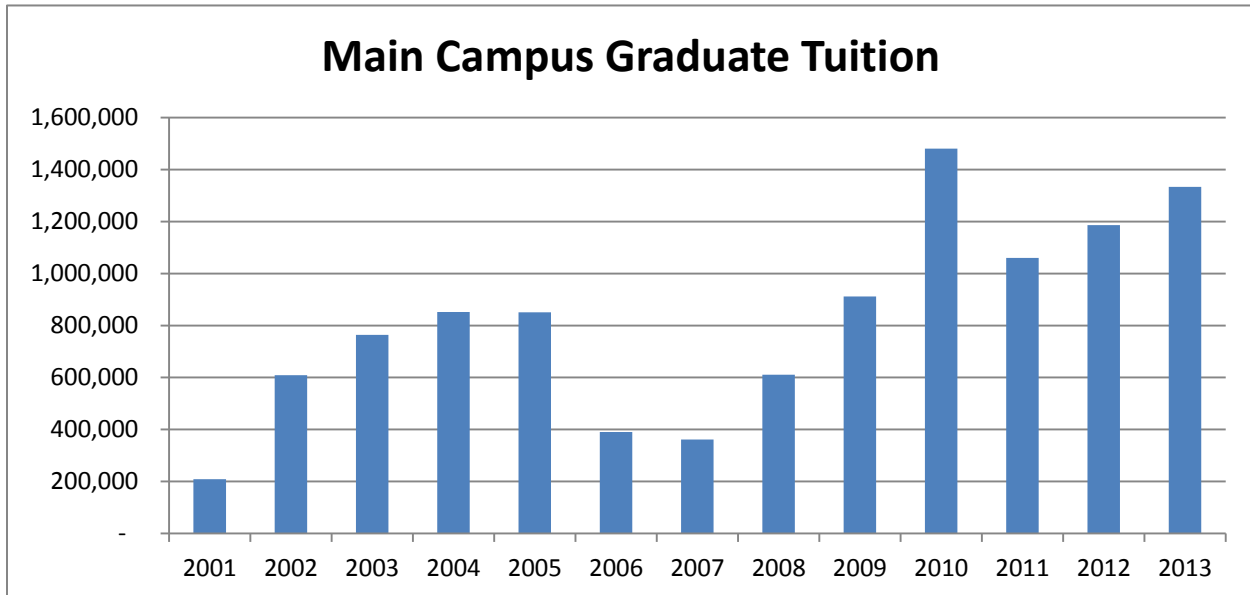
**Chart 5.1 Main Campus Undergraduate Tuition**



*The college's net tuition for main campus undergraduate students has grown from about \$3.5 million in 2001 to about \$5.5 million. Put another way, today the college's main campus undergraduate program generates \$2 million more with which to operate the college than was the case in 2001, even though main campus undergraduate enrollment has not increased. Institutional financial aid is roughly equal to net main campus undergraduate tuition.*

