

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION ONE

General Recommendation One: The committee recommends that the college continue to develop and implement a systematic, transparent institutional planning and evaluation system.

Essential conditions, elements, and uses of this system:

- Clearly define the planning and evaluation processes.
- The planning and evaluation processes are ongoing.
- The planning process is participatory involving appropriate constituencies such as faculty, administrators, staff, students, and other interested parties.
- Results of the planning and evaluation processes influence resource allocation decisions and are used to improve programs and services.
- Necessary resources are provided for an effective planning and evaluation system to function.
- Institutional research is integrated with and supportive of institutional evaluation and planning.
- The college uses information from its planning and evaluation processes to communicate evidence of institutional effectiveness to the public.

(Standard 1: 1.B.1, 1.B.3, 1.B.4, 1.B.6, 1.B.7, 1.B.9)

COLLEGE RESPONSE

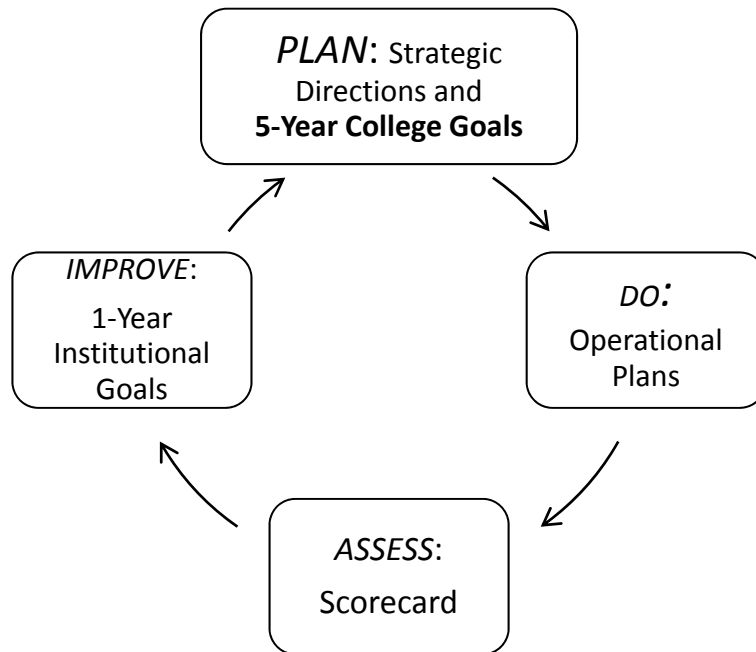
Clark College has made substantial progress in institutional planning and evaluation since the full-scale evaluation visit in October 2008. The College has adopted and implemented a strategic planning and continuous improvement process both at the college level and operational level. The continuous improvement process aligns goals, objectives, activities, measureable outcomes, and improvement strategies to the Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. One full cycle of continuous improvement has been completed at the college level.

College-Level Continuous Improvement Process

The Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan, now in place, addresses the mandate for a continuous improvement process. The continuous improvement process is an annual cycle that involves four components: plan, do, assess, and improve. Each of these verbs describes the actions integral to an institutional planning and evaluation system, while the documentation needed to make that system transparent is provided as follows:

- The 2009-2014 Strategic Plan's Strategic Directions and Five-Year College Goals articulate and make public the work of the first component: plan.
- The operational plans within each organizational area record the activities related to the second component: do.
- The Scorecard is the evaluative tool that provides the mechanism for the third component: assess.
- The institutional one-year goals capture the college priorities for improvement related to the Strategic Plan that will guide fulfillment of the last component of the model: improve.

COLLEGE-LEVEL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS



PLAN: Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan

In January 2008, the President convened a taskforce to develop the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. The taskforce consisted of representatives throughout the college community, including the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board, the President, faculty, Student Affairs, Administrative Services, Planning and Effectiveness, Foundation, Instruction, staff, and students. From January through June 2008, the taskforce gathered information from external and internal focus groups and environmental scanning activities, such as service district demographics, economics, and occupational labor market and wage information.

