

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

June 16, 2005



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Strategic and Accreditation Issues	6
Appraisal Feedback Report	10
Critical Characteristics Analysis	12
Category Feedback	15
<i>Helping Students Learn</i>	16
<i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i>	19
<i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i>	22
<i>Valuing People</i>	26
<i>Leading and Communicating</i>	30
<i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i>	34
<i>Measuring Effectiveness</i>	39
<i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i>	42
<i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i>	45
Using the Feedback Report.....	50

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Systems Appraisal conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program of The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools provides a comprehensive examination of the Fort Hays State University conducted by a trained team composed primarily of higher education peer reviewers. In order to provide fresh and objective insights and perspectives the team also included reviewers from outside higher education. Following is the Appraisal Team's summary evaluation of Fort Hays State University's current performance in each of the nine AQIP Categories.

The complete Systems Appraisal Feedback Report contains evaluation of the processes, performance results, and improvement strategies under each of these nine AQIP categories, pointing out where the team sees FHSU's current activities and practices as strengths and where it sees in them opportunities for improvement.

As you study the results of this Appraisal, do not ignore the strengths and focus only on the possibility of improvements. Strengths offer significant opportunities as well: they can be celebrated as model practices, deployed or imitated in programs throughout the institution, and used to inspire new approaches to performance enhancement in other areas.

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

Growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly. Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Reliable processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are being developed and implemented. Successful approaches and processes are sometimes adopted and used in units other than where they originated. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in a few areas. Evidence exists of recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance in a few areas. Anecdotal information is on hand about processes and performance of other organizations. Feedback is occasionally used to set performance targets in a few areas. Anecdotal evidence of improvements, occurring at irregular intervals is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly. Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

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

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AQIP CATEGORY 5: Leading and Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly. Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

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

Reliable processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are being developed and implemented. Successful approaches and processes are sometimes adopted and used in units other than where they originated. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in a few areas. Evidence exists of recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance in a few areas. Anecdotal information is on hand about processes and performance of other organizations. Feedback is occasionally used to set performance targets in a few areas. Anecdotal evidence of improvements, occurring at irregular intervals is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly. Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly. Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

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

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

Strategic issues are those most closely related to Fort Hays State University's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution (as it is for most) then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified these issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview, the feedback it provided for each Category, and a review of the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic and accreditation issues is included to assist you and your colleagues on prioritizing

the important issues facing Fort Hays State University. Among these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, the opportunities and challenges that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. AQIP expects an institution to have a minimum of three vital Action Projects at a time in order to encourage administrators, faculty, and staff to prioritize their efforts and resources. The Systems Appraisal Team has listed more than three or four issues, trusting that Fort Hays State University will discuss and prioritize those it concludes are most critical. Hopefully, this Strategic Issues Analysis will intensify your continuing quality efforts.

- S FHSU identifies the need to improve how it coordinates the links it has established with its various stakeholders in order to generate a more coherent alignment with the needs of its students and the region it serves. The strategic importance of coordinating the linkages with partners and stakeholders rests on how the University balances its overall interests for them to identify with the Institution as a whole with the specific needs from the units performing the outreach activities. (Category 3)
- S FHSU has a centralized inventory of sixteen survey instruments used for collecting satisfaction data from many of its stakeholders. The dependence on satisfaction data for certain performance areas is an issue that raises concerns, particularly because at present, the process for setting targets is unclear except when it comes to measuring the meeting of student needs. Institutional strategy could be enhanced through the establishment of short- and long-term goals for the relationships the Institution wants to implement, maintain and use these as the basis for measuring performance effectiveness. (Category 3)
- S The University currently lacks effective tools for assessing how it meets stakeholder expectations (3C1, 3C2, 3I1). Given the express concern over diversity matters, the lack of tools seems to be a significant oversight. This issue closely aligns itself with *Criteria for Accreditation #1* (mission and integrity – e.g., 1a, 1b) and *Criteria for Accreditation #2* (preparing for the future – e.g., 2a, 2c); however, it is the team's view that the issue does not rise to an accreditation issue at this time. Instead, we feel that this is a strategic issue because the Institution does recognize key demographic trends that influence stakeholder expectations as well as the potential formation of new stakeholder groups, and has identified diversity as an institutional concern. The strategic opportunity is based on FHSU's ability and agility in meeting the challenges posed by this demographic shift, the setting of appropriate goals with measures and indicators, and using the measures to document performance and monitor alignment as part of its continuous improvement in meeting stakeholder expectations. (Category 3)

- S There is a lack of trend data for demographic information for the various administration, faculty, and staff classifications as well as with faculty satisfaction data. Thus it is difficult to notice whether these are positive trends, steady state, or decreasing trend situations. This is a strategic issue because much of the demographic data has been available for years and as such is able to more clearly document some of the challenges FHSU faces and the level of agility it has had in meeting these challenges.
- S FHSU does not demonstrate a formal, systematic succession process that is linked with its strategic initiatives, wherein lies the strategic issue. There are no lists or identified criteria of personal and professional attributes and experiences that are deemed appropriate or essential for the identification and recruitment (within and outside campus) of future senior leaders that are supportive of the University's vision, mission, core values, and strategic initiatives. What is apparent is a limited opportunity for faculty to engage in some professional development opportunities in preparation for potential consideration and promotion to the position of department head (5P7, 5P8). Similar opportunities are not apparent for staff in other campus units. (Category 5)
- S FHSU's attempt to improve its communications plans is hampered by an unclear process for determining targets. There are no apparent action plans expressly designed to meet this need. The flow of information, its access, and its understanding are issues that the University identifies as concerns, so the strategic issue is more than that of simply a lack of information. From a strategic perspective, the challenge may rest on whether or not there are clear goals and objectives for the purposes and roles of communication from a system's perspective that drive the creation of action plans and their performance targets. (Category 5)
- S The items and data from multiple survey instruments should be aligned with other performance measures and indicators for the purpose of expanding institutional analysis to provide a more comprehensive and action-oriented view of institutional performance (Category 6). The basic strategic issue is the need to report the results emanating from the analysis of an integrated database that provides all the necessary performance measures to determine institutional well-being and success in meeting defined goals and objectives. At present, based on the portfolio, the University's processes do not document results except in limited areas, reducing FHSU's ability to document their successes and continued opportunities for improvement. Their processes do not demonstrate an ability to evaluate their performance and their agility to make appropriate and necessary corrections. (Category 3, Category 6)

- S The University fails to make a direct link between the data it collects and the outcomes of improved student learning. This becomes a strategic issue because it presents a challenge as to what the University defines as student learning and the underlying rationale for these definitions. Although the team does not see this as an accreditation issue, over time, this issue could rise to one under *Criteria for Accreditation #2* (preparing for the future – e.g., 2c), *Criteria for Accreditation #3* (student learning & effective teaching e.g., 3a, 3c), and *Criteria for Accreditation #4* (acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge – e.g., 4c). The lack of clarity between collected data and the actual identified student learning outcomes invites questions of alignment of results to outcome objectives. (Category 7)
- S FHSU places a high degree of importance on academic partnerships (identified in Table 9-4), but it does not identify the criteria that define a “high priority special academic partnership.” The University also does not clearly link the purpose of these partnerships with its mission of providing a liberal arts education/service to Kansas, relying on faculty to articulate the link in their partnership reports. The strategic issue emanates from the lack of a linkage to the institutional and criteria defining the various levels of academic partnerships. Given that the Institution is in the process of determining performance expectations and measures from these collaborative relationships, there is an opportunity to create a strategy that can link FHSU’s mission with specific outcomes from their collaborative relationships. (Category 9, Category 3)
- S FHSU states that comparative analyses related to expected learning outcomes from the collaborative relationships is unavailable. This is a strategic issue reflecting on the potential limitations of the existing institutional approach toward benchmarking activities as these relate to identifying programs, measures, indicators, and results that can be used to drive the University’s performance analysis and decision making process. (Category 9)

FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY FEEDBACK REPORT

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

Each member of the Systems Appraisal Team devoted many hours to analyzing and reacting to your *Systems Portfolio*, first individually and then via a consensus process. There are no one-person idiosyncratic, or subjective opinions here. Most of the team's members have had executive responsibilities in colleges and universities, but the team also included at least one person whose work and experience lie outside of higher education, and who could help the team maintain perspective on the work higher educators still have to do to bring quality principles into all areas of the Academy. All team members are committed to promoting continuous quality improvement in higher education and have received training in quality processes. We know that you and your colleagues will find the astuteness of their perceptions, as embodied in this report, useful in your commitment for continuous quality learning.