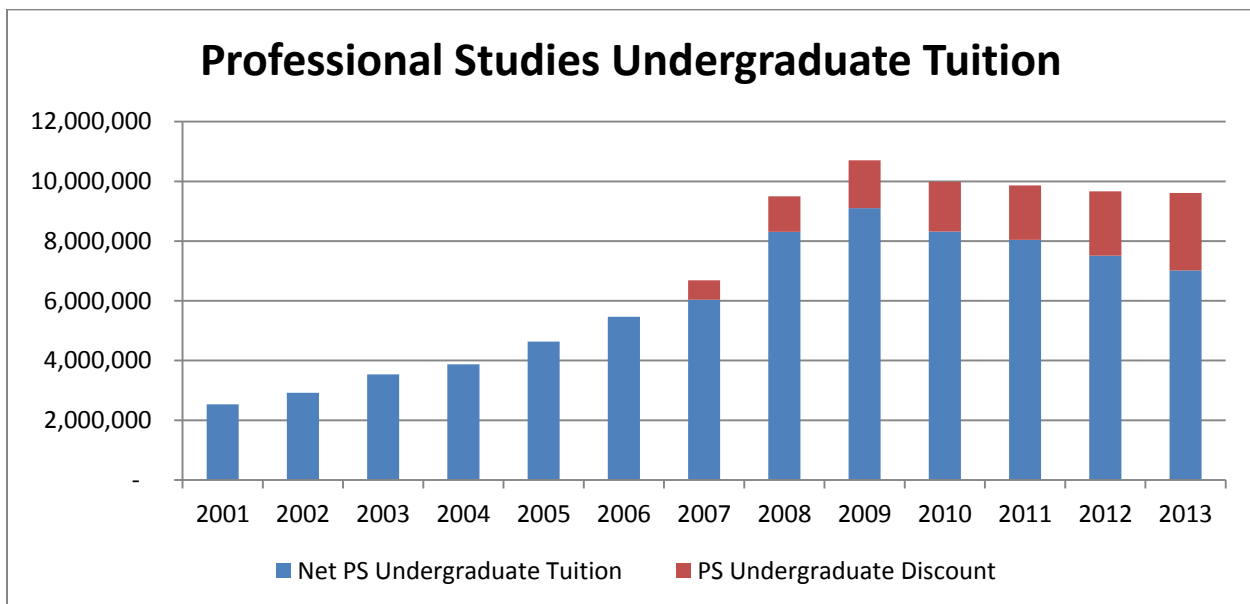


Chart 5.2 Main Campus Graduate Tuition



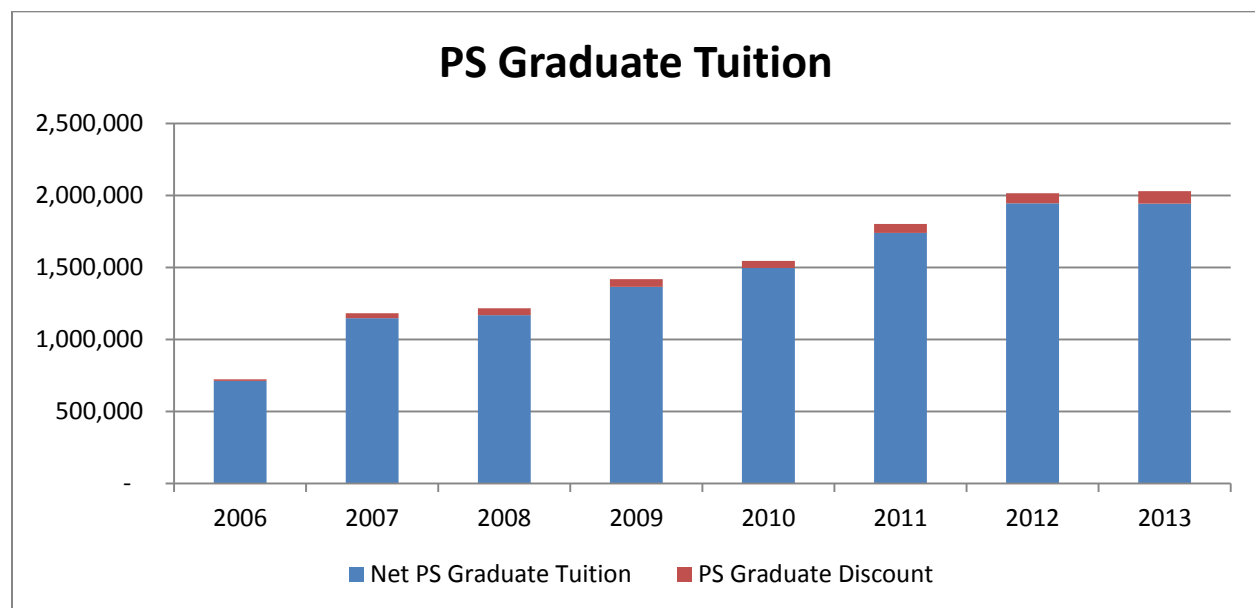
Main campus graduate tuition has grown dramatically from 2001 to 2013, as seen in Chart 5.2. The mainstays of main campus graduate programming are the college's MBA, M.Ed., and Ed.D. programs. For brief periods the main campus also offered master's programs in music and leadership.

Chart 5.3 Professional Studies Undergraduate Tuition



*Professional Studies undergraduate tuition grew steadily from 2001 through 2009, increasing from a little more than \$2 million to about \$9 million as shown in Chart 5.3 on the previous page. The undergraduate discount rate shown in this chart reflects the fact that, when the college serves active duty military learners, tuition assistance is capped at \$250 a credit hour. Consequently, as PS tuition has increased steadily, surpassing the \$250 a credit hour level, tuition discounting has increased steadily. Enrollments in PS undergraduate programs have declined over the past five years as the adult education market has matured and more institutions are competing for adult enrollments.*

**Chart 5.4 Professional Studies Graduate Tuition**

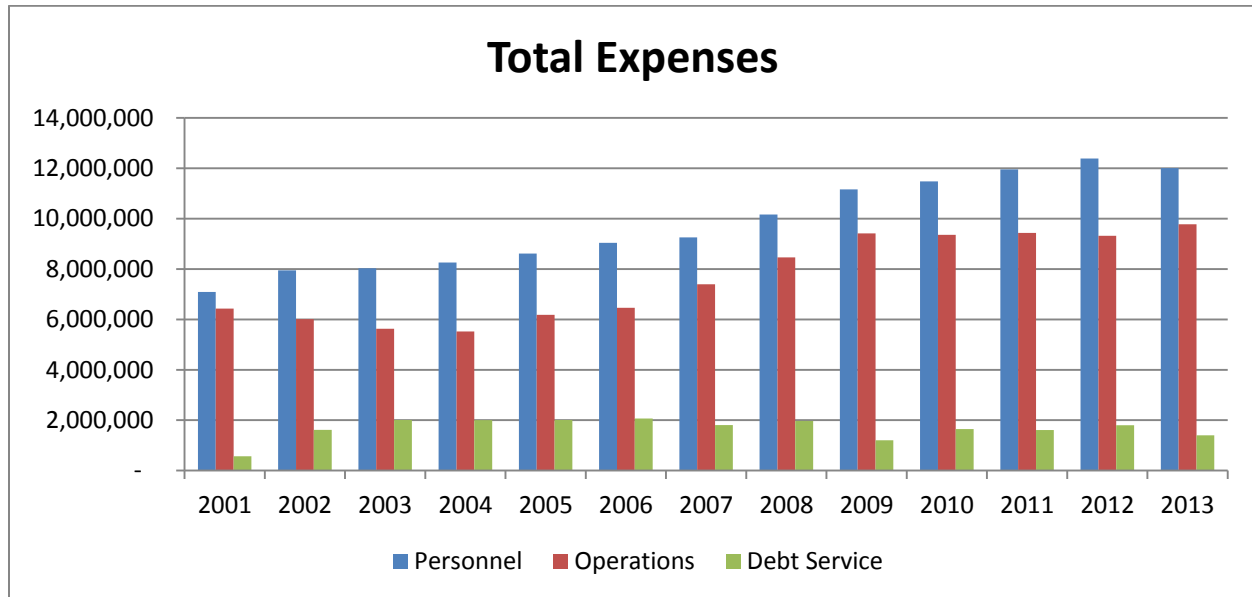


*Professional Studies graduate enrollments and tuition have grown steadily over the past nine years, as shown in Chart 5.4. The discount for graduate courses is much more modest, and stable, than is the case for Professional Studies undergraduate courses, reflecting the fact that far fewer active duty military personnel enroll in PS graduate programs than is true of undergraduate programs. A significant portion of this discount is related to “group rates” the college has extended to selected partner school districts that send teachers into the college’s graduate education programs.*



