

Cowley College

HLC ID 1275

AQIP: AQIP Pathway Systems Appraisal

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1 - Reflective Overview

The first section of the System's Appraisal Feedback Report is the Reflective Overview. Here the team provides summary statements that reflect its broad understanding of the institution and the constituents served. This section shows the institution that the team understood the context and priorities of the institution as it completed the review.

In the Reflective Overview, the team considers such factors as:

1. Stage in systems maturity (processes and results).
2. Utilization or deployment of processes.
3. The existence of results, trends and comparative data.
4. The use of results data as feedback.
5. Systematic improvement processes of the activities each AQIP Category covers.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

During this stage of the Systems Appraisal, provide the team's consensus reflective overview statement, which should be based on the independent reflective overviews written by each team member. The consensus overview statement should communicate the team's understanding of the institution, its mission and the constituents it serves. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

Overall: Cowley College, a two-year college in South-Central Kansas, serves approximately 3863 unduplicated students per year through four associate degree programs and 23 vocational certificates in addition to continuing education opportunities. Of these students, approximately 22% are dual enrollment/dual credit students. Students can enroll in two campuses and take courses at an additional four other locations, not including 14 partner high schools or online. Approximately one-quarter of the student population is completely online, and over 20% of the students take at least one online course. Approximately 30% of faculty are full-time, and the student-faculty ratio is 18 to 1. As a public state institution, Cowley College reports to the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR).

Category 1: Cowley College has used the four years since the 2014 System Appraisal to address some of the recommendations and concerns. Previously, Cowley did not have program learning outcomes (PLOs) except for the career and technical education programs. Now Programmatic Learning Outcomes (PLOs) align with the Global Learning Outcomes (GLOs), and the PLO process is combined with the assessment of the GLOs on a three-year cycle. The GLO skills of communication, computation, critical thinking, citizenship, and technology are aligned with a level of success for degree completion as well as employment. Student Affairs and Academic Affairs work together to align co-curricular development goals with teaching and learning through various clubs and organizations. Cowley College has renewed its commitment to program review by altering its schedule from one year to three year to allow time to implement new initiatives and evaluate them; the goal is to move to an alternating review schedule with two reviews yearly. This timetable allows for a more thorough review of programs. Responding to the Kansas Board of Regents, Cowley has

revised the Credit for Prior Learning to better accommodate military learners with the goal of continuing to provide dedicated support for individual student populations.

Category 2: Cowley uses multiple means of assessing student needs and satisfaction through national and campus surveys. This information has led to the implementation of academic success programs including increased availability of tutoring, a first-year experience course, and improved processes for enrollment management. Through KBOR, Cowley completes KPIs on institutional measures that influence state funding to the College. Through the Strategy Forum, the College developed Enrollment 123 to revise and improve areas related to enrollment management.

Category 3: Cowley has implemented several processes to provide professional development and onboarding for employees and to use data to assess the value of these programs. Cowley has implemented a new software program to track and organize professional development. Using employee feedback, the College devotes two days each academic year to professional development. While this work is in the beginning stages, systems are in place to gather feedback and assess effectiveness. The College maintains appropriate academic rigor, in part, by following faculty credential guidelines from the Higher Learning Commission and the Kansas Board of Regents. These guidelines apply to high school (dual enrollment) faculty as well as others. All full-time employees complete a performance appraisal tied to the College's core values. The College is establishing an effective and consistent employee recognition program and increasing the budget allocation for employee training and support.

Category 4: In response to the 2014 Systems Appraisal, Cowley College has implemented a strategic planning process to provide more stable leadership and increased campus-wide participation in planning activities. This strategic planning process has been in place through two strategic planning cycles, and assessment of the process provides Cowley the means to determine if the College has achieved the goals of greater engagement while serving the needs of stakeholders.

Category 5: The new Student Information System (SIS) has been implemented to help streamline the processes and coordinate services for students, providing a more holistic approach to student services. A new position directing institutional effectiveness has been deemed critical to making decision-based decisions. Cowley is already seeing the benefits of this work as the College identifies needed process changes. New software applications are providing additional support for process improvement in fiscal, physical and technology infrastructure.

Category 6: Cowley has put many processes in place to ensure continuous improvement. While they have progressed commendably in strategic planning and developing common learning outcomes, data collection and analysis is still young but promising. New software, new leadership in key areas such as assessment and planning, and an increase in stakeholder participation in decision-making are sure to make a positive impact. Cowley College has been involved in quality initiatives for twenty years and understands the value of involving internal stakeholders in developing processes through shared governance.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2 - Strategic Challenges Analysis

Strategic Challenges are those most closely related to an institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning and quality improvement goals. Review teams formulate judgments related to strategic challenges and accreditation issues through careful analysis of the Institutional Overview and through their own feedback provided for each AQIP Pathway Category. These findings offer a framework for future improvement of processes and systems.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

Strategic Challenges may be identified on the Independent Category worksheets as the review progresses. The team chair will work with the team to develop a consensus Strategic Challenges statement based on their independent reviews. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

Category One: Helping Students Learn

Cowley College revised its institutional outcomes into the new general education outcomes, called GLOs. The catchy phrase of "GLOs" and the alliteration of the GLOs (communication, computation, critical thinking, computer and citizenship) reflect the desire to keep these ever present in mind of faculty and students. Cowley has also demonstrated an awareness of how to reduce assessment fatigue by distributing these GLOs throughout the curriculum, enabling students to learn and practice these competencies through the educational experience but without requiring an annual assessment report from each course. Cowley can also boast of a robust program review process. Cowley is challenged, however, in some key processes and uses of data. For example, Cowley may benefit from aligning the individual program crosswalks to determine if indeed students are enjoying an opportunity to achieve the three levels of competencies. Without a thorough review, Cowley students could get exposure to GLOS and SLOs at the same introductory level. Although some initiatives or directions are to be applauded, such as the robust offerings of co-curriculars, the processes associated with these initiatives or efforts are unclear or non-existent. For example, students have an opportunity to participate in many different kinds of activities, but the process for determining the learning obtained through these offering, how to assess this learning, and then how to use the subsequent data to improve the learning opportunity through co-curricular is not provided. Although Cowley clearly collects a great deal of data, it is not clear how data informed decisions are determined. Of greatest concern, and this is a concern experienced throughout the review of the systems portfolio, is the lack of evidence that Cowley uses data effectively to improve results. This conclusion is the result of the lack of evidence provided that Cowley reflects upon and interprets data. Very little evidence is provided to suggest a process of collecting data, sharing the data across constituencies to determine the various ways to interpret these data, and then making changes based on these interpretations.

Category 2: Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs

The review team finds a clear and persistent interest in helping students succeed and serving the

needs of its many communities. Cowley does not hesitate to try new approaches and to reach new populations. Cowley offers extensive student support services, including health services, mental health counseling, and tutoring, available both in person and online. A new strategic plan and direction from the state prompted additional outreach and support for cultural diversity, for international students, for military students, and for the seniors programs. The Systems Portfolio failed to include the discussion and documentation to indicate how these priorities were chosen, by whom, and how the College will determine the success of these foci. As noted throughout, Cowley fails to set benchmarks and targets, and if a target is suggested, the rationale for this target is missing. With respect to setting these strategic priorities, determining the approaches to serve the needs of these special populations, and selecting the tools and means of assessment, the Systems Portfolio is silent. Similarly, the processes for responding to complaints is not clearly indicated, and the Portfolio does not indicate how the College ensures timely and appropriate action and communication about the action. In these examples, Cowley would be much better served and would use its resources more effectively by developing and/or documenting processes as well as the tools and methods to determine effectiveness, and then using the data in ways to provide continuous improvement.