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

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

and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report. At the end of the list of strengths and opportunities for each Category is the team's consensus assessment of the institution's stage of development on that particular Category. This section consists of a series of statements reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

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

Appraisal Summary: The compilation of the nine rubrics that capture the team's appraisal of the organization's Portfolio description of each of the nine AQIP Categories. The summary indicates the team's consensus on the developmental maturity of each Category description.

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

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

- O1a FHSU, a regional public Carnegie II Masters level university operating under the Kansas Board of Regents, principally serves the rural western Kansas area with a population of 630,000 miles spanning 66 of the 105 counties in the state.
- O1b A statewide strategic focus and primary emphasis of the university is the integration of computer and telecommunications technology with the educational environment and work place within a computerized environment that spans across all colleges, balancing technological change and human sensitivity to individual students learning needs through High Tech/High Touch.
- O1c FHSU participates in an eight-year program review, mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents, to ensure that programs are aligned with its mission and vision, which was modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of the state and nation.
- O1d The primary institutional measure for tracking effectiveness is the Scorecard of Key Performance Indicators originating from the system-level goals of the Regents.
- O2a FHSU requires of all bachelor degree graduates a 55-credit hour General education curriculum with a set of Common Student Learning Objectives, emphasizing a liberal arts education.
- O2b In addition to four academic colleges, FHSU has academic support units including a distance education delivery structure (called the Virtual College), a graduate school, Forsyth Library, and the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technologies.
- O2c Programs in Teacher Education, Educational Administration & Counseling, and Justice Studies have been cited for excellence. Additionally other programs have been have been accredited nationally or are in the process of seeking accreditation.
- O3a FHSU has a student body of 7,373 students with 4,718 on-campus and 2,655 in off-campus programs. Entering students have an average ACT composite of 21.9 and 66% demonstrate financial need and receive aid in the amount of \$27 million.

- O3b Student demographics consist of 3,269 males, 4,104 females, and an enrollment of 999 international students. By ethnicity 76.2% are white, 1.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.8% Hispanic, native American, of black and 5.7% no information. 75% of FHSU students are Kansans: 79.2% are white, 13.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.8% Hispanic, Native American or Black.
- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.
- O3d FHSU has adopted a Mission Centered, Market Smart strategy that reflects service to Western Kansas while exploring international market opportunities through the Virtual College
- O3e FHSU students favor more traditional programs and those designed to meet the needs of an evolving workforce. Several are housed in the College of Health and Life Sciences. At the graduate level the focus tends to shift to programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education and Technology.
- O3f FHSU has addressed the issue of what students require in order to be successful learners through a variety of programs and offices, reports of student progress, and a variety of metrics for measuring both processes and outcomes. Student access to information is designed to be efficient, informative, and courteous.
- O4a Pursuit of partnerships is an important strategy for achieving new enrollment growth. FHSU has several key collaborators: local partners (donors, Commerce Bank, Volga German Society, and Tiger supporters), statewide collaborations based on student recruitment (includes tuition arrangements with neighboring states, arrangements with community colleges, KBOR's AccessUS program, and relationships with the US Navy and US Coast Guard), international academic partners (Chinese Ministry of Education and Selcuk University in Turkey), Relationships with external peers and accrediting agencies), and the Endowment Association which provides millions of dollars for capital improvements and scholarships. In addition, collaboration exists with the Kansas Cosmosphere and The Space Museum has provided FHSU with exclusive access to the collection of NASA memorabilia.
- O5a FHSU employed a total of 727.95 FTE during FY2003 and in FY2004. The University engaged 253 full-time and 38 temporary faculty on campus, and 7 full-time and 62 part-time within their virtual campus. Forty-one percent of the faculty members are females, 47% of new hires are females, and 35% of the administrative positions at FHSU are held by females. One-hundred and forty-one faculty held tenure appointments in 2003, 69 held tenure track positions, and 206

of the teaching faculty hold terminal degrees. However, the last two years of decreased state funding have lead to challenges in staffing.

- O5b Approximately 296.3 staff FTE are allocated to FHSU and position control and salaries are monitored by the Kansas Department Administration for these classified positions.
- O5c Faculty are collectively represented by a long-standing elected Faculty Senate and Graduate Council and a bargaining unit represented by a local American Association of University Professors Chapter of which 180 are members in this bargaining unit.
- O5d Faculty are evaluated annually by department chairs and supervisors with salary increases based on merit not years of service.
- O6a Located on a 200-acre campus, FHSU contributes significantly to the economic well-being of the city and county, has an annual impact on the city and county of \$124 million and is the second largest employer in the county.
- O6b FHSU has 30 computer laboratories. Faculty and staff have access to 2700 computers and all faculty and staff have dedicated computers and access to laptops. Students have access to high speed Ethernet and the university has been upgraded to be Internet2 compliant and is working on wireless technology. This makes FHSU a front-runner in the state in terms of building mediated classrooms.
- O6c In 2003 FHSU was the number one developer of Blackboard courses in the nation with more than 500 courses, 11 undergraduate degree completion programs, and one Master's program available completely at a distance.
- O6d FHSU is a cultural center for the people of western Kansas, with such institutions as the world renowned Sternberg Museum of Natural History and the Beach Schmidt Performing Arts Center
- O7a FHSU exists with in an environment of six institutions administered by the Kansas Board of Regents and 19 community colleges, five technical colleges, six technical schools and a metropolitan university.
- O7b FHSU appears to have a good sense of the competition as indicated by the six stated assumptions regarding market competition and insight regarding the difficulties in providing concurrent high school enrollments.
- O7c Competition in providing education opportunity has occurred in high schools with concurrent enrollment. However, Transfer of concurrent credit is an issue because most classes are freshman level classes requiring the advanced mastery of skills.
- O7d FHSU is the only competitor in the area to meet the demands for entry-level degrees in Agriculture, Business, Nursing, and Education.

- O7e To meet competition FHSU has developed programs in technology- based degrees through partnerships with Cisco. Also developed were a BS in Information Networking and Telecommunications, a customizable Bachelor of General Studies, and a Masters of Liberal Studies. In addition FHSU has developed a Bachelor of Leadership Studies and has had approved a Bachelor of Technology Leadership.
- O8a Enrollment appears to be increasing due both to the tagline of “Affordable Success” and stressing “internal branding.” Trends in citizen support, population decline, and the legislative climate are monitored and influence management decisions.
- O8b Systems have been mapped, studied and reengineered in an effort to increase system efficiency such as making the enrollment growth in the Virtual College more manageable and using affinity diagrams to help faculty assess student learning.
- O8c FHSU is addressing shrinking enrollment trends through a variety of partnerships focused on distance learning. These efforts appear to be enhancing FTE and permitting some sense of stability in lean times.
- O8 FHSU has worked on changing the culture of the institution to improve the research environment.
- O8e A key challenge is in the area of new markets – seeking partnerships with international institutions and with institutions in Kansas and beyond as well as markets through the Virtual College.
- O8f FHSU is challenged to maintain a competitively compensated, quality faculty and staff due to significant reductions in state financial assistance.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

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

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

- O1b A statewide strategic focus and primary emphasis of the university is the integration of computer and telecommunications technology with the educational environment and work place within a computerized environment that spans across all colleges and balances technological change and human sensitivity to individual students learning needs through High Tech/High Touch.
- O1c FHSU participates in an eight-year program review, mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents, to ensure that FHSU programs are aligned with its mission and vision, which was modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of the state and nation.
- O2a FHSU requires of all bachelor degree graduates a 55-credit hour General education curriculum with a set of Common Student Learning Objectives emphasizing a liberal arts education.
- O2b In addition to four academic colleges, FHSU has academic support units including a distance education delivery structure (called the Virtual College), a graduate school, Forsyth Library, and the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technologies.
- O2c Programs in Teacher Education, Educational Administration & Counseling, and Justice Studies have been cited for excellence. Additionally other programs have been have been accredited nationally or are in the process of seeking accreditation.
- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools

even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.