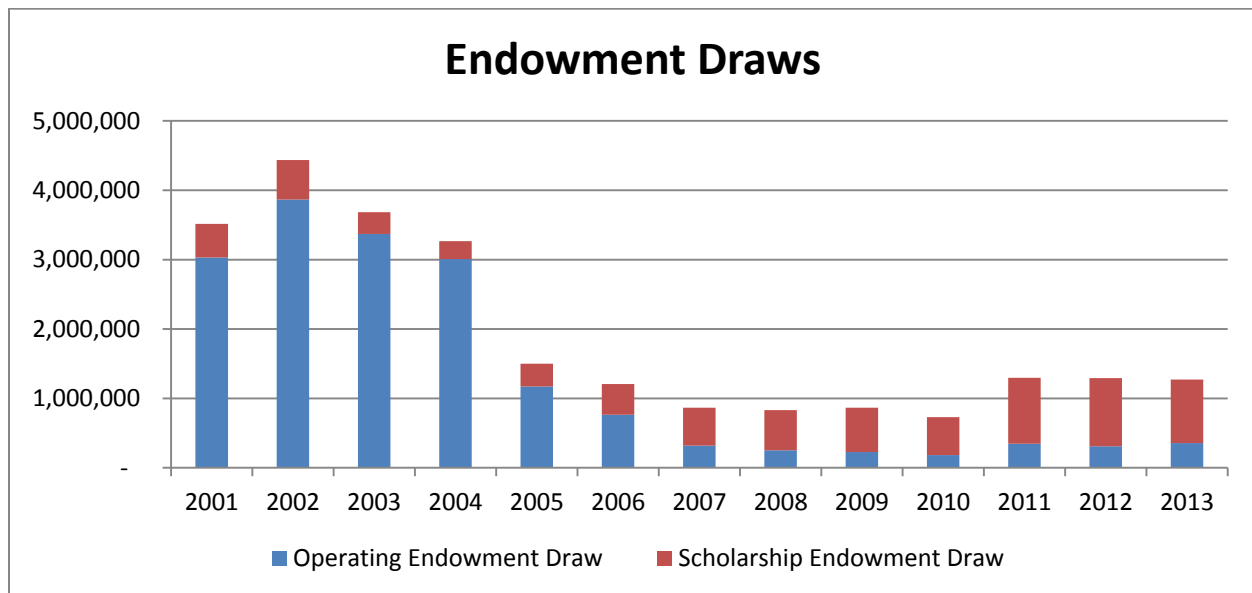


Chart 5.5 Total Expenses



*The college's expenses for personnel and operations have grown steadily as the college's enrollment and complexity have increased. Debt service has decreased in both absolute terms and as a percentage of the college's total operating expenses.*

Chart 5.6 Endowment Draws



*Chart 5.6 depicts the stabilization of the college's financial situation over a multi-year period. During this period the college significantly reduced its reliance on endowment income to balance its operating budget.*

This trend information about academic program scope, enrollment growth, and diversification of college revenues provides the backdrop for the administration's use of the following key measures of effective resource management:

- fiscal year budget outcomes (targeting generation of modest operating surpluses)
- producing balanced budgets with responsible draws on endowment earnings (5% of the three-year trailing average of the value of the college's endowment)
- budget compliance by budget managers (avoiding expenditure overages)
- investment in information technology
- investment in facilities repair, replacement, and maintenance
- ability to add or reallocate instructional positions to respond to, or stimulate, enrollment growth in academic programs
- ability to fund adequate support services (student life and academic support) for the college's students.

Summary results of these indicators are at [Expense Data document](#).

The college works with our auditor and the Kansas Independent College Association (KICA) to prepare, and share with the Board of Trustees and the U.S. Department of Education, information about the financial management of the college's resources and the college's financial viability, etc. (5A2). The college's participation in KICA data gathering permits the college to compare its expenditures and results to those of other private colleges in Kansas. This comparative information which may not be shared outside of the KICA membership, is analyzed annually by the trustees, the president, the vice president for finance, and other administrators, and informs the annual budget-building process (5A5). [KICA comparative information](#) The college's auditor, Grant Thornton, provides the college information that compares Southwestern College to peer institutions on a number of key indicators. This information is reviewed with the Board of Trustees at its fall meeting. [Grant Thornton comparative information](#)

Key insights from the data include the following:

- The college's net expenses per student are less than medians for small private institutions.
- The college's net tuition per student is higher than the medians for small private institutions.
- The college's tuition discount is considerable lower than the median for small private institutions.
- The college needs to seek means to maximize unrestricted financial assets.

All of these findings may be largely attributed to the growth of the college's Professional Studies and graduate programs which do not provide significant institutional financial grants to students and to the lower instructional costs of these programs due to their more extensive use of adjunct faculty.

The college's principal financial goal is to increase its unrestricted assets. The college currently lags behind other Kansas private colleges in accumulation of unrestricted assets, depriving the college of desired financial flexibility. Increased annual giving and reduced operating expenditures are key to addressing this challenge. This lack of flexibility is also reflected in the fact that almost all of the college's endowment assets are true endowment, whereas competitor institutions have been more effective in building flexible quasi-endowment assets. The [KPMG Strategic Ratios/Indicators](#) show recent results and compare these with results at other KICA institutions.

## **5I2 Resource Management: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

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The college will seek to improve its external benchmarking of key resource management indicators by seeking opportunities for consortial data sharing about costs. Possible venues for this activity include the Kansas Independent College Association, the Council of Independent Colleges, and the Delta Costs Project.