In 2008-2009, the Strategic Planning Taskforce reviewed information about the college, the community, and, more generally, about the Washington State community and technical college system. The sources of information used to develop the Strategic Plan included the existing college plans (such as the Instructional Plan and Enrollment Management Plan), focus groups from community and college constituents, environmental scans, college community feedback, the accreditation self-study, the accreditation evaluation report, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) Strategic Plan. (Exhibit 1.1)

The Strategic Planning Taskforce identified the major themes arising from the research and developed the vision, mission, strategic directions, and five-year college goals. These four components comprise the Strategic Plan. The contents of the Strategic Plan were intended to capture the collective work of the college and set the direction for the next five years. All departments will be able to articulate the ways in which their work supports the Strategic Plan.

Considerable opportunity was given to the college to review, critique, and offer feedback regarding the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan as it was being developed. These feedback mechanisms included a Penguin Roundtable, a Board of Trustees work session, and a College Council meeting; a less formal mechanism invited individuals from the college and the community to provide feedback to a member of the Strategic Planning Taskforce and/or to submit comments/critiques on Clark College's intranet site. Based on the college's review, significant revisions were made to the Strategic Plan before presenting it to the Board of Trustees on June 15, 2009, for a vote of approval. The Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adopt the Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan for implementation on July 1, 2009. (Appendix 1.1; Exhibit 1.2)

The Strategic Plan has four components: vision, mission, strategic directions, and five-year college goals. The vision and mission are statements that capture the aspirations and purpose of the college.

VISION:

Extraordinary Education • Excellent Services • Engaged Learners • Enriched Community

MISSION:

Clark College provides opportunities for diverse learners to achieve their educational and professional goals, thereby enriching the social, cultural, and economic environment of our region and the global community.

The Strategic Directions are the core themes of the College. Under each Strategic Direction are the five-year college goals that link to and direct the work of the college. The Strategic Directions and Five-Year College Goals establish the work and the trajectory of the College.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND FIVE-YEAR COLLEGE GOALS:

Focus on Learning – The College will focus on learning as the foundation for decision-making with respect to planning, technology, location, instructional methods, and successful outcomes. Learners will receive high-quality, innovative education and services that foster student success in achievement of their goals.

- Identify, offer, and support teaching and learning strategies that enhance student success.
- Increase the retention and progression of all students, with emphasis on first-generation students.
- Refine and implement continuous improvement planning consistent with the “learning college” model.
- Provide all employees with opportunities for professional development.

Expand Access – The College will offer programs and services that are affordable and accessible to students of the community. Students will be provided flexible options for learning in locations that are accessible and resources that help make their education affordable.

- Provide appropriate support services and reduce procedural barriers to help students enroll in college.
- Expand options to increase the overall affordability of education.
- Expand online services across the college.
- Expand learning options by offering courses and services in various modalities, timeframes, and locations.

Foster a Diverse College Community – The College will provide programs and services to support the needs of diverse populations.

- Recruit, retain, and support a diverse student population and college workforce.

- Provide comprehensive training and educational resources to help all members of the college community interact effectively in a diverse world.

Respond to Workforce Needs – The College will provide educational services that facilitate the gainful and meaningful employment for students seeking training, retraining, or continuing education. College programs and services will meet the economic needs of the community.

- Identify and support high-demand workforce needs.
- Identify and support emerging workforce needs, including technology training and green industry skills.
- Establish, maintain, and expand partnerships that support workforce needs.

Enhance College Systems – The College will continually assess, evaluate, and improve college systems to facilitate student learning.

- Improve college infrastructure to support all functions of the college.
- Develop and implement an effective advising system to enhance student success.
- Seek alternate resources, such as grants, philanthropy, and partnerships to fulfill the college mission.
- Refine, communicate, and implement a shared governance system.
- Integrate environmental sustainability practices into all college systems.

Based on the work of the Strategic Planning Taskforce, the college has a plan that unites and connects the work within different organizational units through the strategic directions and five-year college goals.