- O3e FHSU students favor more traditional programs and those designed to meet the needs of an evolving workforce. Several are housed in the College of Health and Life Sciences. At the graduate level the focus tends to shift to programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education and Technology.
- O3f FHSU has addressed the issue of what students require in order to be successful learners through a variety of programs and offices, reports of student progress, and a variety of metrics for measuring both processes and outcomes. Student access to information is designed to be efficient, informative, and courteous.
- O6b FHSU has 30 computer laboratories. Faculty and staff have access to 2700 computers, with each member having dedicated computers and access to laptops. Students have access to high speed Ethernet. The university has been upgraded to be Internet2 compliant and is working on wireless technology. This makes FHSU a front-runner in the state in terms of building mediated classrooms.
- O6c In 2003 FHSU was the number one developer of Blackboard courses in the nation with more than 500 courses, 11 undergraduate degree completion programs, and one master's program are available completely at a distance.
- O8a Enrollment appears to be increasing due both to the tagline of "Affordable Success" and through stressing "internal branding." Trends in citizen support, population decline, and the legislative climate are monitored and influence management decisions.
- O8b Systems have been mapped, studied, and reengineered in an effort to increase system efficiency such as making the enrollment growth in the Virtual College more manageable and using affinity diagrams to help faculty assess student learning.

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

- 1C1 S FHSU has an extensive (55 credits) and well- defined General Education program for Undergraduate students that includes both foundational skills and an array of content courses including a number related to multiculturalism.
- 1C2 O An annual senior survey is conducted to assess whether the general education program is meeting its objectives. It is unclear whether this same approach is

used for other academic programs and whether direct measures of student learning outcomes are also used to assess the General Education Program.

- 1C2 S At the department level, faculty have developed affinity diagrams mapping learning expectations and outcomes to the curriculum and defining assessment measures for each program that are reviewed every two years facilitating improvement in the curriculum. Departments and programs produce annual reports and program assessment reports as well as reviewing their curriculum regularly as part of the strategic planning process.
- 1C4 S University commitments to individual student advising, diverse student learning support services, on-line learning methodologies, and internationalization of both the curriculum and student body helps students prepare to live in a more diverse world. Diverse student learning needs are supported by the Kelly Center, a support center that helps students with learning style inventories, reading skills, test-taking skills, etc
- 1P2 S Environmental scans are conducted to analyze trends and provide the basis for determining needs which are piloted through seminars, readings, topics, courses and enrollment management trends. The course proposal process proceeds through the Faculty Senate or Graduate School to assure faculty involvement. The Academic Affairs Committee has developed standard course goals and elements for courses and assessment of courses against course goals.
- 1P11 O Departments use multiple measures, including pass rates for certification exams, department level testing, faculty and student end-of-course assessments and evaluations of faculty performance and link them to the Affinity Diagrams to document student learning and program effectiveness. Departments have only recently been instructed to produce indicators of student learning outcomes. Various committees, including the Council for Institutional Effectiveness (AQIP) focus, the University Assessment Steering Committee, and General Education Committee, are charged with the responsibility to ensure processes are in place to assess student learning and to initiate changes to correct any weaknesses uncovered, but are currently limited by lack of reported results.
- 1R2 O Satisfaction surveys, rather than direct assessment of student learning outcomes, are cited as the major assessment measures employed by FHSU. Results from direct measures of student learning are not reported, thus impeding the continuous improvement process.

- 1R3 O The university has not provided evidence of measures being used to determine the effectiveness of its processes associated with helping students learn.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Maturing**, characterized by growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

- O1a FHSU a regional public Carnegie II Masters level university operating under the Kansas Board of Regents, principally serves the rural western Kansas area with a population of 630,000 spanning 66 of the 105 counties in the state.
- O1b A statewide strategic focus and primary emphasis of the university is the integration of computer and telecommunications technology with the educational environment and work place within a computerized environment that spans across all colleges, balancing technological change and human sensitivity to individual students learning needs through High Tech/High Touch.
- O1d The primary institutional measure for tracking effectiveness is the Scorecard of Key Performance Indicators originating from the system-level goals of the Regents.

- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decrease in the past 20 years.
- O3d FHSU has adopted a Mission Centered, Market Smart strategy that reflects service to Western Kansas while exploring international market opportunities through the Virtual College.
- O6d FHSU is a cultural center for the people of western Kansas with such institutions as the world- renowned Sternberg Museum of Natural History and the Beach Schmidt Performing Arts Center.
- O8c FHSU is addressing shrinking enrollment trends through a variety of partnerships focused on distance learning. These efforts appear to be enhancing FTE and permitting some sense of stability in lean times.
- O8d FHSU has worked on changing the culture of the institution to improve the research environment.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:

- 2C1 S FHSU has three distinct objectives it identifies as wanting to meet: (1) students learning through direct instruction, (2) the use of scholarship as a means of stimulating learning as well as faculty and students, and (3) providing public service to the community, the region, and the state. While these three objectives are the standard objectives of many universities, FHSU's relative geographical isolation and lack of immediate competition from other universities requires the university to take serious these objectives as a means of sustaining institutional viability and well-being in an area where out-migration, changing demographics, and need for resources are prevalent realities. The importance is reflected in how these objectives are incorporated in AQIP related projects, strategic planning activities, and the Kansas Priority Initiatives.
- 2C3 S Joint faculty/student research activities also link scholarship and public service with student learning; the number of students involved in such projects increased from 209 in 2002 to 220 in 2003 as evidence of this trend.
- 2P1 O The steps used to execute the strategic planning process focus attention on the discovery of other distinct objectives for the school to pursue. Faculty, staff, and

students each have a role in both determining and carrying out other distinctive objectives and are represented on the Strategic Planning committees. However, it is unclear how the Mission-Centered/Market Smart Strategy, the Virtual College, and the positioning as a regional cultural center fit into the University's planning focus.

- 2P2 S Communication of the strategic plan and mission statement are provided to stakeholders through University governing bodies, meetings, forums, publications, and surveys. The institution recognizes that this process flows both top-down and bottom-up within the University community.
- 2P3 S The University has implemented a planning process that recognizes faculty and staff needs as elements needing to be incorporated in the annual budget allocation priorities.
- 2P4 O The processes used for assessing and reviewing scholarship and public service objectives appear to lack clearly defined completion dates and expectations preventing best use of the materials collected for the determination of annual budget priorities.
- 2R1 S The University has measured selected key performance measures indicating support for scholarship and public service activities enabling the school to begin to benchmark its results against comparable higher education institutions. For example between FY2002 and FY2003 refereed publications increased by 56% (72 to 112) and creative activities such as performances and exhibitions increased 30% (302 to 393).
- 2R2 O Some data exist permitting FHSU to compare the effectiveness of accomplishing its other distinctive objectives against national norms; however, this evidence provides little guidance for initiating necessary actions for improving the ratings obtained.
- 2R3 S The University is beginning to initiate action steps that link its goals, processes, and measurement of results for accomplishing distinctive objectives as evidenced by the example of achieving a measurable increase in scholarship dollars.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Developing**, characterized by reliable processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are being developed and implemented. Successful approaches and processes are sometimes adopted and used in units other than where they originated. Occasional short-term

(under two years) data on performance results exist in a few areas. Evidence exists of recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance in a few areas. Anecdotal information is on hand about processes and performance of other organizations. Feedback is occasionally used to set performance targets in a few areas. Anecdotal evidence of improvements, occurring at irregular intervals is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

- O1a FHSU, a regional public Carnegie II Master's level university operating under the Kansas Board of Regents, principally serves the rural western Kansas area with a population of 630,000 spanning 66 of the 105 counties in the state.
- O1c FHSU participates in an eight-year program review, mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents, to ensure that FHSU programs are aligned with its mission and vision, which was modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of the state and nation.
- O2c In addition to four academic colleges, FHSU has academic support units including a distance education delivery structure (called the Virtual College), a graduate school, the Forsyth Library, and the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technologies.
- O3a FHSU has a student body of 7,373 students with 4,718 on-campus and 2,655 in off-campus programs. Entering students have an average ACT composite of 21.9 and 66% demonstrate financial need and receive aid in the amount of \$27 million.
- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.