## **5P3 Operational Effectiveness**

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Annual budgets are built from prior year information, enrollment-related and other revenue estimates, and from budget requests either generated from department unit plans or general cost increases. These budget requests are reviewed by the Administrative Council and the president and additions/reallocations are fitted with projected revenues and the college's mission and strategic plan priorities. Revenue assumptions and an outline budget are reviewed by the Board of Trustees in October and the final budget is approved in January (5A5).

All college budget managers receive monthly statements about their budgeted funds and may access detail about expenditures at any time. Budget compliance is monitored by the business office staff and developing problems are addressed and corrected. In years in which revenue is not projected to meet targeted levels, expenditures are adjusted downward.

Through interaction with faculty, administrators, students, and through participation as members of cross-departmental teams such as the Student Service Team, the Applications Power Users Group, et al., IT staff members remain abreast of current needs and anticipated needs. Analysis of helpdesk requests and complaint information also informs staff awareness of needs. The IT department has taken a lead role in demonstrating a comprehensive approach to complaint gathering and processing. Complaint data is maintained on the intranet [in the IT issue listing](#).

As noted above, the college's facilities maintenance efforts are guided by an annually updated list of key facilities projects to be completed. In addition, the college's plant operations staff responds to requests for service received through the college's ["Fix It" service](#).

The college works actively to evaluate and reduce risk, working closely with our liability insurer and with the Midwest Higher Education Compact to evaluate and respond to risks of loss and interruption of business operations. Risks identified are found in the [EIIA IT risk management report](#). Remedial steps have been taken, or are planned, to address these risks. Five years ago, with the assistance of consultants from HRP Associates, the college conducted a comprehensive [audit of environmental risks and compliance](#) with both state and federal environmental protection regulations. The college's environmental compliance committee, which is chaired by the college's vice president for planning and includes administrators and faculty members (notably, from the chemistry and theatre departments), ensures that the college is complying with environmental regulations.

Feedback from EIIA and IMA were used to improve our data security posture as can be seen by the following completed projects:

- Moved our data center to a secure, environmentally controlled location
- Implemented controlled physical room key access protocol to the data center
- Installed power generator backup to the data center
- Virtualized our server environment
- Installed a SAN replication system with our Wichita location
- Installed a virtual platform backup and recovery system to a secondary site on campus
- Installed a password reset system (password expiration to be rolled out this year)
- Updated IT policy document
- Implemented Packeteer system to manage internet bandwidth
- Developed disaster recovery and a business continuity plan (basic) is in place for data
  - Primary production application is backed up and then the backup is replicated to a secondary location on campus
  - Secondary systems are replicated between Wichita and Winfield
  - Recovery would depend on the situation and what is destroyed
  - We have two recovery sites, Winfield and Wichita and the data can be moved from one to the other as needed
  - We can also move the data to our secondary hosted site provided by AOS
- Increased training for staff and faculty with online Microsoft Training Program
- Yearly IT assessment of production system is in place
- Implemented control training and development environment for production system
- Upgraded infrastructure from shared hub to switched environment
- Upgraded wireless controllers to HP authenticated WLAN system
- Implemented mobile device management of college mobile assets
- Implemented disk encryption for laptops

### 5R3. Operational Effectiveness: Results

The management of the college's buildings and grounds is under the direction of Sodexo Facilities Services. A 2013 facilities condition analysis (Table 5.1) shows the following concerning the condition of the college's facilities.

**Table 5.1 Facilities Condition Analysis**

Facility Condition Index and Facility Condition Quality Index	
% Gross Square Footage by FCI Range	
Excellent (FCI 0 – 2%)	21.1%
Good (FCI 2.1 – 5%)	5.6%
Fair (FCI 5.1 – 10%)	14.10
Poor (FCI over 10%)	59.2%

The facility condition index score highlights a significant challenge for the college: allocating adequate resources for renewal and replacement of important building systems, notably HVAC, roofs, and electric service. Issues with these systems are not yet having significant impacts on college programs or the experiences of students, but must be addressed before those impacts begin.

In the current academic year the president, vice president for finance, vice president for information technology, and director of plant operations have been working actively with the Board of Trustees to better align board committee structures and operations so that facilities and technology issues may be more effectively addressed. The board's business affairs committee and facilities and technology committee have begun meeting jointly and will continue such joint meetings at every board meeting for the foreseeable future in order to better coordinate planned investments in facilities. This alignment of committee work will enable the board and the administration to make key decisions concerning the priority of various facilities projects and to match key facilities projects with appropriate sources of project funding, including: energy performance contracting, proceeds from a planned capital campaign, funding through issuance of Kansas Independent College Finance Authority bonds, and allocation of budgeted operating funds for plant expenditures.

The vice president for IT informs members of the Administrative Council, members of the trustee committee on facilities and technology, and the board at large about key IT needs. These needs are then factored into the college's budget-building and planning process. The Department of Information Technology employs a three-year rotating plan – built through review of industry journals, contacts with peers at other institutions, and the work of staff members in

daily operations - to complete projects and seek continuous improvement. In the past five years, the following improvement projects have been completed:

**Infrastructure:** Upgraded main campus internet bandwidth, from 20Mb to 40Mb to 100Mb and then to 250Mb; upgraded our Wichita Professional Studies connectivity from 10Mb to 20Mb to 50Mb while moving it from older unstable connectivity to the new cloud connectivity; moved IT data center from an open room on the upper floor of Christy Administration Building to a secure room in the basement of Christy with its own generator and climate control; upgraded all switching and routing equipment and wireless access points; upgraded backup and restore process from tape to virtualized disk-based; migrated nearly all bare metal servers to Citrix Virtual Platform; implemented redundant SAN platforms to handle storage; implemented out-bound email spam control; implemented internet traffic controls and caching; and designed disaster recovery and business continuity plans for IT.