DO: Operational Plans

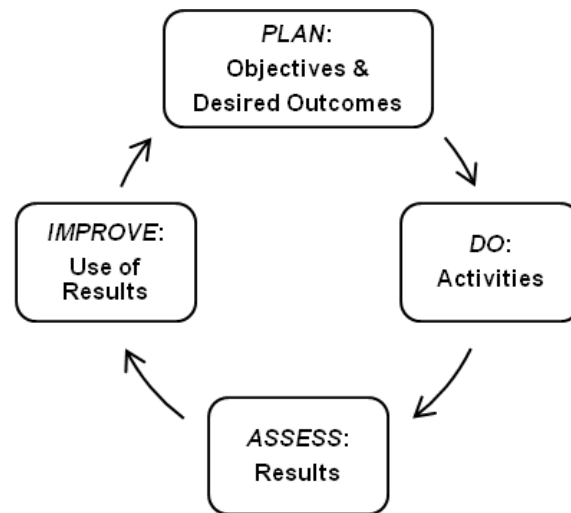
The work that is conducted to meet the five-year goals is documented within each operational plan throughout the college community. Operational plans record continuous improvement activities at the operational/organizational unit level or organizational unit level. Each operational plan has six components:

1. Linkage to the five-year strategic goals and one-year institutional goals;
2. Objectives: Statements that identify the major functions of the organizational unit;
3. Desired Outcomes: Measureable/desirable outcomes that will identify whether the objective has been accomplished;
4. Activities: Activities that will lead to the accomplishment of each objective;

5. Results: Assessment findings that determine if the outcome was met; and
6. Use of Results: Improvement strategies that identify what should be implemented the following year to reach the outcome and objective.

The continuous improvement process at the operational level or organizational unit is illustrated below:

OPERATIONAL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS



(Appendix 1.2)

Implementation of the organizational continuous improvement process, i.e. operational planning, has begun. Each member of the President’s executive team (EC) developed a 2009-2010 operational plans for each of his/her respective areas in Spring 2009. The Executive Cabinet areas are 1) President’s Office, 2) Instruction, 3) Student Affairs, 4) Administrative Services, 5) Corporate and Continuing Education, 6) Human Resources, 7) Diversity and Equity, 8) Communications, 9) Planning and Effectiveness, and 10) Clark College Foundation.

While EC members were creating their operational plans during Spring 2009, the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan was still in draft form. EC members developed overall objectives to capture their work and areas of responsibilities, and linked them to the draft five-year goals. Later, EC members finalized the links between their objectives and five-year goals. The EC operational plans are also a piece of the performance review process. Incorporating this into the performance review process compels the college to assess its effectiveness from many directions.

Once full implementation has occurred, the College expects to have 42 operational plans, representing the organizational units of the college.

Number of Operational Plans Expected by Executive Cabinet Areas

Executive Cabinet Areas	Number of Plans Expected
President’s Office	2
Office of Instruction ¹	9
Student Affairs	14
Administrative Services	8
Corporate and Continuing Education	1
Offices of Human Resources and Diversity and Equity	1
Communications and Marketing	1
Office of Planning and Effectiveness	1
Clark College Foundation	1
College-wide Committees (Advising, Cultural Pluralism, International Education, and Technology)	4
Total Operational Plans Expected	42

Operational plans are considered complete when 1) the objectives and desired outcomes have been assessed for that year and 2) the strategies for the following year have been developed based on the assessment findings. Since this process was implemented just prior to the 2009-2010 academic year, no operational plans have been completed yet using the current model. All Executive Cabinet areas have developed their operational plans for the 2009-2010 academic year. Although the first full cycle will not be completed until the end of the academic year, EC members have been documenting their progress toward accomplishing their objectives. (Exhibit 1.3.)

Institutional Research (IR) has been actively involved in the creation of the operational plans. IR has served as a consultant to help identify desirable objectives that are measurable. As EC has been updating their operational plans, IR has provided a significant amount of data and analyses to measure the progress toward accomplishing EC’s objectives. Some operational plans have had to use “place-holders” until baseline data is collected. Organizational units throughout the college have partnered with both IR and IT to establish methodologies to collect information needed to evaluate progress toward accomplishing the unit’s objectives.