- O3d FHSU has adopted a Mission Centered, Market Smart strategy that reflects service to Western Kansas while exploring international market opportunities through the Virtual College.
- O3f FHSU has addressed the issue of what students require in order to be successful learners though a variety of programs and offices, reports of student progress, and a variety of metrics for measuring both processes and outcomes. Student access to information is designed to be efficient, informative, and courteous.
- O4a Pursuit of partnerships is an important strategy for achieving new enrollment growth. FHSU has several key collaborators: local partners (donors, Commerce Bank, Volga German Society, and Tiger supporters), statewide collaborations based on student recruitment (includes tuition arrangements with neighboring states, arrangements with community colleges, KBOR's AccessUS program, relationships with the US Navy and the US Coast Guard), international academic partners (Chinese Ministry of Education and with Selcuk University in Turkey), relationships with external peers and accrediting agencies, and the Endowment Association which provides millions of dollars for capital improvements and scholarships. In addition, collaboration exists with the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Museum that provides FHSU with exclusive access to the collection of NASA memorabilia.
- O6d FHSU is a cultural center for the people of western Kansas, with such institutions as the world-renowned Sternberg Museum of Natural History and the Beach Schmidt Performing Arts Center.
- O7d FHSU is the only competitor in the area to meet the demands for entry-level degrees in Agriculture, Business, Nursing, and Education.
- O8a Enrollment appears to be increasing due both to the tagline of "Affordable Success" and stressing "internal branding." Trends in citizen support, population decline, and the legislative climate are monitored and influence management decisions.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

- 3C1-2 S Internal and external stakeholders are well-defined and segmented into 14 distinct groups as identified in Table 3-1. FHSU measures its relationship with these student and stakeholder groups based on the expectations and requirements on how the University has to meet their needs.

- 3C1-2, 3I1 OO The university currently lacks effective tools for assessing how it is meeting the expectations of its stakeholders. In defining student and other stakeholder needs, FHSU segments students only by class standing. It does not take into account or define stakeholder needs based on the ethnic, gender, economic, and academic demographic information provided about the student body and the region served by the university. Given the expressed concern with diversity this is a significant oversight. An example of this are the challenges centered on meeting the newly expanding Hispanic population in the region and how this will impact institutional responses in recruiting faculty, providing services, and delivering meaningful instruction to this population.
- 3C2 O Although the university has identified its stakeholders by categories and listed needs attributable to each, the school has not developed both defined short- and long-range goals to be accomplished for these relationships.
- 3P1 S Changing student needs are identified through a variety of surveys and focus groups. Surveys, focus groups, program feedback, and information from stakeholders are used by operational units assigned responsibility for a particular student support service or learning activity to initiate improvements. For example, student feedback is used to improve academic marketing materials and the Virtual College web site.
- 3P1 O The process for determining targets is unclear beyond the process of responding to student needs. Even then, identifying and responding to student needs is based primarily on employer and student satisfaction. There are no indications that direct measures of student needs, such as basic skills testing, are used to determine appropriate responses. The University processes do not document results, and thus does not lead to results of how it builds relationships with students to improve such outcomes as retention and transfer rates. Other measures such as recruitment and retention data as well as direct measures of service effectiveness, student engagement and learning outcomes could be employed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of whether student and community needs are being met.
- 3P2 S All FHSU faculty and administrators maintain an open-door policy as the result of the University's emphasis on engendering a one-on-one relationship between students and advisors, faculty, and staff. The Institution also employs a department-based advising and course-registration system as a means to foster

this close relationship by allowing students the opportunity to discuss academic and career goals at a minimum of twice per year.

- 3P3 S FHSU provides examples of department involvement with stakeholders to assure the sharing of information with and between external stakeholders as well as determining what it needs to do to adequately prepare their graduates for future employment. Information from these events filters to the necessary faculty for program improvements.
- 3P5 S New student and stakeholder groups are identified by use of a strategic planning process step that scans the university environment and market place. For example, the AccessUs program allows FHSU to serve a new student population in an area not served by any of the regional state universities through partnerships with other Regents' universities and community colleges using hybrid programs employing both face-to-face instruction and on-line courses.
- 3P7 S The Assistant Provost for Quality Management maintains an inventory of sixteen survey instruments including the student and other stakeholder satisfaction surveys, teaching evaluations, and NSSE freshman and senior surveys, which provide satisfaction benchmarks with other institutions. FHSU also uses daily logs of calls to a support desk to identify potential student areas of concern (although the logs do not appear to be maintained by front-line staff who documents the complaint trends).
- 3R3 O The university has only recently begun to measure relationship building with its stakeholders. This is why although Table 3-2 lists stakeholders surveyed, the survey method used for these stakeholders, and the frequency that these stakeholders are surveyed. There is no information on the type of information sought by these instruments.
- 3R5 O The University currently is seeking to develop ways to benchmark the processes it uses for understanding the needs of key student and stakeholder groups such as alumni with evidence from other higher education institutions more effectively. At present, FHSU is limiting its benchmarking opportunities to student stakeholder perceptions as evidenced in their involvement with the NSSE. While the Institution indicates that it continues to rely heavily on other tools that allow of comparison with other institutions, there is no discussion of what these tools are or of what data they value in order to pursue benchmarking activities.

- 312 O The University recognizes a need to better coordinate its separate linkages to stakeholders so that a more coherent alignment with regional and individual student needs is reached. Instead of generating different identities as happens when separate functional offices such as athletics, performing arts, alumni affairs, and fund raising contact outside stakeholders, FHSU wants to establish an approach that identifies and meets individual and regional needs which link internal concerns such as program development with what external stakeholders expect and need.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Maturing**, characterized by growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE explores your institution's commitment to the development of your faculty, staff, and administrators since the efforts of all are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Fort Hays State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 4, Valuing People:

- O2c Programs in Teacher Education, Educational Administration & Counseling, and Justice Studies have been cited for excellence. Additionally other programs have been have been accredited nationally or are in the process of seeking accreditation.
- O3a FHSU has a student body of 7,373 students with 4,718 on-campus and 2,655 in off-campus programs. Entering students have an average ACT composite of 21.9 and 66% demonstrate financial need and receive aid in the amount of \$27 million.

- O5a FHSU employed a total of 727.95 FTE during FY2003 and in FY2004 FHSU employed 253 full-time and 38 temporary faculty on campus and 7 full-time and 62 part-time within their virtual campus. Forty-one percent of faculty are females, 47% of new hires are female, and 35% of the administrative positions at FHSU are held by females. One hundred and forty-one faculty members held tenure appointments in 2003, 69 held tenure track positions, and 206 of the teaching faculty hold terminal degrees. However, the last two years of decreased state funding have lead to challenges in staffing.
- O5b Approximately 296.3 staff FTE are allocated to FHSU and position control and salaries are monitored by the Kansas Department Administration for these classified positions.
- O5c Faculty are collectively represented by a long-standing elected Faculty Senate and Graduate Council and a bargaining unit represented by a local American Association of University Professors Chapter, of which 180 are members in this bargaining unit.
- O5d Faculty are evaluated annually by department chairs and supervisors with salary increases based on merit, not years of service.
- O8d FHSU has worked on changing the culture of the institution to improve the research environment.
- O8f FHSU is challenged to maintain a competitively compensated, quality faculty and staff due to significant reductions in state financial assistance.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 4, Valuing People:

- 4C1a S A number of quality improvement structures, including the Council for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Champion Teams have been organized to ensure that job classifications and work responsibilities are organized to meet FHSU's strategic goals, particularly student learning.
- 4C1b S The Council for Institutional Effectiveness coordinates and implements the University's Academic Quality Improvement Program. FHSU has developed departmental, college, and university-wide committees to help implement quality improvement on campus. Table 4-1 provides an overall example of the quality improvement structures that the University has in place. The committees are assisted by the Quality Champion Team (QCT) that is made up of Quality Champions who act as liaison and advocates for a designated college or unit, whose responsibility it is to monitor and report on current implementation and monitor individual quality initiatives. The QCT coordinates data collection and

strategic coordination for a specific criterion; therefore, serving as the policy advising group for the University's improvement processes. The aim of these activities is to improve institutional effectiveness, student learning outcomes, and the maintenance of the University plan.