**Systems:** Created and implemented a software systems process for maintenance, support and upgrades – production, testing, and development environments; migrated Blackboard off their hosting service to a third-party hosted service, thus providing more support to our new structure for a lower total cost; upgraded PowerCampus several major versions; implemented a reporting warehouse; implemented an emergency notification/calling system; implemented a “card based” physical door lock, meal plans and identification system; implemented Sharepoint as our intranet and departmental portal; implemented self-service housing sign-up; implementing a mobile software platform; implemented Cashnet for online payments/payment plans; migrating email to Office365.

**Support:** Implemented a help desk system and process; implemented a call and issue tracking system; implemented IKON/RICOH print shop and copiers contract; implemented a support survey; redesigned our IT website; provide training resources from MS and other vendors as needed; took over support and responsibilities for labs across campus; and maintained video conferencing systems.;

### 5I3. Operational Effectiveness: Improvement and Planned Improvements

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A key improvement is the maintenance of an active and current list of facilities needs and the efforts to categorize these projects and match them with appropriate funding approaches. The involvement of two committees of the Board of Trustees in this work promises to expedite planning and execution of needed facilities projects.

Development of a companion or corollary list of information technology needs will also be completed, permitting a comprehensive view of infrastructure needs and appropriate budget planning responses to these needs.

The staff of the business office will work to improve the “fiscal literacy” of the college’s board of trustees and budget managers to encourage budgeting practices that increase the unrestricted assets of the college.

Protection of organizational data security and personal privacy is a key improvement priority for the college’s IT staff. The staff will focus on more robust password and other authentication methods, training for users on protecting their identity and privacy, work to encrypt their database and/or fields, and adopting an intrusion detection and prevention system.

The IT department will develop a mobile device management system (MDM), change applications, systems and websites to support mobile device display limitations, add bandwidth, and review the future of the college’s laptop learning program.

## CATEGORY 6: QUALITY OVERVIEW

**Context.** Southwestern College has been participating in AQIP since 2003. The current Systems Portfolio is the institution's third and the college's participation in AQIP has prompted significant changes in the culture of the college.

The college's administrative culture in 2003 was largely reactive and rather informal. The reactive nature of the college's operations is reflected in the early AQIP Action Projects completed by the college; they are discrete, of the moment, and focused on specific problems. As the college's culture has evolved, planning has been strengthened, siloed thinking and operations have been challenged and partially overcome, performance planning and evaluation have been improved, and the college has worked more systematically to gather and manage with facts (5D2).

The college's most recent Action Projects have been focused on developing more mature processes, improving handling of complaints, and strengthening academic outcomes assessment. These projects reflect meta-level thinking and actions that are not simply of the moment or designed to address specific problems, but rather are focused on changing and improving the way the college works across a wide range of processes, issues, and domains. What is true of the college's AQIP Action Projects is also true, more generally, of the college's quality improvement efforts; they are more systematic and effective, and show evidence, borne out in a number of surveys of college employees, of an emerging quality culture.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Processes.** The college's processes are best characterized as being at the *systematic* level. Evidence of nascent alignment is seen, but many processes have not operated through multiple cycles to permit alignment. Work activity of the college's employees is increasingly, and more explicitly, related to the college's mission and goals.

**Stages in Systems Maturity: Results.** The college's results are best characterized as being at the *systematic* level. The college works much more intentionally to gather and manage with data. Tracking of performance on institutional goals is improving, but much of this work is still in "first cycle" status.

**Priorities for improvement.** Priorities for improvement include:

- Improvement of assessment of academic outcomes, with creation of stronger, repeated routines of measurement, analysis, and improvement;
- Continued work to improve collection and use of data to strengthen measurement for improvement;
- Continued use of the process maturity model to improve both its extensiveness (being certain it touches and influences all of the institution) and ensure that process steadily improve;
- Incorporation of training in our process and quality culture into our new employee/faculty training and onboarding processes; and
- Recognition and stronger encouragement of process thinking and resulting improvements.



## 6P1. Quality Improvement Initiatives

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During the 2002-2003 academic year, the college's faculty, staff, administration, trustees, and key community and alumni volunteers engaged in a series of evaluative and planning activities related to quality improvement at Southwestern College. The centerpiece of this year of evaluation was a self-assessment based on the Baldrige criteria for education. This self-assessment revealed strengths and weaknesses in the college's approach to providing an education of high quality. Key findings included:

- The college's efforts in the area of performance planning, performance evaluation, workforce training and development, and use of institutional plans and objectives to shape the performance of the college's workforce were judged to be weak and lacking focus.
- While the college was able to demonstrate significant efforts to understand and respond to the needs of students and other stakeholders, Southwestern was not working systematically to understand the requirements of key stakeholders and to assign responsibility to key administrators and faculty members for meeting those requirements.
- The college had not developed and effectively employed performance measures below the enterprise level to guide evaluation and improvement efforts.
- While the college had expended great effort in the realm of academic outcomes assessment, these efforts had not often generated information that led to action for improvement of learning outcomes.

Southwestern applied to participate in AQIP in 2003 with these findings in mind.

At the start of the college's participation in AQIP, the college's improvement initiatives were of a certain sort – tending to be quite specific and reflecting challenges that felt imminent. Most of the impetus for improvement initiatives came from identification by the college's senior administrators – in dialogue with the college's Board of Trustees – of those imminent challenges. Discussions and goal-setting during the college's first Strategy Forum, which involved administrators, faculty members, and the chair of the Board of Trustees, were similarly focused on dealing with the college's most pressing challenges. Hence, early Action Projects were concerned with: 1) understanding and addressing the college's financial challenges, 2) improving student retention, 3) creating an effective human resources office, and 4) strengthening individual employee performance evaluation processes.