Category 3: Valuing Employees

Cowley is to be commended for establishing clear policies and procedures related to valuing employees. It is clear that the institution is committed to its people, and strives to connect them and their work to the mission, vision and values of the College. Additionally, it is evident that Cowley intentionally instills the spirit of continuous quality improvement into its employees and organizational culture. However, strategic issues exist, and they are primarily related to the establishment of targets, the analysis and utilization of data to inform improvements, and the evaluation cycle of the policies and processes themselves. Specifically, strategic issues include an onboarding process that does not appear to meet the needs of the new employee or the College, the lack of a clear process to tie evaluation to performance improvement, and a lack of process to allocate professional development funding to all stakeholders. Additionally, it is unclear which mechanisms are in place to ensure that all employees receive the support and training they need to reach a desired level of performance excellence, employee engagement and satisfaction at Cowley. Therefore, this presents two strategic issues related to the coordination and the assessment of professional development related policies, processes and programming. Finally, in order to collect meaningful data for analysis and data-informed improvements, the issue of low response rates on key surveys needs to be aggressively addressed.

Category 4: Planning and Leading

Cowley is a focused institution with a clear strategic plan shaping its efforts for improvement. There is a clear commitment in the leadership system to improve stakeholder knowledge and embrace of its current mission and goals. As an AQIP institution it drives itself toward improvement and has made continual efforts to shore up its capacity to support its initiatives and do that with an integrity that is mindful of student needs, faculty and staff resources, and incorporate the input of external advisory councils shaping its programmatic direction and initiatives. Overall, improvement is needed to detail operational processes and use them consistently, especially in relation to analysis and reflection upon collected data. Innovation and improvement requires quality tracking trends that are coupled with rich interpretive understanding of that data to be agile in its capacity as a College to respond to changes respective to the College as a whole and particular needs across its multiple campus locations. People at Cowley are invested and it appears there is a strong internal structure for

collaboration; yet, continued efforts to share data analysis and information across institutional units in effective ways would improve planning and decision-making to streamline its improvement capacities and strategic initiatives. As Cowley moves forward with foresight, it may be useful to step back and evaluate how its data informs planning processes, what data collection is most useful and needs to be continued, and squarely address its use of benchmarks and targets (i.e., internal and external) to ensure they are meaningfully in place with rationale for each data set the College uses to facilitate data interpretation for making responsive, careful decisions in a changing environment.

Category 5: Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship

Cowley appears to be an institution that is keenly aware of its need to manage its resources in a thoughtful proactive manner. It has structures in place to do so that range from a clear administrative hierarchy overseen by a Board of Trustee that carefully manages the College's budget and priorities. Further, it is a college that takes its community stewardship responsibility seriously with programs in place to serve student needs, protect data, mitigate risk, and improve safety on an consistent basis. It is actively working to improve its infrastructure management with an eye to cataloging and addressing deferred maintenance issues. It has adjusted its budgets in line with revenue and has annual audits to ensure integrity and compliance. When it has expanded its infrastructure footprint it has secured additional revenue to off-set the costs associated with doing so. However, it is also a college that too often appears to only rely on trend data or mandated data that it needs in order to have an audit done or to meet federal student financial aid or Clery Act data reporting requirement when making decisions. It has developed few internal targets or identified virtually no external benchmarks by which to measure its successes or challenges. Further, it provides only superficial analysis of the data that it does collect with no sense of how it is used in an evolution of the College's decision making processes. Finally, the College as a whole does not seem to have identified any significance structure for how it has selected the tools and processes it does have and how it measures their effectiveness on an on-going basis.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3 - Accreditation Evidence Screening Summary

Systems Appraisal teams screen the institution's Systems Portfolio evidence in relation to the Criteria for Accreditation and the Core Components. This step is designed to position the institution for success during the subsequent review to reaffirm the institution's accreditation. In order to accomplish this task, HLC has established linkages between various Process and Results questions and the Criteria's Core Components. Systems Appraisal teams have been trained to conduct a "soft review" of the Criteria/Core Components for Systems Portfolios completed in the third year of the AQIP Pathway cycle and a more robust review for Systems Portfolios completed in the seventh year. The formal review of the Criteria and Core Components for purposes of reaffirming the institution's accreditation through the comprehensive evaluation that occurs in the eighth year of the cycle, unless serious problems are identified earlier in the cycle. As part of this Systems Appraisal screening process, teams indicate whether each Core Component is "strong, clear, and well-presented," "adequate but could be improved," or "unclear or incomplete." When the Criteria and Core Components are reviewed formally for reaffirmation of accreditation, peer reviewers must determine whether each is "met", "met with concerns", or "not met".

The full report documents in detail the Appraisal team's best judgment as to the current strength of the institution's evidence for each Core Component and thus for each Criterion. It is structured according to the Criteria for Accreditation and the Systems Appraisal procedural document. Institutions are encouraged to review this report carefully in order to guide improvement work relative to the Criteria and Core Components.

Immediately below the team provides summary statements that convey broadly its observations regarding the institution's present ability to satisfy each Criterion as well as any suggestions for improvement. Again, this feedback is based only upon information contained in the institution's Systems Portfolio and thus may be limited.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should create summary statements/suggestions for improvement for each of the Criteria for Accreditation.

Evidence

CRITERION 1. MISSION The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations

Strong, Clear and Well Presented

Cowley reviewed its mission in 2015 through a process that engaged the College campus and broader community before being approved by the Board of Trustees. The mission is posted on campus, on the website, and in documents. The Core Values are part of employees' evaluation process, and strategic planning and budgeting begin with an understanding of how all ideas, initiatives, and investments support the mission.

CRITERION 2. INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT The institution

acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible

Adequate, but Could be Improved

Numerous policies provide guidance on expectations for ethical behavior at all levels of the College. Better documentation about how often these policies are reviewed, how ethical lapses are documented and the results used for improvements, and the collection and reflection of data related to IRB, academic honesty, conflicts of interest, and so on could be considered.

**CRITERION 3. TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT
The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.**

Adequate, but could be improved

Cowley's Curriculum Map aligning General Learning Outcomes keeps programs appropriate to the mission of the institution and industry standards are the basis for many of its competencies in technical programs. Courses and programs are reviewed regularly through a program review cycle. Through the Individual Job Target Plan, Instructor Self Evaluation Form and Faculty Appraisal Report Summary, it is evident that the processes are clear and well developed to ensure that full-time faculty engage in meaningful development experiences. Policies, programs, and advising procedures, and campus resources are in place to meet the needs of a diverse student body including some online services. Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have created a process to align co-curricular development goals with teaching and learning through various clubs and organizations. Cowley can improve the work in this area by providing a data-driven mechanism for systematically reviewing if there are sufficient faculty to carry out all expected faculty duties and responsibilities outside of the classroom. Advisor training needs to be addressed to maintain consistency between faculty and staff advising.