- 4C2 S The Leadership Studies, Modern Languages, and Sociology Departments showed significant growth and were allocated new tenure-track positions, illustrating the University's willingness to support programs with growing enrollments. Other programs – Philosophy, Chemistry, Justice Studies, and History – are expected to grow due to market demand and have submitted action plans requesting additional faculty lines.
- 4C2, 4P2, 4R1 O FHSU's tenure rate is at 47.3% (141/298) while only 70.5% (210/298) of teaching positions are non-temporary, full-time slots. This illustrates the difficulties in attracting and hiring qualified faculty as documented in Table 4-4 while also documenting a reliance on temporary and part-time teaching staff to enhance institutional resource allocation flexibility in instruction. However, both of these issues raise concerns for quality of instruction in terms of continuity of instruction and the ability to integrate temporary full-time and part-time faculty into the University's teaching climate.
- 4C2 O The Virtual College is primarily staffed by part-time faculty employed to meet increases in student enrollment. The designation of positions by job category and classification is unclear.
- 4C2, 4R2-3 OO There is a lack of trend data for demographic information for the various administration, faculty, and staff classifications as well as with faculty satisfaction data, thus it is difficult to notice whether these are positive trends, steady state, or decreasing trend situations. (Note: This is not an accreditation issue:
- 4C4 S As part of its commitment to professional development all faculty and staff are equipped with up-to-date computers, software, e-mail and database management systems; faculty, staff and students are provided with free internet access.
- 4C4 S Professional development for faculty is provided through a new faculty orientation program and through the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technology (CTELT), which also provides training sessions for staff. Almost 300 faculty and staff participated in at least one training session sponsored by the CTELT during 2003.

- 4C4 S All faculty advisors are trained by the Center for Academic Advisors: according to the NSSE, over 90% of students are satisfied with the advising they receive.
- 4C4 S The new faculty orientation program, attended by all new hires, involves over 21 hours of training in addition to another 19 hours of professional development that is also provided to existing faculty members. Training topics change each year to best meet the needs of junior faculty. Typical offerings include continuous quality improvement, research opportunities, and technology use. Faculty participation levels in these additional training sessions, however, reflect national averages as identified in the 2001-2003 HERI data.
- 4P1 O The university has begun to collect, compare, and use satisfaction data to measure the achievement of improved results in valuing people.
- 4P1-2 S Hiring processes at FHSU are well- defined by the state as well as the university. Job descriptions for classified staff are set by the Kansas Department of Administration, which also controls these positions; detailed search processes for unclassified faculty positions have been developed; all positions advertised are reviewed at department, college and university levels and by the Affirmative Action Officer.
- 4P2 O A personnel orientation for recently hired administrative and classified staff is not discussed in the portfolio.
- 4P2-3 O Although FHSU has well-established and clearly outlined grievance procedures, the type, frequency and outcomes of these procedures are not clear. The impact of the faculty bargaining unit on university governance, beyond providing a forum to voice concerns, is not clear.
- 4P4 S FHSU faculty members may apply for two levels of reassigned time as an incentive for completing various kinds of scholarly activities: Track 1 (departmental) and Track 2 (university-wide). The typical award is for three hours. This is done to promote good teaching, innovative research, and valuable community service.
- 4P7, 4R2 S FHSU established a special task force to create a new recognition system. As a result, the University has developed a series of awards to promote the recognition of faculty, staff, and students: the Navigator Award for outstanding academic advisor, the Pilot Award for a graduating senior (nominated by a faculty member), the Teacher/Scholar/ Innovator of the year by each College,

one overall winner, the Teacher of the Year, and the President's Distinguished Scholar Award to recognize research/creative activities, service and instruction.

- 4P8-9-10, 4R3 S Processes are in place to assess faculty and employee satisfaction.
- 4P8-9 S FHSU faculty and staff have many fitness and wellness opportunities on campus ranging from health assessment screenings to counseling and referral services in relation to social and emotional health issues.
- 4P8-9, 4R1 S Overall faculty job satisfaction was rated at 75% (satisfactory or very satisfactory) while 83% of the faculty (satisfactory or very satisfactory) indicated that professional relationships with colleagues was a positive aspect of their job (see Table 4-4).
- 4R1-2 O The university has established a process for detection of employee satisfaction and is beginning to use the results obtained for initiating actions to establish processes for achieving continuous improvements.
- 4R3 O HERI survey results indicated that employees are satisfied or very satisfied with their opportunities for scholarly pursuit and to develop new ideas. Increased participation in the survey is stated as a future goal.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Maturing**, characterized by growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

1c FHSU participates in an eight-year program review, mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents, to ensure that FHSU programs are aligned with its mission and vision, which was modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of the state and nation.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Fort Hays State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

- O1d The primary institutional measure for tracking effectiveness is the Scorecard of Key Performance Indicators originating from the system-level goals of the Regents.
- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.
- O3d FHSU has adopted a Mission Centered, Market Smart strategy that reflects service to Western Kansas while exploring international market opportunities through the Virtual College.
- O8b Systems have been mapped, studied and reengineered in an effort to increase system efficiency such as making the enrollment growth in the Virtual College more manageable, and using an affinity diagrams to help faculty assess student learning.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

- 5C1 S FHSU's system of guided participatory management gives wide powers and responsibilities to managers at all levels including department chairs, program directors, and unit heads and integrates them into the annual budget planning process. The institution communicates to all stakeholders through an extensive system of committees, newsletters, forums, and e-mails to engage all university participants.
- 5C2 S The university utilizes a systematic strategic planning process composed of stakeholder representatives to align Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) goals with FHSU initiatives and assure effective communication channels.
- 5C2 O In terms of process, no information is provided as to how differences between the Kansas Board of Regents and FHSU are negotiated or resolved.

- 5C3 S As a public institution isolated in central Kansas, FHSU has defined public and community service obligations and activities for local, regional, state, national, and international entities. Examples include: adherence to NACUBO ethics standards, participation in AACSU's American Democracy Project, serving state and business research and consulting needs through the Docking Institute, summer athletics camps, the Kelly Center, Americorps Program, and cooperative academic programs with institutions in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong through the Virtual College.
- 5P1 S Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) goals are used by the University leadership to achieve a mission- centered, market- smart campus culture. In order to ensure that action plans are consistent with KBOR's six system-wide goals, FHSU has developed a five- point approach to address student financial aid needs, needs for off-campus students, programs to meet needs of local employers, and foster economic development technology transfers. Strategic initiatives are also strengthened due to administrative access to informal stakeholder input and formal stakeholder representation on committees.
- 5P2 S A core of critical committees make decisions for meeting the goals set by the Kansas Board of Regents and the Strategic Planning committee.
- 5P4 S Annual program reviews and Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) four-year program reviews are evaluated by university leaders and used to determine necessary action steps. Regular academic program review results are used in policy decisions concerning allocation and reassignment of full-time faculty positions and in evaluating FHSU's compliance with KBOR expectations.
- 5P6 S The strategic plan is distributed annually to faculty and staff. Faculty Senate sponsorship of AQIP forums and campus communications reinforce the mission and goals and reflect commitment to the AQIP process.
- 5P8 OO There is no formal succession planning process in place to assure continuity of vision, mission, core values, or strategic initiatives. The current promotional process appears to be the strongest mechanism for encouraging leadership potential. The interim assignment process, although demonstrating incumbents' abilities to handle job responsibilities, may not be an optimal substitute for market exploration when seeking fresh ideas and approaches to enhance the institutional vision. (Note: The evaluation team does not see this as an accreditation issue.)

- 5R1 O Results from HERI and other satisfaction surveys suggest that decision-making structures and shared governance processes are less effective than the description of these processes would indicate. Of note are results in Table 5-3 in which over 2/3 of the faculty feel they are at odds with campus administrators and a high percentage of faculty feel that procedures and red-tape issues are a source of stress. The AQIP Gap Analysis Survey indicated that faculty feel uninformed about the AQIP process and a majority feel that AQIP has not become part of the culture of their departments and colleges
- 5I1 S The University has taken steps to improve its strategic planning process by standardizing reporting forms and improving leadership communication processes through streamlining departmental annual reports, forums, and AQIP newsletters.
- 5I2 OO The University continues to focus on improving its communication processes but recognizes the need for additional orientation sessions, forums, newsletters, and measures for setting and communicating future targets for improvement. The process for establishing improvement targets is unclear. FHSU notes that they lack communication from administration; the proposed solution to this is to develop newsletters. Given the number of committees, open door policy, and planning, assessment and governing structures, and tensions between faculty and administration, the problem seems larger than lack of information. Newsletters could further exacerbate the problems since a newsletter is about telling rather than communicating through stakeholder engagement. (Note: The evaluation team does not see this item as an accreditation issue.)