The completion of the college's initial Systems Portfolio (2007) was largely an exercise in documenting current practices at the college and, often, noting their inadequacy (5D1). Review and discussion of the resulting Systems Appraisal feedback report by the college Administrative Council, other administrators, trustees, and faculty who were involved with Action Projects and construction of the Systems Portfolio (roughly 75 college employees) inaugurated a number of significant changes in the college's AQIP efforts (5D2).

Because AQIP was, up until that time, widely regarded at the college as an accreditation-specific group of processes – calling forth compliance-minded responses – a decision was made to rebrand the college's quality improvement effort as SCIQ (Southwestern College Improving Quality), with the corresponding message that improving quality is something we work at each day, not just when the Higher Learning Commission needs a report. This rebranding was, in addition, a response to comments in the Systems Appraisal that urged the college's leadership to broaden participation in improvement efforts and foster more grassroots generation of ideas and processes focused on improvement (5D2).

In response to Systems Appraisal feedback, the nature of Action Projects undertaken at the college began to shift away from the college's early efforts to solve discrete problems and move toward a) multi-year or multi-phase projects, e.g. focusing on measuring academic outcomes, and b) projects focused on observed weaknesses in the college's quality culture and infrastructure, rather than projects focused on one-off problems.

Because almost 75 college employees played a role in drafting the 2007 Systems Portfolio, those 75 employees had the experience – emphasized in Systems Appraisal feedback comments – of reaching, often in vain, for facts and evidence to substantiate claims they wished to make about results and outcomes. This experience, in turn, produced greater emphasis on measurement and repeated use of standard instruments (5D2).

Quality improvement efforts multiplied after the completion of the first Systems Portfolio. Notable among these have been:

- Regular administration of the ***Are We Making Progress?*** survey of employees. Several training and improvement initiatives have resulted from institution-specific queries and the recommendations of the college's employees (5D2).
- Efforts to strengthen individual performance planning and evaluation through review and revision of position descriptions, work to connect individual performance plans to unit plans, and efforts to move more of the impetus and initiatives in college's strategic planning process to the grassroots, based on individual and unit plans. These efforts were rooted in an early Action Project.
- Development and strengthening of the college's Office of Institutional Research, which now provides significant support for decision-making and management at many levels across the college.
- Development and reporting of key financial and performance metrics that are frequently updated and are used to manage college operations. Transparency into revenue and expenditures has dramatically improved, permitting effective budget planning, monitoring of revenues and expenditures, and diffusion of budget management authority across the college.
- Efforts, completed across a number of Action Projects, to standardize academic outcomes assessment across the college.

- Development of an annual process by which the college's long-term goals and short-term implementation steps – Goals and Directions – are reviewed, updated, and approved by the Board of Trustees.
- Strengthened efforts to improve persistence and retention, both through improved reporting and development of improved support services for students.
- Acting on Systems Appraisal feedback, the college vice president for planning took steps to provide expanded opportunities for the college employees of all classifications and ranks to participate in shaping the college's strategic plan. The college Planning Council now includes representation from across the college.
- Systematic gathering of after-graduation outcomes data from alumni. Results have been used to focus efforts to strengthen internship and job placement services in an underperforming academic division.
- Development of working teams that cut across departmental lines (Student Services Team, International Student Services Team, Athletic-Academic Council, Retention Council, PowerCampus Users Group, et al.). These teams, which are normally led by administrators at the director level, involve administrators and faculty from across the college in identifying problems, finding solutions, and redesigning processes.
- A number of extant college groups and processes have begun to focus on key quality initiatives, thus dramatically broadening the participation of the college's people in quality improvement efforts. For example, the Task Force on the Future of Southwestern College, a group including administrators, faculty, staff, and trustees that is convened every three years, has focused in its three most recent incarnations on reviewing and revising the college's mission statement, improving the career preparation and employment outcomes programs of the college, and developing segmented communication strategies to better meet the information needs of key college stakeholder groups.

The college's quality efforts took a significant turn after the 2008 Strategy Forum, when the college's vice president for information technology, Ben Lim, who is well-versed in quality improvement work, took on an expanded role as an evangelist/trainer for quality improvement. The most significant work done by Mr. Lim involves training on and implementation of the process maturity model as a means of evaluating college processes, noting their maturity, and planning steps for improvement. In a companion project, Lim has assisted a number of campus departments with improving complaint processing. These projects mark a significant step forward in the college's effort to build a quality improvement culture.

In summary, Strategy Forum participation, design and execution of Action Projects, and feedback received through Systems Appraisals have helped Southwestern build broader participation in quality improvement efforts. This broadening participation has been seen in the development and operation of multi-departmental functional working groups, in work to create clearer links between individual, unit, and institutional plans, adaptation of extant college

committees and groups to advance quality initiatives, and work to strengthen the quality culture and infrastructure of the college (5D2).

## **6R1. Quality Improvement Initiatives: Results**

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The college has achieved financial equilibrium and routinely balances its budget with an acceptable endowment draw of 5% or less. The Office of Human Resources now operates effectively, directing the operation of a standard performance evaluation and planning process for employees that is integral to the college's planning process, eliciting from employees performance goals that are incorporated into unit goals, upon which the college's strategic plan (Goals and Directions) is built. The college's planning process is now regularized and pervasive and shapes the development of the college's budget. The college's assessment of academic outcomes, formerly rather disparate and shapeless and plagued by a number of false starts in implementation, has been unified and is operating on a regular schedule. Retention of both main campus students and Professional Studies learners has improved. The college's academic programs are now evaluated on a regular schedule.