The departments or units reporting directly to Executive Cabinet members are expected to have identified their objectives; links to the Strategic Plan and, where appropriate, the one-year institutional goals; desired outcomes; and activities for the 2010-2011 academic year. All other plans will be developed for the 2011-2012 academic year.

¹ Operational plans will exist only at the organizational unit level (i.e. dean’s level). Program review activities will capture continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

ASSESS: Scorecard

The Scorecard was developed in Fall 2009 by the Scorecard Workgroup, consisting of representatives throughout the college as well as some cross-over membership from the 2009-2014 Strategic Planning Taskforce (January 2008 – June 2009). The college-wide membership included representatives from the Board of Trustees, Diversity and Equity, Faculty, Instructional Administrators, Administrative Services, Planning and Effectiveness, and Corporate and Continuing Education. The purpose of the Scorecard is to measure progress toward accomplishing the Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. It will be updated annually.

The Scorecard consists of indicators, benchmarks, and evaluative scores that identify areas for improvement and areas of progress. The college has implemented the needed evaluative and outcome data in all continuous improvement activities as the Associate Vice President of Planning and Effectiveness leads institutional research, strategic planning, and the college-level and operational continuous improvement processes throughout the college. The first Scorecard uses primarily 2008-2009 institutional data to provide the evaluative baseline of the college's progress toward establishing the 2010-2011 one-year institutional goals and meeting the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan.

The scorecard indicators were selected to measure the progress toward accomplishing the five-year college goals within the Strategic Plan. The indicators do not align perfectly with any one five-year college goal. Rather, the indicators measure various aspects of multiple goals. Collectively and individually, the measurement and evaluation of the indicators compared to benchmarks provide the information to determine the areas of progress and areas in need of improvement. One-year institutional goals will then address areas in need of improvement. The Scorecard provides an evaluation tool to measure the five-year goals by comparing the indicators with the benchmarks listed on the Scorecard. The benchmarks were selected based on a number of criteria. These criteria take into account the following:

- Limitations of the various indicators, e.g., areas over which Clark College does or does not have control, and perception data from survey results;
- Type of higher education institution, i.e., comprehensive community college;
- Impact of external forces, e.g., significantly high correlation with unemployment rates; and
- Reasonable expectations in improvement.

The college community was asked to review, critique, and provide feedback about the Scorecard as it was being developed. Methods for providing feedback included intranet feedback forms, Executive Cabinet, a Board of Trustees work session, College Council (i.e. President's advisory council), and discussion with Workgroup members. The feedback was used by the Workgroup to refine the scorecard indicators. (Exhibit 1.4)

In December 2009, the Scorecard Workgroup was charged by EC to evaluate each indicator with three scores: Meets or Exceeds Expectations, Does Not Meet, and Does Not Meet – Well Below. Once these scores were determined, the Scorecard was presented to College Council to identify the major areas of improvement related to the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan.

College Council is a recommending body to the President made up of representatives throughout the college. The Council is one component of the shared governance structure. The purpose of College Council is to oversee institutional planning, budget development, and institutional effectiveness systems for the College, and to make recommendations to the President for action. In January 2010, College Council reviewed the Scorecard and identified the major themes that emerged. (Exhibit 1.5) These themes were transformed into one-year institutional goals that will serve as priorities for the 2010-2011 academic year. (Appendix 1.3)

IMPROVE: One-Year Institutional Goals

The one-year institutional goals are a direct outcome of evaluating the accomplishment of the Strategic Plan. As stated previously, the one-year institutional goals are developed based on the major themes that emerge from the evaluation of the Scorecard in the areas that need improvement. Therefore, the one-year institutional goals are more specific than the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan's five-year college goals. The one-year institutional goals provide direction to where the college needs to improve to accomplish the Strategic Plan.

These one-year institutional goals are embedded in the operational planning process. Each objective of every operational plan is linked to the Strategic Plan's five year goals and, where appropriate, the one-year institutional goals. Ultimately, as resources are allocated, the initiatives and areas that support these one-year institutional goals are given significant priority for funding, but not at the expense of losing ground or progress in areas where the College meets or exceeds its goals.