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Maturing**, characterized by growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Fort Hays State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

- O1b A statewide strategic focus and primary emphasis of the university is the integration of computer and telecommunications technology with the educational environment and work place within a computerized environment that spans across all colleges and balances technological change and human sensitivity to individual students learning needs through High Tech/High Touch.
- O1c FHSU participates in an eight-year program review, mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents, to ensure that FHSU programs are aligned with its mission and vision, which was modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of the state and nation.
- O2c In addition to four academic colleges, FHSU has academic support units including a distance education delivery structure (called the Virtual College), a graduate school, the Forsyth Library, and the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technologies.
- O3a FHSU has a student body of 7,373 students with 4,718 on-campus and 2,655 in off-campus programs. Entering students have an average ACT composite of 21.9 and 66% demonstrate financial need and receive aid in the amount of \$27 million.
- O3b Student demographics consist of 3,269 males, 4,104 females, and an enrollment of 999 international students. By ethnicity, 76.2% are white, 1.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.8% Hispanic/Native American/African American, and 5.7% of students who provided no information. Seventy-five percent of FHSU students are from Kansas: 79.2% are white, 13.3% Asia/Pacific Islander, 4.8% Hispanic/Native American/Afro-American.
- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.

- O3d FHSU has adopted a Mission Centered, Market Smart strategy that reflects service to Western Kansas while exploring international market opportunities through the Virtual College.
- O5a FHSU employed a total of 727.95 FTE during FY2003 and in FY2004 FHSU employed 253 full-time and 38 temporary faculty on campus and seven full-time and 62 part-time instructors within their virtual campus. Forty-one percent of the faculty are females, 47% of new hires are female, and 35% of the administrative positions at FHSU are held by females. One-hundred and forty-one faculty held tenure appointments in 2003, 69 held tenure track positions, and 206 of the teaching faculty hold terminal degrees. However, the last two years of decreased state funding have led to challenges in staffing.
- O6b FHSU has 30 computer laboratories. Faculty and staff have access to 2700 computers and all faculty and staff have dedicated computers and access to laptops. Students have access to high speed Ethernet. The University has been upgraded to be Internet2 compliant and is working on wireless technology. This makes FHSU a front-runner in the state in terms of building mediated classrooms.
- O8a Enrollment appears to be increasing due both to the tagline of "Affordable Success" and stressing "internal branding."
- O8b Systems have been mapped, studied, and re-engineered in an effort to increase systems efficiency such as making the enrollment growth in the Virtual College more manageable and using affinity diagrams to help faculty assess student learning.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

- 6C1 SS The University describes the operations that support institutional operations with special emphases on computing and networking infrastructures, educational technology services, administrative systems and technology support, student web services, mediated classroom projects and support, growth in online instruction, academic advising support services, the virtual college and "Blackboard" use, the student information system, Forsyth Library, Kelly Center, and physical plant.
- 6C1 S The Business Office, Budget and Planning and Student Fiscal Services work together and with other planning bodies to coordinate and improve services. Quality control and reporting functionality elements are being added to the new Financial and Human Resource system, Sungard Bi-Tech, as a means of

supporting the coordination and improvement processes. FHSU Purchasing works with statewide Best teams, established by the state to increase purchasing efficiencies.

- 6C1, 6R3 S The FHSU budget for the past three years has continued to emphasize support for instructional costs despite budget cuts from the state. The University has been able to absorb these cuts by maintaining the ownership of increased tuition and fee revenue emanating from increased enrollment as well as relying on supplementing funds from the Endowment Association (Table 6-10). The Endowment Association provides money for scholarships under the direction of KBOR to assist students from rural, low-income homes to attend the university. In keeping with its "Affordable Success" marketing campaign, FHSU has kept its tuition and fees the lowest in the state for both residents and non-residents. The University will continue this strategy through keeping costs down and increasing enrollments, especially through the Virtual College.
- 6C1, 6I2 S FHSU's strategy of depending on instructional and supporting technology for current and potential markets incorporates a "high tech and high touch" approach, is sustained by a robust campus network of servers (Table 6-2), services (Table 6-3), and administrative/support services for faculty, staff, and students (Table 6-4). An internal user group (Table 6-9) and an external user group (Kansas Information Technology Office – KITO) monitor progress. These provide feedback and monitor expenses, project milestones, and quarterly progress of the project management plan targeting areas for process improvement (registration/enrollment, student housing, online recruitment and admission, online degree summary options, instructor course evaluations on the web and online surveys, and assessment processes). The strategy has resulted in leveling the playing field for on-campus and off-campus students by making the same information available to all students. Information on strategic improvement goals is shared with stakeholders via brochures and e-mail updates and the results of user satisfaction surveys are posted to the web.
- 6C2, 6R2 O The portfolio does not directly address how key student and administrative support services reinforce processes and systems to help students learn or accomplish other distinctive objectives. The only data provided describes activity and satisfaction data (Tables 6-7, 6-10, 6-11, 6-12, 6-13, and 6-14). Goals provided in the portfolio are identified by category and general, non-quantified outcomes, preventing the documentation of achieved results.

- 6P1 S FHSU uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to evaluate student satisfaction. According to NSSE results FHSU has exceeded the norm in providing a supportive environment for students over the past 2 years. The University also uses retention data, internship feedback, and graduate student satisfaction surveys to identify student support service areas in need of improvement.
- 6P2 S The process of communication of support service needs for students and faculty is clear. The Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technology helps faculty learn to use technology, design appropriate curriculum and supports them through a help desk as well as providing a number of seminars and workshops on using Blackboard, Dreamweaver, and other related topics.
- 6P2 S The Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) has initiated a Performance Agreement Task Force that coordinates with FHSU AQIP processes. KBOR is satisfied with FHSU's AQIP approach to meeting the Performance Agreements. The task force specifies goals such as systems effectiveness, improving learner outcomes, and improving workforce development.
- 6P3-4-5, 6I1-2 S Processes have been designed to provide both quantitative and qualitative measures for determining performance effectiveness and these are reviewed and revised on an established periodic schedule. All departments and administrative units on campus complete or revise an Affinity Diagram at least every three years, with the process helping the departments and units foster collaborative decision- making by having members of the departments and units participate in the identification of critical departmental/unit goals. This approach helps each department or unit to measure effectiveness and adjust its processes to meet their defined goals and to revise their Affinity Diagrams as required. Surveys are also conducted on a regular basis. Areas and processes for improvement are selected as part of the AQIP planning process. One example of the effectiveness of this process is the approach to continuous improvement used by the Virtual College.
- 6P4 S In a step to build capacity in formulating institutional analyses, FHSU has centralized data and access to data through the creation of a data warehouse to provide current and historic information and formative and summative data in the forms of paper and web reports, drill-down access to data, and user-controlled ad hoc reporting. However, it is not clear how the data is accessed and utilized to support the Institution's decision- making processes.

- 6R1 O There are no trend data to determine the level of performance in activities generated by admissions, enrollment management, financial aid, and campus housing as these relate to acceptance rates. The only data available to demonstrate trends is Table 6-1, which probably is a current comparative breakdown of aid types and amounts at FHSU and Emporia State University. However, there is no discussion on whether benchmarking in these areas is appropriate and how that information could/could not be useful to the institution.
- 6R2 S The institution has effectively reviewed and reorganized Physical Plant services to better address stakeholder needs through re-organizing maintenance teams. The creation of a new Energy Division is intended to explore energy issues and future alternative energy options.
- 6R2 S In an environment where online services are deemed to be an important approach toward providing academic services to faculty, staff, and students, 86% of faculty surveyed reported that they were satisfied with the online resources at Forsyth Library. This high level of satisfaction suggests that the Library's services are supporting on-line learning capabilities and have the potential for enhancing research opportunities for faculty and students.
- 6R2 O Although FHSU has developed procedures and surveys to measure specific needs from the faculty, students, alumni, and the community to indicate whether they feel support services are adequate in order to make their needs known within the strategic planning process, there are no results reported demonstrating how well the process is working. The procedures are only now beginning to provide information for determining faculty, student, and other stakeholder needs and these have not been linked to how these enter the University's various decision- making processes.
- 6R3 S One area where trend data is provided is in enrollment figures. Given the importance the Institution has given to increasing enrollment as a means of fostering institutional well-being, these data demonstrate that their current strategy is working. Table 6-19 indicates that FHSU has an eight-year positive trend of FTE and headcount enrollment increases. There was a drop in FTE and headcount in FY1998 with recovery to FY 1997 levels in headcount occurring in FY2001 and FTE in FY 2002. The FTE increase between FY 2002 and FY2003 was at 624 and the increase between FY 2001 and FY 2003 was at 1747, indicating a stronger increase for those years than during the previous four to five year period.