**CRITERION 4. TEACHING AND LEARNING: EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT
The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.**

Adequate but needs improvement

Cowley's Program Review process is well developed and conducted every three years. From faculty and chair involvement to the CAO to the President's Board, stakeholder involvement is clear. The College's recent efforts focusing on prior learning assessment, especially in regards to military credits, provides a clear roadmap for moving forward with improvement in this area. Cowley ensures program rigor across all locations and delivery modes by maintaining the same minimum faculty qualifications for all faculty, utilizing the same course procedure, universal textbook and instructional materials for all sections of a given course, a faculty mentoring program, and faculty evaluation schedule. Dual credit processes are monitored and faculty meet accreditation requirements.

Cowley does struggle in evaluating their effectiveness for student learning, however. A system of

program level outcome assessments is in place but the overall consistency of this process and how it is employed across the institution and its departments to address improvement is not entirely clear. For example, the program review master list shows number of participating departments, but not how assessments led to improved actions at the program level. Targets for completion are reported in AIM using a 3 year average for its internal target level monitoring achievements; yet, it is unknown how these reported internal target measures shape a process for resource allocations for improvement or desired program changes. Enrollment management collects information from non-returning students and includes rich source information that is self-reported by students, yet it remains unclear if this is a regular ongoing process shaping persistence data or not since the document provided is not dated and does not indicate academic year time frames for analysis.

New hires in IE and addition of a retention coordinator in 2017 improves FTE capacity to address educational improvements and the ability to create continuous evaluation processes will surely follow.

CRITERION 5. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, RESOURCES AND PLANNING The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Adequate but Could Be Improved

Cowley recently upgraded the Institutional Effectiveness Office under the direction of the Executive Director. This office generates and shares data and information both internally and externally. Through the auspices of the Institutional Effectiveness Office, provides the AIM document, a detailed, 34 page dashboard of reports. Although this information is collected, it is not clear how the College deliberately and repeatedly shares this information and with whom. As noted throughout the feedback, Cowley provides a lot of data and information without explaining the rationale for actions and the data used to provide the rationale. With few exceptions, very general targets and benchmarks have been set. Information provided lacks important components. The mission is supported through state appropriation, property taxes, and tuition and fees. Of particular interest is the fiscal responsibility for the new site as supported by a ten year half-cent tax property tax increase. Policy and Procedure 113 provides for an annual contingency fund and explains the Board's responsibility should a shortfall occur. Room utilization and physical space needs are monitored through a comparison to Post-secondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual (FICM). Computers are replaced on a planned cycle. It is clear Cowley has many tracking mechanisms in place but does not describe a process in which all of this information is reviewed on a regular basis in order to use it for decision making. Again, the lack of information about the review process itself, including a means for shared governance to create and assess these policies, signals the opportunity for more engagement across the campus with greater transparency.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4 - Quality of Systems Portfolio

In this System Appraisal, peer review teams should acknowledge any work that the institution has begun toward addressing the Criteria for Accreditation and the Core Components. The more focused analysis remains on the AQIP Categories and the institution's evidence related to the Process (P), Results (R), and Improvement (I) questions. In cases where there was HLC follow-up stemming from the institution's previous reaffirmation review, the institution may request closer scrutiny of those items during this Systems Appraisal.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

Because it stands as a reflection of the institution, the Systems Portfolio should be complete and coherent, and it should provide an open and honest self-analysis on the strengths and challenges facing the institution. In this section, the peer review team provides the institution with constructive feedback on the overall quality of the Systems Portfolio, along with suggestions for improving future Systems Portfolio submissions.

Evidence

Cowley College demonstrates the willingness to innovate and be responsive to the changing demographics of American student population and the changes in its community. Cowley experienced rapid changes in leadership that contribute to morale declines and a general feeling of instability. The current president and the College have responded by moving forward with a strategic plan, opening a new campus location, seeking new student populations, and serving the community through online programs, continuing development of continuing education, and robust co-curricular offerings while remaining fiscally sound. Clearly, many good things are happening at Cowley.

Some of the recommendations the Peer Review Team would normally have suggested, such as focusing more on how of processes, will be less relevant in the Pathway model. However, what will be most important going forward is the ways in which data are presented, contextualized, and reflected upon. Cowley collects a lot of data, but it is not evident how the data are used. At times it appears that data are collected to complete the dashboard rather than to provide evidence that something is--or is not--working. The Team is not suggesting to curtail data collection but to make sure the data are used to make improvements. Providing for a review team the reasons for collecting certain data and explaining how the data support efforts or initiatives or the assessment of these efforts or initiatives would allow a team to offer more helpful suggestions or insights. This same kind of analysis will help the College determine whether something is working, whether it should be tweaked, or whether something has completely missed the mark.

As suggested by the contextualization recommendation, Cowley could use its current data collection to greater impact by engaging in reflection on evidence. Consistent throughout the Systems Portfolio was a lack of reflection on what results meant. Cowley shared that some of the campus surveys show some frustration or disenchantment among staff and faculty. Rather than just report what percentage of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, Cowley could use professional development days or even small groups discussions to determine how could those data be variously interpreted and what do such data mean about morale. These opportunities for interpretation and reflection provide the focus

for meaningful campus discussions. Sometimes just starting the conversations is the most important improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5 - AQIP Category Feedback

The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report addresses each AQIP Category by identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement. Through detailed comments, which are tied to the institution's Systems Portfolio, the team offers in-depth analysis of the institution's processes, results and improvement efforts. These comments should be straightforward and consultative, and should align to the maturity tables. This allows the team to identify areas for improvement and recommend improvement strategies for the institution to consider.

I - Helping Students Learn

Focuses on the design, deployment, and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes (and on the processes required to support them) that underlie the institution's credit and non-credit programs and courses.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Common Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes, Academic Program Design, Academic Program Quality and Academic Integrity.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Category 1 focuses on the design, deployment and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes (and the processes required to support them) that underlie the institution's credit and non-credit programs and courses.

1.1: COMMON LEARNING OUTCOMES

Common Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities expected of graduates from all programs. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.B., 3.E. and 4.B. in this section.

1P1 Describe the processes for determining, communicating and ensuring the stated common learning outcomes, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Aligning common outcomes (institutional or general education goals) to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution (3.B.1, 3.E.2)

An Outcomes Assessment Team, consisting of faculty and staff, reviewed and revised the institutional learning outcomes into Global Learning Outcomes (GLO). These outcomes focus on five skills: communication, computational, critical thinking, computer, and citizenship skills. The GLO are integrated throughout the general education core and extended to co-curricular events, ensuring that all degree seeking students will have the opportunity to learn and develop these skills. The GLO appear to align with the mission and values of Cowley. The alignment process as a repeatable action is not clear. For example, citing its “Citizenship” GLO as being met because students are engaged in service learning through PTK, its ACES’s club, or because students enroll in sociology classes is rather tangential evidence. However, the College identifies a clear opportunity to provide a direct link in the service learning reflection papers cited; at present, Cowley demonstrates a **systematic** level of maturity.

- Determining common outcomes (3.B.2, 4.B.4)

The committee charged with determining the general education competencies chose outcomes that they believe are 21st century skills. It is not clear how these were determined, and it is difficult to determine how much impact faculty (full-time and adjunct) have in the process. The outcomes have been reviewed in fall 2013 and fall 2017. It is clear that there are processes in place but the lack of detailed description or a timeline of the activities makes it hard to determine any systematizing of this work. The maturity level is **reacting**.

- Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of the outcomes (3.B.2, 4.B.1)

During the Program Review process, faculty for each program crosswalk the GLO to program coursework and determine whether the competency is introduced, reinforced, or assessed. These crosswalks are shared on the website and reviewed by faculty. It is not clear how programs determine the level of achievement of the competency, nor is it clear that the various crosswalks are aligned to one another to ensure that students have an opportunity to achieve the various levels of competency across their educational program. Also unclear is how results have been reviewed and used as part of an improvement cycle. The “Outcomes and Assessment” grid was last updated in 2013, and it is unclear how much the “Use of Results” section of the grid was used to drive on-going changes. Linking the use of results over time would seem to be one opportunity to demonstrate a more mature and consistent process and move beyond the **systematic** level of maturity.

- Incorporating into the curriculum opportunities for all students to achieve the outcomes (3.B.3, 3.B.5)

Cowley describes “opportunities” that are available for students and faculty to achieve the learning outcomes. These opportunities include core required courses as well as co-curricular experiences. However, the examples did not provide an understanding of the alignment of outcomes to courses and experience. The process to align GLOs with specific courses and at the introduce,

reinforce, or assess level is not explained. It is not clear if the expectation is for students to demonstrate competencies in all courses, and if so, how students demonstrate improvements. The portfolio does not indicate that students in the AAS degree are considered in this opportunity. While it is clear there are processes behind this work, the College does not provide details of a repeatable process including how often the process is reviewed and by whom. Providing more detailed description of the process will move this work from **reacting** to Systematic.

- Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs (3.B.4)

By linking the College's GLOs to the Kansas Core Outcomes and the subsequent annual review of those KGO outcomes by faculty from all 32 institutions in Kansas, Cowley provides strong evidence of the relevancy of its GLO. The local review of its PLO and CLO is less rigorous and has been in effect for a shorter timeframe but still provides a solid framework of a structure that is both relevant and aligned with internal and external stakeholder needs. The College may want to continue to explore gathering community feedback as it continues to move from the **systematic** level of maturity.

- Designing, aligning and delivering cocurricular activities to support learning (3.E.1, 4.B.2)

The range of opportunities for co-curricular activities for students is solid and provides a strong basis from which to grow the alignment with assessment and learning outcomes. While Cowley has a process in place for collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, as well as an annual goal form process for the student clubs and organizations, it is unclear how the Global Learning Outcomes identified are advanced and assessed via the co-curricular activities. The goal form works well to ensure that students are reminded of the GLOs, but it is not clear how the alignment of GLOS to the clubs is determined, measured and assessed. As Cowley moves from its current **systematic** level of maturity, the College may consider further linking these forms with Course Level Assessment and subsequent curriculum design changes that might potentially result from such linkages.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of common learning outcomes (4.B.2)

Cowley's Global Learning Outcomes Team with engagement of faculty and staff is responsible for the selection of assessment tools, methods and instruments to measure the attainment of the Global Learning Outcomes. Cowley has intentionally chosen to assess several of its GLOs through assessments at the department/course level as it moved away from CAAP and Workkeys. Using only course embedded assessment marks a departure from the past, but the narrative fails to explain the rationale for this shift. A greater demonstration of the specific "course-embedded" assessment and a clearer identification of the benchmark targets and how they are being met or not met are needed to ensure that the tools and methods being used to assess learning outcomes are rigorous and useful for providing ongoing improvements in student learning. This would help move Cowley beyond the current **systematic** level.

- Assessing common learning outcomes (4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.4)

A robust, documented assessment process is overseen by a committee of employees, including the Vice-President of Academic Affairs, HLC Accreditation Liaison, Faculty Lead for Learning Outcomes and Department Chairs. Assessment data are collected, analyzed and shared. The recent change to embedded assessments and only in key courses means that there is little if any relevant

data that can and have been used to drive quality improvements in the most recent cycle. The **aligned** process appears to have a solid framework and structure but lacks in details and results due to the recent changes.

1R1 What are the results for determining if students possess the knowledge, skills and abilities that are expected at each degree level? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Focusing on the GLOs for 2013 and then the subsequent 2017-18 time period provides a strong basis of an assessment program that is replicable, at least at that level. Cowley provides a summary of key data related to student knowledge, skills, and abilities. An analysis of the CAAP data indicates that Cowley students are performing at or above the national average in the areas of critical thinking, computational skills, and communication. Results for the computer/technology using the skills assessment manager indicates students do not meet the criteria for success. The College's decision to phase out the CAAP as an assessment tools eliminates one source of external benchmarking and of a replicatable process. Such internal tools inherently make it difficult to benchmark results, especially externally, and this appears to be an ongoing challenge for the College. Program Level outcomes and course level outcomes are missing as well as the suggested connection between GLO, PLO and course outcomes. The maturity level would move beyond the **systematic** if these outcomes, additional information about who is engaged in data collection, and the response to such data sharing were provided.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley uses both institutional trends and national trends to benchmark its work but does not focus on specific targets to guide its work. How Cowley establishes internal targets remains unclear. The recent change to embedded assessments for course-level assessments makes it difficult to identify external benchmarks for setting internal targets, especially in the short term. Other benchmarks provided do not explicitly address GLO; for example, transfer success, while important to track institutionally, is not explicitly tied to GLO measures. While Cowley's assessment is in the beginning stages, a next step that would move the maturity level beyond the **reacting** stage is to use the trends to create internal and external quantitative benchmarks.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Cowley has the beginning of a good plan as demonstrated in the 2017-2018 GLO results table that provides results of assessments over time. However, the College cannot provide a robust interpretation of the results due to the low response rates. In addition, Cowley acknowledges some issues with processes requiring student to complete the work used to assess these measures. While the "use of results" column is helpful, the use of those results to drive improvements is less clearly defined and does not appear to be reported in the assessment grids systematically. Faculty-driven interpretation found in the assessment grid is a strength that reflects how institutional learning outcomes are understood, measured, and could be improved moving forward. Cowley demonstrates a **systematic** level with respect to the use of grids but a **reacting** level for the overall use of data.

1I1 Based on 1R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in

the next one to three years? (4.B.3)

The assessment team appears to be engaged and focused on the making changes. The recent change to imbedded assessments is one example. The plans by programs such as ACES is also a demonstration of this. There, however, appears to be a lack of an over-arching strategy and focus measuring results to drive improvements.

1.2: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities graduates from particular programs are expected to possess. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.B., 3.E. and 4.B. in this section.

1P2 Describe the processes for determining, communicating and ensuring the stated program learning outcomes and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Aligning learning outcomes for programs (e.g., nursing, business administration, elementary teaching, etc.) to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution (3.E.2)

Cowley College is at the **reacting** stage in articulating a process for aligning program learning outcomes to mission and associate degree levels. Full-time faculty, advisory boards, accrediting agencies, and state transfer programs work to align learning outcomes for programs. How do full-time faculty ensure learning outcomes are aligned? How do the advisory boards factor into this? How often do these processes take place? To mature the work in this area beyond reacting, Cowley needs to provide more information about the process for these areas in assuring alignment

- Determining program outcomes (4.B.4)

Program Learning Outcomes are determined by the faculty in consultation with advisory boards, outside accrediting agencies, and the Kansas Board of Regents. The process for determining PLOs is clearly outlined and a timeline is provided. The process, defined as a result of a previous AQIP initiative, appears complete and replicable. This work could be matured beyond the **aligned** stage by including student input and acknowledging the data used in this decision making process.

- Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of the outcomes (4.B.1)

It is unclear how Cowley has been articulating the purpose of the Program Learning Outcomes in the past. Cowley articulates the purpose, content, and level of achievement of the outcomes by posting it to the website and by discussions at academic department meetings. There is no clear indication of how or when the information is articulated specifically to students, staff, or the board of trustees, for example. What happens with the results and how they are intended to be used to drive improvements has been less clear. It is also troubling that the example provided indicates the three program learning outcomes aligned to one course within the program. The new Program Review Process provides some framework for this and can potentially be built upon from a quality assurance standpoint. A clearer process in place for direct articulation is necessary to advance this work beyond the **reacting** stage.

- Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs (3.B.4)

The College provides no clearly defined process for ensuring outcomes remain relevant and aligned. The primary reliance on Advisory Committees is one solid tool, but it lacks comprehensiveness and was not clearly systematized to provide a clear adherence to this standard. Cowley may want to consider consulting with professional organizations, holding conversations with high schools and transfer institutions, or talking to potential employers, to ensure outcomes remain relevant. This process can mature beyond the **systematic** stage by providing more data-driven decision making and student input into the work. The new Program Review Process is a strong step toward providing such assurance.

- Designing, aligning and delivering cocurricular activities to support learning (3.E.1, 4.B.2)

Cowley has a solid co-curricular offering and alignment is documented through the Goals Form required by each club and organization; however, the College's broad definition of co-curricular activities makes it difficult to determine exactly how the activities link to specific learning outcomes. It is more of an intuitive linkage than a direct one. The annual goals form is a process to align with GLO, but stronger evidence of how PLOs are supported and aligned would strengthen evidence. While Cowley has a process in place for collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, it is unclear whether academic and students affairs work closely together to design, align, and deliver these to support learning. It is unclear how the Program Learning Outcomes are advanced and assessed via the co-curricular activities. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of program learning outcomes (4.B.2)

Although program faculty were tasked with choosing assessment tools, it is not clear that a sustainable, repeatable process is in place to select assessment tools and methods at the program level. It is not clear how often faculty review the tool selected and how the validity of the tool is tested over time. There does not appear to be a systematic approach guided or supported by the Institutional Effectiveness office and processes are not described for this department level work. How often are the tools and methods evaluated? If departments are using different tools and methods, is there enough consistency to make comparisons? A clear plan to select and review the assessment tools would move the maturity level beyond the **reacting** level

- Assessing program learning outcomes (4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.4)

Per the Cowley College Procedure for Program Learning Outcomes, the faculty are responsible for assessment according to the established schedule, collecting, analyzing and reporting their findings to the Outcomes Assessment Team. Programs are expected to identify at least three program learning outcomes, and one outcome is reviewed per year per program. Programs may choose to include more than three program learning outcomes, but no information suggests how the calendar would accommodate additional outcomes. More important, no information was provided about the process to use assessment data for program improvement. It is not clear that results are shared at the program level nor broadly shared for evaluation or replicability. Developing responses to these concerns could indicate a maturity level beyond **reacting**.

1R2 What are the results for determining if students possess the knowledge, skills and abilities that are expected in programs? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in

collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Overall levels of deployment of the program assessment processes within the institution (i.e., how many programs are/not assessing program goals)

The College reports limited success with having programs complete the assessment process. Although some justification is provided, Cowley reports an 18% non-compliance rate. It is not clear what systems are in place to help ensure full participation in the future. Additional information about response rates with respect to performance targets would be enhanced by including the sample size, and the College would move beyond the **reacting** stage by articulating a process to ensure full compliance with the assessment process.

- Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley's evidence would be more compelling by including a summary of the program results, in addition to the individual program results. The samples provided varying levels of meaningful data; some examples included external benchmarks. Additional comparative data using internal target references would strengthen the evidence and demonstrate a maturity level beyond the current **systematic**

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

There is little evidence of targets being set or of a process for setting targets. Further, the use of external benchmarks appears to be optionally determined at the individual program level or because of external accreditation standards. Additional comparative data using internal target references would strengthen the evidence and move the maturity beyond the current **reacting**.

- Interpretation of assessment results and insights gained

As a result of individual programs setting or not setting targets or benchmarks, it is challenging to determine if there is an overall process for interpreting results. The new Program Review structure might be moving towards an ongoing systematic process of setting targets and benchmarks and then assessing the results related to them as part of an overall improvement strategy, but there is little in the results presented to suggest this has been the case in the past. Providing an overall summary of data would be helpful. The individual example from biology does indicate that tracking results to yield trend data has been initiated. More programs completing such analysis and sharing results would enhance the maturity beyond the **reacting** level.

112 Based on 1R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.B.3)

The addition of a new software program and the linking of PLO assessment with Program Review have the potential to provide a more systematic approach than has been evident in the past. Cowley seems to be making improvements in the work at the department level but has not yet implemented the oversight of the work at an institutional level. It is hoped that the integration of PLO with the program review process will bring about a better process of assessment throughout the institution. This next step will enhance the maturity level beyond the current **systematic**.

1.3: ACADEMIC PROGRAM DESIGN

Academic Program Design focuses on developing and revising programs to meet stakeholders' needs. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 1.C. and 4.A. in this section.

1P3 Describe the processes for ensuring new and current programs meet the needs of the institution and its diverse stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Identifying student stakeholder groups and determining their educational needs (1.C.1, 1.C.2)

The College analyzes prospective and current student data to provide a limited general student profile-based need assessment in terms of readiness and uses standardized testing to place them. There are co-curricular activities to support various groups as well. The mechanism for linking this data to program development and revisions is unclear. Further, how these needs differentiate and are then assessed and used to align with specific degrees and expected outcomes is absent. There is no mention of how advisors use data to identify at-risk students, nor is any early alert mentioned. While the entry level identification of needs is **systematic** for the student body as a whole, processes are **reacting** and need to be expanded upon. Moving toward a higher maturity level would involve greater attention to the process of how identified student populations stakeholders are met or not met by varied offered services at the College.

- Identifying other key stakeholder groups and determining their needs (1.C.1, 1.C.2)

Limited data are given on how stakeholder needs are determined more broadly. Examples given refer to a program for students over the age 50 and international students. As a result, there is an opportunity for greater connections to other identifiable stakeholder groups and their ongoing needs. It is unclear if Cowley has a systematic process for identifying and supporting other key stakeholder groups. While the detail of the process for using feedback to make new institutional choices is not provided, it does provide an opportunity for Cowley to show how this enrollment data analysis could be repeated to make future adaptations or identify other groups moving forward. A broader reach and systematic approaches would increase the level of maturing beyond **reacting** in this area.