Executive Cabinet will develop a prioritization process to allocate revenues to departments and units based on improvement strategies to meet college goals. This protocol will be forthcoming in the next couple of years when both the college-level and operational-level continuous improvement processes complete their first cycles. Moreover, the college has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Strategic Plan by prioritizing resource allocation based on its contents. All resource allocations made in the past two years have been critically tied to the Strategic Plan despite the fact that the College has endured significant budget cuts during that time.

One example of this prioritization process pertains to advising. Acting upon the findings of the accreditation self-study report in keeping with the College's commitment to continuous improvement evaluation, Clark College has begun to address the necessary changes in the

advising process. Advising is a one-year institutional goal for both the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years. When the Advising Department requested additional funds to support a reorganization that would increase efficiencies and effectiveness of the advising services, EC committed the funds over a three-year period.

The one-year institutional goals are also used to prioritize grant development activities. Grant opportunities that support the one-year institutional goals are given priority. Currently, Clark College is developing a Title III-Strengthening Institutions grant application that pertains to three of the institutional goals for 2009-2010, including advising, strategic planning/continuous improvement, and program review.

The 2010-2011 one-year institutional goals have been developed, recommended to the President by the College Council, and officially adopted. They are as follows:

One-Year Institutional Goals 2010-2011

College Climate

- Improve the college climate² with special emphasis on historically disadvantaged populations encompassing the entire college community. *Enhance College Systems*

Shared Governance

- Communicate, implement, and monitor a shared-governance framework that identifies the role administrators, faculty, staff, and students each play in the college decision-making process. – *Enhance College Systems*

Diversity

- Increase recruitment, retention, and educational resources in direct support of the Diversity Plan. – *Foster a Diverse College Community*

Student Achievement

- Increase student achievement by improving academic support services and ensuring a supportive-learning environment is present throughout the entire college. – *Focus on Learning*

Advising

- Implement and monitor a long-term and systemic advising plan. – *Enhance College Systems*

Environment Sustainability

- Develop an environmental sustainability plan. – *Enhance College Systems*

² The current social environment, perceptions, attitudes, and expectations that define the institution and its members. Peterson, M.W., and M.G. Spencer. 1990. "Understanding Academic Culture and Climate." In "Assessing Academic Climates and Cultures," edited by W.G. Tierney. New Directions for Institutional Research No. 68. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Communicate Evidence of Institutional Effectiveness to the Public

The college publicly reports institutional effectiveness in a variety of ways. The Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan is posted on the internet. The Vision and Mission statements are located in most common areas throughout the college. Institutional data is available on the internet, identifying student enrollment and demographics for each quarter. This data also includes various studies that measure institutional effectiveness, including graduate follow-up survey results by educational programs, student satisfaction reports, transfer outcomes, and high school graduate follow-up studies.

At every Board of Trustees meeting, each member of Executive Cabinet presents his or her monthly activities and outcomes linked to the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan's strategic directions. This information is recorded publicly. In addition, Washington State has required that the results of each accreditation self-study be posted to the web and the college must prepare and submit a report annually about the progress the college has made to improve in the areas of the recommendations. Other institutional effectiveness information is provided through the course catalogue, course schedule, Annual Report to the Community, President's annual State of the College Address, and Clark College Quick Facts. (Exhibits 1.6-1.12)

Conclusion

Institutional planning and evaluation are being incorporated into the work of all areas of the College. Linked to and directed by the college-wide Strategic Plan, the work of the College is evaluated for effectiveness; areas of success as well as those needing improvement are identified. The continuous improvement cycle is conducted on an annual basis both at the college level and operational level. The College expects full implementation of the continuous improvement process by 2011-2012. Further, the college will abide by a process of allocating resources based on mission fulfillment as all organizational units will tie their operational objectives to college goals. Consistent focus of goals and assessment of work has already begun to make Clark College more deliberate and effective in its strategies and initiatives to serve students.

CLARK COLLEGE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