## **6I1. Quality Improvement Initiatives: Improvements and Planned Improvements**

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Key initiatives will include:

- Improvement of academic outcomes assessment, focusing particularly on more careful analysis and interpretation of results and incorporation of findings into decisions for improving performance.
- Continued use of the Process Maturity Model to improve both its extensiveness (being certain it touches and influences all of the institution) and to ensure that process scores are steadily improved.
- Strengthening the role of the Office of Institutional Research in supporting decision-making and in completing construction of, and training in the use of, a data mart that will foster more autonomous report generation and interpretation by both departments and interdepartmental working groups.

## **6P2. Culture of Quality**

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Instilling a quality culture is not an easy task. As noted above, the college worked to rebrand AQIP, replacing it with SCIQ in order to signal that improving quality is an ongoing, integral part of the college's work, not an accreditation-related task. There is suggestive evidence in the way the college's employees speak indicating that this has been an important change. Many projects undertaken at the college are now simply referred to as "process improvements."

Repeated administration of the ***Are We Making Progress?*** survey has been used to both assess the perceptions of the college's employees about quality issues, and also to equip them with a vocabulary and a way of thinking about quality improvement initiatives. As was noted above, institution-specific questions added to the survey have also provided information that has allowed the development of targeted training programs that respond the needs expressed by employees.

The majority of the ***Are We Making Progress?*** survey focuses on questions grouped under the following headings: Leadership; Strategic Planning; Service Focus; Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; Human Resource Focus, Process Management; and Results. Responses are on a five point scale, with 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. High scores reflect positive evaluations. Low scores reflect negative evaluations. [Employee Survey 2014](#)

For example: Leadership items focus on the clarity of the college's mission, how information is shared within the organization, using the college's values to guide the institution, and seeking the input of employees. In the 2014 survey administration, the most favorable score was 4.09 for "I know the college's mission." The least favorable was 3.12 for "The college asks what I think." It might be said that this is an interesting response to a survey that asks respondents what they think, but it clearly means some employees do not feel they are being heard or listened to. Right in the middle was "The college's leaders share information about the organization," at 3.77. The overall average for seven items was 3.68.

Averages for the question groupings:

Leadership	3.68
Strategic Planning	3.36
Service Focus	4.17
Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management	3.75
Human Resources Focus	4.10
Performance Management	3.67
Process Management	3.66
Results	3.74

The lower scores in Strategic Planning reflect responses indicating that some employees don't see how their department's plans and goals connect to the broader goals of the college, and they don't see how the college's goals and plans do (or should) affect their work. The college has tried to address this with administrators and staff by tying together individual goals, unit plans, and goals and directions, but some of these connections are evidently still not clear. This same concern about linking personal goals to institutional goals echoes in responses about Performance Management, which focuses on supervision and defining performance goals.

Concerning Results, respondents believe that “people are satisfied with my work” 4.02, and that “the college obeys laws and has high standards and ethics” 4.1 and 4.0. They are less satisfied when asked to gauge how well “the college removes things that get in the way of progress” 3.04. But they also report that “I can make changes that will improve my work” 4.13. Fairly high scores are seen in response to “My supervisor and the college care about me” 4.05, and “I am satisfied with my job” 4.04. A separate query showed that 96 of 103 respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with working for the college.

A longitudinal look at survey results – from 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2014 in Table 6.1 – reveals stability, mostly. The scores shown above for Leadership, Strategic Planning, etc., haven’t moved much over the years, though the trend since 2005 is slightly positive. One exception is in the realm of Human Resource Focus, where the score has moved in a positive direction. This reflects improvement in basic human resources work with position descriptions, employee training, and benefit administration.

Table 6.1 Results of College Employee Surveys

**Results of College Employee Surveys**

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2014
	<i>Scale from 1 to 5, with higher scores representing positive assessments.</i>						
<b>1</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.68</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>3.36</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Service Focus</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>4.17</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.75</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Human Resource Focus</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Process Management</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>3.66</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.74</b>
	<i>Scale: very satisfied - 4; satisfied - 3; dissatisfied - 2; very dissatisfied - 1</i>						
	<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>3.29</b>

Survey results are often dismissed as being subjective, but these results do indicate the lived experience of the college's employees and the survey has heightened their awareness of the college's SCIQ program (5D1).

The college has developed and implemented training for top level administrators that encourages understanding of the culture and reasoning of process/quality improvement. ([Performance Management Training](#)) For mid-level administrators, training and work have focused more on identifying, documenting and improving processes through the Process Maturity Model ([PBM and 6σ Training](#)). At the level of individual employees, it is expected that

at least one process improvement goal will be included in each employee's annual performance plan. The college has also identified and trained a group of "Process Leaders" who have been trained in more depth regarding the Process Maturity Model and have also executed at least one cycle of documenting processes. The [PMM scorecard](#) shows that the entire institution has participated in this effort, naming, documenting, and scoring the maturity of college processes. Over 100 college employees participated in this effort (5D1).

The institution relies on its strategic planning process to help identify, select, and execute improvements. Institutional goals developed and expressed in the college's annually updated statement of Goals and Directions provide overarching guidance for goals the college will pursue. Departmental annual and three-year plans are derived from these Goals and Directions. Individual performance goals serve to advance departmental goals. Although these institutional, unit, and individual goals are often presented in a hierarchical manner, they are not developed or derived in a top-down manner. It is certainly the case that the college leadership expresses goals for the institution. It is just as clearly the case that individual unit plans reflect and encourage initiatives on the part of individual employees or groups of employees who identify key goals for improvement which are ultimately reflected in high level institutional goals.

Less successful, to date, but equally promising as a means to strengthen the college's quality culture and enhance its focus on stakeholder expectations, is the development of a college-wide complaint tracking and processing model. The model is shown at: [Complaint Process](#).