- Developing and improving responsive programming to meet all stakeholders' needs (1.C.1, 1.C.2)

Two strong examples are given that involve retention of students at risk and the embrace of military student needs per the focus of KBOR. Cowley has hired a retention specialist and is working with faculty to develop course modalities and times that better fit student schedules. The focus of the work the College has done on responding the stakeholder needs appears to be limited primarily to student personal improvement and retention and does not seem to be more broadly inclusive of other stakeholders. It would be useful to understand the process Cowley utilizes to develop and improve offerings and services to non-degree seeking students, community members, or other stakeholders. More evidence on creating a repeatable process for providing responsive programs to varied stakeholders beyond the above mentioned examples would be useful and move the College beyond the current **reacting** stage.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess the currency and effectiveness of academic programs

Cowley identifies tools such as Academic Councils, the Kansas Core Outcomes Group, Program and discipline review, and state reporting activities as tools and methods to assess the currency and

effectiveness of academic programs. These are excellent tools, and while there is a process for assessment, there is little evidence of a process for groups selecting tools used in the evaluation process, for determining effectiveness of them or for making sure the tools continue to be useful over time, resulting in a **reacting** stage of maturity.

- Reviewing the viability of courses and programs and changing or discontinuing when necessary (4.A.1)

Cowley's Program Review process, conducted every three years, is described in detail. The College has developed documentation for surveying advisory councils, changing curriculum, changing programs, and discontinuing programs. There are multiple ways in which courses/programs are changed and engage both state, community, and/or college resources to fund the decision-making process for the changes. From faculty and chair involvement to the CAO to the President's Board, stakeholder involvement is clear. Processes are also clearly outlined for steps taken based on the reviews including the handling of issues such as enrollment decline and declining student success. What is less clear is what data are used to determine viability or when changes are necessary and what criteria are used to guide such decisions. Overall, the maturity level is **aligned**.

1R3 What are the results for determining if programs are current and meet the needs of the institution's diverse stakeholders? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)

Varied assessment processes-- Advisory Council Surveys, Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, Student Course Surveys, Community Survey, NLSSI and NLSOL-- have been utilized to provide evidence for initiating changes in the design of academic programs. In addition, the College has added a new software tool for compiling this and other data for use in assessment-related decision making. It appears that Supporting Students Indirect Measures of Student Success was administered 2013, 2014, 2015 – then a 3-year break – now 2019 and presumably 2020 and 2021, but no discussion explains this decision. Response rates are low for some of these assessments and may not be providing enough information to adequately inform the work in this area. The College may wish to explore ways to increase participation in this important work and to progress beyond the current **systematic** level of maturity.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley shared only one internal and one external benchmark for their work in this area; the externally-identified benchmarks such as the NLSSI and NLSOL come with built-in comparison tools. Primary attention for meeting benchmarks is the Advisory Council Surveys. The College, however, does not appear to have engaged in comprehensive goal setting linking these results to specific action related to student learning improvement actions. The new Ally system makes data tracking more consistent but will not provide for external comparisons and benchmarks. Expanding benchmarks will provide much needed information to better guide the work and advance Cowley beyond the **systematic** level of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

There are limited data presented regarding how results are comprehensively interpreted and what insights from the gathering and assessing of data have been achieved. One is left to wonder how these data and the interpretation of the data are used to inform priority budgetary decisions at the program design level and the institutional level. The current maturity level is **reacting**.

1I3 Based on 1R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

A peer review process seems to reflect Cowley commitment to shared governance model at the level of decision-making for program reviews. The role of the Academic Affairs Council in the process is not specified, although it appears to be primary location for such linkages with the structure. Cowley recognizes the need for more analysis and interpretation of its assessments and is creating templates to guide this work and share with others. While the work is responding to past system portfolios, it is evident the College is aware and can continue to mature the work beyond the **systematic**.

1.4: ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUALITY

Academic Program Quality focuses on ensuring quality across all programs, modalities and locations. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.A. and 4.A. in this section.

1P4 Describe the processes for ensuring quality academic programming. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Determining and communicating the preparation required of students for the specific curricula, programs, courses and learning they will pursue (4.A.4)

The College demonstrates an **aligned** stage of maturity. Cowley follows common protocols regarding the communication of student preparation for individual courses and programs through the college website. College policies align with this each other and the identified course placement procedures are communicated to students. Prerequisites for select courses are determined by the faculty or external accrediting agencies and sequential courses have prerequisite requirements for successful completion of the previous level. Syllabi are required to follow a common template which also makes it easier for students to understand the expected preparation and subsequent learning that will take place in courses and programs. While these policies are essential, more detailed information is needed to determine a clear, repeatable process. Also, it is unclear how the information is communicated other than through the website, such as through orientation or advising practices. Academic plans are mentioned but the process for implementing these is not described.

- Evaluating and ensuring program rigor for all modalities, locations, consortia and dual-credit programs (3.A.1, 3.A.3, 4.A.4)

Cowley ensures program rigor across all locations and delivery modes by maintaining the same minimum faculty qualifications for all faculty, utilizing the same course procedure, universal textbook and instructional materials for all sections of a given course, a faculty mentoring program, and faculty evaluation schedule. Dual credit processes are monitored and faculty meet accreditation requirements. While the assessments need to be more robust, the processes the College does have in place are clearly outlined, repeatable and regularly reviewed. demonstrating an **aligned** maturity level.

- Awarding prior learning and transfer credits (4.A.2, 4.A.3)

Transfer policy at Cowley is governed by the State transfer agreement program and thus consistent with state standards that ensures the successful transfer of courses from and to other state institutions. Cowley has invested in learning about the transfer experiences of their students and uses data to keep coursework rigor to the standard accepted by 4 year institutions. Transfer appears to be well established and functioning smoothly with state-level tools and procedures in place to assist and local policies that are up-to-date. The College's recent efforts focusing on prior learning assessment, especially in regards to military credits, provides a clear roadmap for moving forward with improvement in this area. It also provides a future opportunity to align the College with other institutions within the Kansas system through the state-level site being designed for this purpose. The current maturity level is **aligned**.

- Selecting, implementing and maintaining specialized accreditation(s) (4.A.5)

Specialized accreditation pursuit and attainment occur at the department level without evidence of a coordinated process for organizing and gathering information through the Institutional research office or other coordinating body. No data are provided on how these choices are assessed. It is not clear that all specialized accreditations are highlighted on the website and in the academic catalog. To move beyond the **reacting** stage, Cowley may want to develop a process that includes metrics for deciding which specialized accreditation to pursue and to determine if the accreditation continues to be important for the program and the school.

- Assessing the level of outcomes attainment by graduates at all levels (3.A.2, 4.A.6)

Cowley looks at several indicators of success of graduates. First, student performance is measure for the GLO's. Transfer success of students is monitored and reported along with degree completion data. Cowley monitors employment rates of Career and Technical Education program and relies on feedback from the employers of Cowley graduates for additional data. These approaches allow for some external benchmarking in comparison to other peer or state-level institutions. Further, the Accountability and Institutional Measure document captures this and other data for comparison purposes. To mature the work in this area beyond the **systematic** level, the College might benefit from a more comprehensive plan for assessing the level of student learning and student learning outcomes as well as from goal setting and linkages to GLO, PLO, and Course-level assessment. In addition, Cowley could look further into wages and salaries of graduates to determine the impact of their education on economic mobility.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess program rigor across all modalities

The faculty of the given program or discipline are collectively responsible for selecting the assessment instruments and methodology to ensure program rigor across all modalities. The program review process and its measures/benchmarks is the foundation of evidence for assessment of rigor. Processes moving toward alignment may also include and make more explicit those external benchmarks on its graduates/employer data to assess relevance and preparation related to program rigor. Providing more comprehensive descriptions about how the curriculum guides are produced, implemented, and assessed would raise the maturity of this work from the current **systematic** level of maturity.