- 6R3 O While the University uses the NSSE and other types of surveys to evaluate student satisfaction with their student services; no trend data or benchmark data is made available in the portfolio to help evaluate how these units are actually performing.
- 6R3 O Although retention rates are mentioned, specific data and comparisons are not presented.
- 6I1-2 OO FHSU is at an early stage of changing its organizational culture in relationship to how it pursues its new institutional linkages for planning, reporting, and continuous improvement purposes. The portfolio explains how the University uses affinity diagrams to identify strengths and opportunities in its current processes for supporting institutional operations, and relates that they have undergone at least one three-year cycle of affinity diagrams to set baseline measures and observe developing trends. However, there are little trend data shared, a critical component of the maturation of an institution that is successful in implementing institutional change. Trend data, the reporting, use of, and sharing of these data demonstrates how the Institution has actually incorporated these practices into its organizational culture along with providing evidence of the University's ability to meet its own, the State's, and their stakeholders' expectations. (Note: Does not rise to an accreditation issue, but it is a strategic concern in terms of climate change.)

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Developing**, characterized by reliable processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are being developed and implemented. Successful approaches and processes are sometimes adopted and used in units other than where they originated. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in a few areas. Evidence exists of recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance in a few areas. Anecdotal information is on hand about processes and performance of other organizations. Feedback is occasionally used to set performance targets in a few areas. Anecdotal evidence of improvements, occurring at irregular intervals is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of

information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Fort Hays State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

- O1c FHSU participates in an eight- year program review mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents to ensure that programs are aligned with its mission and vision as modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of the state and nation.
- O1d The primary institutional measure for tracking effectiveness is the Scorecard of Key Performance Indicators originating from the system-level goals of the Regents
- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regent schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.
- O3f FHSU has addressed the issue of what students require in order to be successful learners through a variety of programs and offices, reports of student progress, and a variety of metrics for measuring both processes and outcomes. Student access to information is designed to be efficient, informative, and continuous.
- O6c In 2003 FHSU was the number one developer of Blackboard courses in the nation with more than 500 courses, eleven undergraduate degree completion programs, and one master's degree program available completely at distance.
- O8a Enrollment appears to be increasing due both to the tagline of "Affordable Success" and stressing "internal branding". Trends in citizen support, population decline, and the legislative climate are monitored and influence management decisions.
- O8b Systems have been mapped, studied, and reengineered in an effort to increase systems efficiency such as making the enrollment growth in the Virtual College more manageable.
- O8c FHSU is addressing shrinking enrollment trends through a variety of partnerships focused on distance learning. These efforts appear to be enhancing FTE and permitting some sense of stability in lean times.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

- 7C1 S FHSU uses Cognus Impromptu Web Reports, a CICS management information system, and an IPED Web-based Data Collection System to collect and store information for appropriate constituents to use as needed for analysis and decision- making.
- 7C2 S Senior benchmark data (National Survey for Student Engagement – NSSE), percentage of students graduating within 6 years, and the FHSU Scoreboard of key Performance Indicators help measure the effectiveness of student learning. By so doing the university is beginning to improve the campus environment by improving its systems, creative activity, and learning environment.
- 7P1 S The University has initiated significant process revisions in the operations of the registrar’s office, student information systems, marketing opportunity response times, on-line enrollment processing, and the improvement of Virtual College operations demonstrating an improved ability to use information more effectively.
- 7P1 OO The University fails to make a direct link between the data it is collecting and outcomes of improved student learning with a potential risk of being engaged in overlapping and competing processes that remain unconnected for the determination and achievement of learning improvements and organizational efficiencies. For example, further analysis of why the Sungard Bi-Tech System project failed may reveal whether FHSU is trying to utilize too many complex tools, inadequately defining what it is trying to accomplish, or engaged in overlapping and competing processes that are generating data for the sake of simply doing so. (Note: This is not an accreditation issue.)
- 7P3 S The University uses its Scorecard of Key Performance Indicators, Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction with On-line Service results, and Board of Regents performance objectives to help determine appropriate measures for determining comparative analyses. As the university employs more sophisticated measures of learning performance the usefulness of its analyses may be strengthened.
- 7P4 O The role of departments in generating performance data for their programs and making revisions based on their analyses of results needs clarification to ensure that the performance data collected links student learning outcomes with faculty performance to better satisfy published University learning goals.
- 7P5 O As part of AQIP efforts, units and departments aggregate and post unspecified information supporting the alignment of action projects and achievement of quality improvements. However, the report does not make clear the nature of

the information collected preventing interpretation of the success of the process or processes being used.

- 7P6 O The University is aware of the need to improve the effectiveness of its information systems and related processes to be better able to address key institutional concerns relating to its current software limitations. Awareness is an important first step for initiating processes for achieving continuous improvement and could serve as a focal point for a quality improvement project.
- 7P7 O The University is only beginning to collect and use both process and outcome measures that will enable it to achieve continuous improvements of institutional effectiveness.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Beginning**, characterized by processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

- O1b A statewide strategic focus and primary emphasis of the university is the integration of computer and telecommunications technology with the educational environment and work place within a computerized environment that spans all colleges and balances

technological change and human sensitivity to individual students learning needs through High Tech/High Touch.

- O1c FHSU participates in an eight-year program review, mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents, to ensure that FHSU programs are aligned with its mission and vision, which was modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of the state and nation.
- O1d The primary institutional measure for tracking effectiveness is the Scorecard of Key Performance Indicators originating from the system-level goals of the Regents.
- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.
- O3d FHSU has adopted a Mission Centered, Market Smart strategy that reflects service to Western Kansas while exploring international market opportunities through the Virtual College
- O4a Pursuit of partnerships is an important strategy for achieving new enrollment growth. FHSU has several key collaborators: local partners (donors, Commerce Bank, Volga German Society, and Tiger supporters), statewide collaborations based on student recruitment (includes tuition arrangements with neighboring states, arrangements with community colleges, KBOR's AccessUS program, and relationships with the US Navy and US Coast Guard), international academic partners (Chinese Ministry of Education and with Selcuk University in Turkey), relationships with external peers and accrediting agencies), and the Endowment Association which provides millions of dollars for capital improvements and scholarships. In addition, collaboration exists with the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Museum has provided FHSU with exclusive access to the collection of NASA memorabilia.
- O8a Enrollment appears to be increasing due both to the tagline of "Affordable Success" and stressing "internal branding." Trends in citizen support, population decline, and the legislative climate are monitored and influence management decisions.
- O8c FHSU is addressing shrinking enrollment trends through a variety of partnerships focused on distance learning. These efforts appear to be enhancing FTE and permitting some sense of stability in lean times.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:

- 8C1 S FHSU considers environmental factors that influence strategic planning processes including: the role of the Kansas Board of Regents in setting the mission, developing a comprehensive plan to coordinate higher education, defining key performance indicators, the influences of changing demographics, legislative actions, and state appropriations. The FHSU mission emphasizes commitment to undergraduate liberal education, scholarship, and public service through alignment with the needs of professionals and learners.
- 8C1 S FHSU explores methods for aligning the quality of the "Virtual Classroom" with the quality of the traditional classroom while employing best practices for managing institutional growth and systemic planning due to significant population decreases in Western Kansas.
- 8C1-2 O Process alignment with prescribed Kansas Board of Regents set objectives and strict prescriptive processes for submitting continuous improvement suggestions may hamper the management hierarchy from receiving "bottom-up" continuous improvement recommendations from primary service levels. The "Scorecard" appears to be the primary measure of effectiveness. The Scorecard is not an end in itself; a shift in emphasis from how the Scorecard works to what it shows would facilitate continuous improvement.
- 8C2-3 S FHSU's emphasis on critical alignments between strategic planning, financial planning, human resources, colleges, departments, and faculty in the Strategic Planning Process Supplemental Document permits goal accomplishments to proceed.
- 8P1 S FHSU has well-defined, detailed planning processes including the AQIP Action Planning Processes. These processes include data collection and feedback from constituents at the campus and legislative levels followed by a review by the Office of Budget and Planning and other oversight groups prior to presentation to the appropriate Kansas Board of Regents committees. Task forces and group recommendations provide input into the strategic planning process. The planning process results in action steps assessed via affinity diagrams and other processes to determine achievements resulting from planned quality initiatives.