In addition to continuing systems-level efforts described above concerning performance planning, strategic planning, PMM, and complaint processing, and performance planning and evaluation, the college's people have worked, under the rubric of SCIQ, to complete a number of quality improvement efforts. Some of these projects include:

- Paper checks in payroll eliminated.
- eRefunds instituted for direct deposit of financial aid refunds.
- Internal audit and reconciliations added to the financial aid disbursement process.
- Professional Studies course selection schedule opened up for the entire semester versus session-by-session to increase effectiveness of student enrollment processes and assist students in following their graduation plans.
- Professional Studies learners offered .edu student email addresses to allow discounts on software and increased ability to mass communicate.
- Office of Communications dissemination of news releases to media, parents, and students through Merit system (allowing instant sharing on social networks).
- Addition of system for improved camps and conferences registration processes and evaluation.
- New password reset process put in place by IT to provide a more convenient and effective self-reset of passwords.
- New backup and restore process instituted by IT to provide a more effective self-restore of deleted or corrupted files.



- Financial aid office documentation completed of all procedures for consistency and continuity, allowing staff to shift tasks to avoid burnout and boredom as well as to provide cross-training among the team and deeper and more comprehensive knowledge of the entire financial aid process for all our team members.
- Document retention plan completed and implemented by IT department.
- Website covering billing policies and procedures created by business office.
- Standardized reporting and metrics for accounts receivable established by business office
- The Institutional Advancement Office's "Make a Gift" online giving form redesigned and improved.
- Campus signage (particularly way-finding signage) updated and improved.
- Social media targeted more effectively toward specific groups of alumni, parents, and friends by the Office of Communications.
- Implementation by the library staff of a plan to collect and review resource usage information to support collection assessment.
- Recent-graduate outcomes survey administered annually by the Office of Institutional Research.
- Web-based early warning system implemented by the college's academic success center, allowing faculty to "flag" students who have attendance and performance issues for intervention and support.
- Training implemented by enrollment management for admission/coaches on key processes (business office, financial aid) as well as product knowledge (faculty present when training concerned programs).
- Formalized process implemented for legal and HR issues and complaints, including Campus Conduct hotline.
- MySC intranet site developed to facilitate sharing of documents by committees and work teams.
- CRM implemented by Professional Studies to increase personalized interaction with prospective students and applicants and to create greater lead management accountability
- Main campus admission website redesigned, integrating a net price calculator to provide greater transparency regarding tuition and other costs.
- Online employee payroll self-service implemented by human resources.
- Academic program review on the main campus and in Professional Studies is now carried out on a regular schedule.
- Each program offered through Professional Studies undergoes a program review in a five-year cycle. Assessment results from the prior five years, input from an advisory council (made up of employers, graduates of the program, content matter experts, and graduate school representatives, if applicable), graduate and alumni surveys, NSSE

results, and other data are evaluated to determine the efficacy of the program and to determine if it meets employer or market expectations. As a result of each review, curricular changes are recommended, new programs or emphasis areas are identified, or programs that no longer meet employer or graduate school admission expectations are sunset.

## 6R2. Culture of Quality: Results

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In preparation for the college's participation in its third AQIP Strategy Forum, in February 2012 the college's workforce was invited to complete a Quality Culture Survey. More than 100 of the college's full-time employees completed the [Quality Culture Survey](#). (5D1)

Survey responses showed encouraging signs that quality principles, whether explicitly named or not, are having an impact on the operation of the college and on the way the college's employees think and work. Responses to questions concerning locus of authority, employee participation, and task structure indicate that the college's employees believe the college encourages employees to take initiative, gives them latitude to make decisions, and puts authority in the hands of those who actually do the work. In short, the college has a good balance of flexibility and control. Responses on many scales gave the college good marks on measures about culture management (having clear values and integrity), disposition toward change, goal clarity, treating each other with dignity and respect, and having a culture that expects and rewards good performance. On two scales Southwestern did rather poorly: evidence-based orientation and stakeholder orientation.

The results of the Quality Culture Survey, the list of quality improvement projects completed and listed above, and the number of college employees who have participated in process maturity model training and have worked to map, document, and train on key processes, are all evidence that a quality culture has taken root at the college. More attention to understanding the needs of non-student stakeholders is needed. More attention to managing with facts and evidence, with results supporting further improvement efforts, is also needed.

**Note to HLC leaders of the AQIP:** Given the difficulty AQIP institutions have experienced in gathering and presenting comparative data across educational institutions, continued and expanded use of the Quality Culture Survey among AQIP institutions should be strongly encouraged by the AQIP staff. The survey is a valuable instrument, but only if many institutions use it and comparative results are available.

## 6I2 Culture of Quality: Improvements and Planned Improvements

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The college will be focusing attention on more careful specification of key stakeholders and of plans to understand and respond to their needs. The college will continue efforts to strengthen management with facts, focusing on measurement of outcomes, and evaluation of outcomes for subsequent improvement. The college has dramatically increased its collection and use of data, but use of data to create meaning and change for improvement still needs attention. Put another way, the college needs to become more proficient in measurement of results, analysis of results, and further change to improve performance. Measurement for improvement – indeed the effective use of feedback in order to manage with facts – is a top priority for the future.

Training in our process and quality culture needs to be incorporated into our new employee/faculty training and onboarding processes. Turnover of personnel is a constant in higher education, so achieved gains in process thinking and execution are subject to rapid erosion.

The college needs to make greater efforts to recognize and reward process thinking and resulting improvements, so that people will be more consistent in their individual pursuit of quality. We have not yet created a process to do this, other than attempting to incorporate one process documentation or improvement project per year into each employee's performance plan.