1R4 What are the results for determining the quality of academic programs? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P4. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared.

These results might include:

- Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)

The College uses primarily indirect measures for assessments. The data related to transfer success, IPEDS, and aggregated advisory council survey results across multiple years provide a strong picture of the program quality. Information about how these data are used to set goals and linked to overall assessment and improvement planning efforts would contribute to moving beyond the **systematic** level.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Although not much additional data were provided, academic program quality is measured and compared with internal and external benchmarks. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

The reviewers did not find a solid connection between the data provided in the results section and the interpretation of the results. For example, the fluctuation of transfer student success was noted in the earlier section, but Cowley did not offer any insights or interpretation of this important consideration. To move beyond **reacting**, Cowley might consider greater reflection on the results.

1I4 Based on 1R4, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley is participating in a statewide initiative to expand opportunities for Credit for Military Service. In addition, the College seeks to improve outcome tracking by modality through a new tool, Tableau. Finally, a new program review cycle should assist Cowley in goal setting and establishing benchmarks and move Cowley beyond the **systematic**.

1.5: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity focuses on ethical practices while pursuing knowledge. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.D. and 2.E. in this section.

1P5 Describe the processes for supporting ethical scholarly practices by students and faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Ensuring freedom of expression and the integrity of research and scholarly practice (2.D., 2.E.1, 2.E.3)

Cowley has developed a set of core values to promote a sense of fairness, citizenship, tolerance and integrity. Faculty expectations are outlined in the negotiated master agreement in the section on Professional Code of Ethic for the Professional Employee. Policies and guidelines ensuring academic freedom for faculty appear complete, clear and well communicated. The College has an Institutional Review Board and procedures (IRB) to provide oversight on the ethical use of research for faculty, staff, and students. The Academic Honesty Policy provides a means of educating the community about academic integrity and the process for this work is clearly defined and repeatable and demonstrates an **aligned** state of maturity.

- Ensuring ethical learning and research practices of students (2.E.2, 2.E.3)

Students are oriented to practices of integrity and supported at the course and institutional level. The Academic Integrity Policy is included in the Student Handbook, and policies and procedures guide students in ethical learning in the classroom, in research writing, and in other activities. Training is incorporated into orientation and coursework. The clearly defined academic code of conduct policy and procedure has been reviewed and updated in a regular fashion, reflecting an **aligned** stage of maturity

- Ensuring ethical teaching and research practices of faculty (2.E.2, 2.E.3)

3-A, 1-I, 1-R, 1-no response

Policies and guidelines ensuring teaching and research appear complete, clear and well communicated. They are included in the Master Agreement for teachers, and an Internal Review Board Procedure is in place. Not included is an ongoing process for training and updating skills and knowledge, which Cowley may wish to consider to move beyond the **aligned** stage of maturity.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to evaluate the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of supporting academic integrity

Cowley describes the tools used to evaluate the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of supporting academic integrity, but no processes for selecting and evaluating the tools are included. In addition, Cowley may wish to consider developing processes and policies to ensure the comprehensive support for academic integrity is employed equitably by all faculty. Addressing these concerns could move Cowley beyond the **systematic** stage.

IR5 What are the results for determining the quality of academic integrity? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P5. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures where appropriate)

Cowley tracks IRB requests and Academic Integrity Violations, and conducts assessment of student experiences through Noel Levitz and a first year experience survey. However, the summary provides limited information rather than a comprehensive overview of major areas of accomplishment or opportunity. To move beyond the **reacting** stage, Cowley may wish to consider a method of identifying key factors to target and to gather assessment over a period of time for the information to suggest patterns.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley demonstrates a **reacting** stage of maturity because of the lack of internal or external benchmarks. Assessment are either too new to establish appropriate baselines or are very specific to the College, so external comparisons are not possible.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Because Cowley has not provided much summary of results, there is also little interpretation and those presented are basic. Although the College tracks IRB requests and Academic Integrity Violations and has identified trends indicating areas for possible improvements, it does not specify

the actions taken beyond “reinforcing” the information shared regarding academic integrity. Many of the assessments are new to Cowley and as the College continues to develop work in this area, the results, analysis, and interpretation will become stronger, leading to more than the current **reacting** stage of maturity.

115 Based on 1R6, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Working on the Academic Integrity Violations has been a strength for the College, but the weakness is this is the only improvement focused upon. Although Cowley has used the data to pinpoint a specific population and is working to implement interventions, such as increased training and communication about the standards, no other improvements are discussed. Cowley intends to focus on policy review and improved tracking mechanism, which should provide a greater ability to use the data to move beyond the systematic.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Based on the information provided by Cowley College, it appears that course outcomes, program reviews, and GLO do not have a pattern or history of strong integration. However, there are pockets of good work: Cowley College has initiated many great programs, policies, and procedures based on the feedback from previous system portfolios including the hiring of a retention specialist, implementing new software to make data collection more consistent, and conducting and participating in more surveys. Closing the assessment loop is not evident. Interpretation of results and insights gained are brief in many sections which is really the primary place for the institution to show how its processes work effectively to make adjustments and inform future practices and its ability to meet benchmarks (internal and external). Next steps to mature the work beyond **systematic** include documentation of key processes and increased partnerships with Institutional Research to guide the assessment work in both academic and student affairs. This will ensure consistency of information and assistance with the summary and interpretation of results that are lacking.

CATEGORY STRATEGIC ISSUES

The review team agreed that on a few strategic issues that appear to prevent Cowley from capitalizing on some of their initiatives and good work. One issues is the failure to identify targets, benchmarks, and comparative data for interpreting results. Cowley collects a great deal of data, but it is not apparent that Cowley uses the data to look for patterns, to explore implications, and to make strategic decisions. The reviewers were also systimed at times for the lack of context for the decisions that were reported and the data provided. The team recommends Cowley shore up consistent sets of data and establish effective processes for interpretation of results that flow from the well-developed and articulate program review process.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

II - Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs

Focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of current and prospective students and other key stakeholders, such as alumni and community partners.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Current and Prospective Student Needs, Retention, Persistence and Completion, Key Stakeholder Needs, Complaint Processes, and Building Collaborations and Partnerships.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

CATEGORY 2: MEETING STUDENT AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

Category 2 focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of current and prospective students and other key stakeholders, such as alumni and community partners.

2.1: CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENT NEED

Current and Prospective Student Need focuses on determining, understanding and meeting the non-academic needs of current and prospective students. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.C. and 3.D in this section.

2P1 Describe the processes for serving the academic and non-academic needs of current and prospective students. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Identifying underprepared and at-risk students, and determining their academic support needs (3.D.1)

The mandatory placement process, coupled with the placement guidelines for reading, writing, and math, provides evidence that Cowley students would be identified at the level of preparation they need to enter a program. IMPACT (TRIO) addresses some specific at-risk populations and provides services that identify and determine their needs. Although Cowley provides clear guidelines about placement into courses, the College process to respond to students is less clear. The level of maturity

is **systematic**.