- 8R1 O The University evidences expenditures aligned with strategic planning initiatives demonstrating achievement of its strategic goals. A clearer connection between the budget allocations process and the strategic planning process would better demonstrate institutional priorities and commitment.

- 8R2 O How reported results are used to make revisions in the Performance Agreement and AQIP Goals as well as other strategic planning objectives need to be addressed. For instance, AQIP Action Plans are central to the achievement of institutional performance goals, but Performance expectations are unclear.

- 8I1 O The University has begun to integrate quality improvement principles throughout its strategic action planning and discussions are beginning in order to evaluate the value of input and participation from constituent groups. Evaluation results are based on a variety of surveys and direct evidence of progress toward goals is not cited. The processes of upward flow of communication concerning assessment and strategic planning cycles are not clearly defined.

- 8I2 O The process for setting targets is unclear and direct evidence of measuring progress toward goals is unclear.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Maturing**, characterized by growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

- O3c FHSU has strategically planned to make their educational costs affordable and competitive. As a result, their enrollment gains have been in the double digits (13% and 15%) for the past two years in comparison to a 2% increase at other Regents schools even though Western Kansas has seen a significant population decline in the past 20 years.
- O3d FHSU has adopted a Mission Centered, Market Smart strategy that reflects service to Western Kansas while exploring international market opportunities through the Virtual College.
- O4a Pursuit of partnerships is an important strategy for achieving new enrollment growth. FHSU has several key collaborators: local partners (donors, Commerce Bank, Volga German Society, and Tiger supporters), statewide collaborations based on student recruitment (includes tuition arrangements with neighboring states, arrangements with community colleges, KBOR's AccessUS program, and relationships with the US Navy and US Coast Guard), international academic partners (Chinese Ministry of Education and with Selcuk University in Turkey), Relationships with external peers and accrediting agencies), and the Endowment Association which provides millions of dollars for capital improvements and scholarships. In addition, collaboration exists with the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Museum has provided FHSU with exclusive access to the collection of NASA memorabilia.
- O5c Faculty are collectively represented by a long-standing elected Faculty Senate and Graduate Council and a bargaining unit represented by a local American Association of University Professors Chapter of which 180 are members in this bargaining unit.
- O6a Located on a 200-acre campus, FHSU contributes significantly to the economic well-being of the city and county and has an annual impact on the city and county of \$124 million as the second largest employer in the county.
- O7b FHSU appears to have a good sense of the competition as indicated by the six stated assumptions regarding market competition and insights regarding difficulties in providing concurrent high school enrollments.
- O7c Competition in providing education opportunity has occurred in high schools with concurrent enrollment. However, Transfer of concurrent credit is an issue because most classes are freshman level classes requiring advanced mastery of skills.

- O7e To meet competition FHSU has developed programs in technology based degrees through partnerships with Cisco, developed a BS in Information Networking and Telecommunications, and a customizable Bachelor of General Studies and Masters of Liberal Studies. In addition FHSU has implemented a Bachelor of Leadership Studies and has had approved a Bachelor of Technology Leadership.
- O8a Enrollment appears to be increasing due both to the tagline of “Affordable Success” and stressing “internal branding.” Trends in citizen support, population decline, and the legislative climate are monitored and influence management decisions.
- O8c FHSU is addressing shrinking enrollment trends through a variety of partnerships focused on distance learning. These efforts appear to be enhancing FTE and permitting some sense of stability in lean times.
- O8e A key challenge is in the area of new markets as FHSU seeks partnerships with international institutions and with institutions in Kansas and beyond as well as markets through the Virtual College

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Fort Hays State University’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:

- 9C1 S FHSU maintains collaborative relationships with former students, community entities, special academic partners, and accreditation organizations. They have developed a functional schema to define types of collaborative relations (See Table 9-1).
- 9C1 SS FHSU maintains close working relationships with community colleges, technical schools, and high schools across the state. Admissions counselors and degree analysts visit community colleges and participate in their career/education fairs.
- 9C1, 9P1 S The University demonstrates the level of importance it places on collaborative relationships by having an explicit organization strategy as explained in Table 9-1 and establishing what it considers high priority special academic partnerships with the Navy College Program Distance Learning Partnership, Coast Guard Institute and SOCCOAST Afloat, SIAS International University, Task Ming College, University of International Business and Economics, Professional Focus, High School Concurrent Enrollment, Southwest Plains Regional Services Center, AccessUS, Hays Medical Center, Cisco Networking Training Academy, and Teachers of Tomorrow. These academic partnerships are created for the purpose of generating income, enhancing student enrollment figures, enhancing

accreditation opportunities, expanding infrastructure/resources, providing clinical experiences and internships for current students, and assuring professional development opportunities for students, faculty and staff. FHSU maintains agreements with 19 other organizations to support these purposes that are considered to be of moderate or low level priority. Academic partnerships are prioritized in accordance with accreditation needs, feasibility and capacity issues, promotion of the mission, enhancement of existing programs, student placement opportunities, and the potential for new market opportunities.

- 9C1-2 OO The major criteria articulated for engaging in collaborative relationships are income generation and student enrollment. Other institutional values, such as knowledge production, student learning, student engagement, and community service are mentioned. It is not clear how the partnerships deemed most significant are specifically related to the mission of providing a liberal arts education or service to Kansans other than to say that faculty members are responsible to include such information in their reports. (Note: This is not an accreditation issue.)
- 9P1 S FHSU utilizes affiliations with program accreditation agencies listed on Table 9-5 and their regional accreditation agency as a means to foster institutional quality and recognition for its enhanced quality programs and activities.
- 9P2 S There is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate charged with the consideration of existing and new special academic partnerships. As part of its charge, the committee reviews and provides input on agreements through formal channels of communications. In addition, each director or contact person overseeing the partnership agreement is responsible for addressing the results of the projects to students, faculty, and administration through typical reporting processes.
- 9C2 S FHSU facilitates communication and feedback from partners through informal methods, including appointing a liaison to the stakeholder relationship; each of the partnerships is reviewed annually and key performance indicators are tracked. Information resulting from collaborative relationship feedback is analyzed and incorporated as necessary into recommendations forwarded by the respective contact person into the annual planning process.
- 9C2 S The central feature of FHSU's mission is to provide a liberal arts education in a computerized environment. The University uses its technology-based delivery of instruction approaches as a means of fostering institutional viability in a rapidly

changing environment The Institution's environment has constant challenges in regards to demographic issues such as a shrinking population and specific population migration patterns that can have a potential negative impact on institutional viability and performance quality.

- 9P1-2 S FHSU emphasizes creating, sustaining, and prioritizing partnerships through a variety of mechanisms for purposes of internships and employment, educational program development and improvement, business improvements, formal agreements, outreach, and feedback channels from partners. Partnership liaisons are determined based on their relationship with projects and feedback systems are informal and considered adequate at present.
- 9R1 S The University attributes increased enrollments, new program offerings, expanded distance education offerings, new learning formats, and international and domestic partnerships as evidence of the positive influence of its collaborative relationships.
- 9R2 S Comparative measures of enrollment and retention provide some indirect evidence of the effectiveness of the University's collaborative efforts as does change to do requests from comparable schools for information on how FHSU has established a given collaboration.
- 9P4 O General measures of the benefits of collaborative relationships are vague beyond those of academic departments and the Virtual College.
- 9I1 S The university recognizes that more formal processes for developing and sustaining its collaborative relationships could be achieved by introducing six elements they believe will lead to improved tracking, communication, assessment, and oversight.
- 9I1 OO FHSU states that comparative analysis related to expected learning outcomes from the collaborative relationships is unavailable. (Note: This is not an accreditation issue.)
- 9I2 S The University is establishing targets for improvements, or at least improved opportunities and payoffs from existing and potential collaborative partnerships, as a means of improving what the parties to these relationships can receive as a result of the existence of the relationship.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Fort Hays State University's performance on this Category as **Maturing**, characterized by growing, emergent processes that typically achieve

many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recent (within last two years) of improving levels of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly. Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

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

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

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Rubrics should be used to understand where the opportunities for ongoing systems improvement are greatest, not as scores indicating success or failure. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.