- Deploying academic support services to help students select and successfully complete courses and programs (3.D.2)

Student retention is a primary goal for Cowley. As such, the College has invested in a Retention Coordinator and has assigned academic advisors. Every student has an advisor, and advising structures support student matriculation processes, keeping students in progression. The process of sending grades and attendance to the Retention Coordinator shows coordinated effort. Tutoring is free and available to all students, coupled with online tutoring services available 24/7. A First Year Experience Course helps prepare students for success and degree completion. More information about the timeline of deployment would be useful or the processes by which the Retention Coordinator gets early warnings on students who are at risk. Rather than the detailed listing of the many efforts to support students, which is clearly a priority, the portfolio would be stronger through the discussion of the process of providing these various services, including how Cowley determines which services are most important to provide. This focus would move Cowley beyond the **systematic** stage.

- Ensuring faculty are available for student inquiry (3.C.5)

The master agreement requires full-time faculty to post eight office hours per week, information which is posted by their office and communicated to students on the syllabi. Adjunct faculty are not required to have set hours but to list availability. Faculty are expected to respond to student emails in 48 hours or less. Providing examples or exploration of other faculty processes that meet availability for varied student population needs would move Cowley toward further maturity (e.g., online office hours, video availability, etc.) beyond the current **systematic**.

- Determining and addressing the learning support needs (tutoring, advising, library, laboratories, research, etc.) of students and faculty (3.D.1, 3.D.3, 3.D.4, 3.D.5)

Cowley provides a wide range of services to students, including tutoring, advising, and library resources. Tutoring services are a strength with faculty involved in the process to identify subjects and courses for tutoring; online tutoring is available to meet needs outside of regular campus hours. Adoption of an early alert system has provided a reporting system, but it is not clear who manages that process and how it is integrated with other support services (e.g., the work of the Retention Coordinator). The writing lab addition is another way in which student needs are addressed. Identifying processes as to who is recommended to use these services is still needed. The course, Introduction to Undergraduate Research, assists science scholarship students. The response does not indicate that faculty have access to a Center for Teaching and Learning. With shifting populations and the changing nature of the student population, faculty benefit from support, too. Overall, although Cowley provides many services, but It is not clear how the College determines the support students need through the collection and analysis of data, demonstrating a **reacting** level.

- Determining new student groups to target for educational offerings and services

Cowley does not clearly articulate a repeatable process to gather meaningful data, follow the data trends, and target the educational offerings and services to meet new student populations. For example, what was the rationale and process for choosing “a data sort of existing students” that links the data to the additional opportunities provided (e.g., international students or veterans). How did the data sort inform what kinds of offerings would be needed, how they were gathered, how presented

for budgetary support, etc. Cowley relies on high school partners, statewide initiatives, and current data to determine new student populations. Once these populations are identified, such as returning adult students or international students, it is not clear what process Cowley implements to address these needs. For these reasons, Cowley demonstrates a **reacting** stage.

- Meeting changing student needs

Cowley cites a new strategic plan to assist in meeting changing student needs. The focus appears to be cultural diversity, support for international students, and improved accessibility to be compliant. It is not clear whether other changing student needs may have been considered, nor is it easy to discern the process that determined these were the most important student groups to respond to. The process does not include membership of the team, how often/when they meet, or what are the team's goals or benchmarks. As colleges need to consider that the students we serve will continue to change, and this change may be accelerated, a clear process would move the College beyond the **reacting** stage.

- Identifying and supporting student subgroups with distinctive needs (e.g., seniors, commuters, distance learners, military veterans) (3.D.1)

While Cowley has identified three student populations with unique needs- international students, military students and students with disabilities- and is working to support them, it is unclear how they were identified and if their needs are being effectively met by the planned interventions. For example, how did Cowley identify that there was a need for an accessibility plan for the distance learner? A repeatable process for identification is important as student populations and needs change and would help Cowley move beyond the **reacting** stage.

- Deploying non-academic support services to help students be successful (3.D.2)

Cowley is to be commended for offering wrap-around services, outside of academic support, to holistically care for students and help them be successful, such as Health Services, Student Life Counselor (mental health) and Technology Assistance; some good deployment processes are in place, such as the ticketing system. However, it is unclear if these services are effectively meeting student needs and impacting success rates. The description includes certain actions but not a process that is clear and replicable for these services. The overall rating is **emerging systematic**, with more work to be done.

- Ensuring staff members who provide non-academic student support services are qualified, trained and supported (3.C.6)

Cowley hiring process starts with the Director of Human Resources providing established qualifying hiring criteria, which are listed with each job description posting. Each Cowley job description articulates the required knowledge, skills, education and experience qualified candidates must possess before they may be considered to provide non-academic support to students. The persons hired are trained through departmental on-boarding and supported through departmental budgets for continuing education. All-College professional days support persons further. The process described indicates the inclusion of most staff but does not suggest why the process might be different for some staff, suggesting a **systematic** level of maturity.

- Communicating the availability of non-academic support services (3.D.2)

Students could potentially learn of the availability of non-academic support services through multiple

points of contact. Cowley utilizes various vehicles, such as dorm meetings, First Year Experience, academic advisors, New Student Orientation, Student Life Counselor, etc., to inform students about the non-academic support services the College offers. Although this is good start, there is no evidence provided that Cowley uses an established cohesive, consistent communication plan. No information is provided that suggests current efforts are assessed for effectiveness or improvement. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess student needs

NLSSI is the primary tool used to assess student needs. It is managed by the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness Office, but it is not clear how often the instrument is used at Cowley or the process for adding/using additional select institutional questions to gather institution-specific data. Focused surveys using Survey Monkey to students are mentioned as part of its assessment process, but no examples are given as to who initiates them and why. The portfolio indicates the tools used, not the process for choosing the tools, thus reflecting a **reacting** level of maturity.

- Assessing the degree to which student needs are met

Cowley relies on student surveys, a gap analysis of NLSSI, and usage reports. These are collected by the Accountability and Institutional Measure document (AIM) and reviewed and analyzed by the appropriate director or administrator. The Accountability and Institutional Measures document is a readily accessible picture of where and how student needs are met across the institution. Moving toward alignment from **systematic** may involve more explicit explanation of the processes used to gather and report the basis for data included within AIM. For example, DFWs vary widely by discipline and aggregate data, while useful, may not fully report the gaps that exists in particular areas needing improvement.

2R1 What are the results for determining if current and prospective students' needs are being met? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley demonstrates a **systematic** level of maturity in the summary of results. Although the Systems Portfolio indicates overall student satisfaction with core services, given Cowley's stated desire to address new student group needs, weak data reporting supports the efficacy of these targeted efforts of those students participating and reported within NLSSI. While Cowley employs a variety of reliable tools to collect data, it is unclear how usage reports correlate to the effectiveness of the tool(s) and the degree to which they serve students' needs.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

The process of using internal targets determined by a three year average is beneficial, and the results provide trend data for Cowley. Cowley appears to benchmark effectively against external targets; such as NLSSI and TRIO (U.S. DOE); however, internal benchmarks appear to be quantity-based and it is unclear how this information is utilized to inform service improvement. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

The analysis of usage reports appears to be the primary way that Cowley measures campus service success; the provided rationale for lower numbers appears to be speculative and not informed from higher level data. For example, Cowley mentions that the library services usage may have declined because fewer students are using the internet and better internet access is available through the dorms. If this is the only interpretation possible, the College may wish to consider other reasons students may benefit from library usage and how these reasons can be shared with students.

2I1 Based on 2R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Improvements are driven by student and faculty suggestions. There are some promising improvements being made that directly serve student needs. When Cowley strengthens its processes for data collection and utilizes data to drive improvement decisions, the capacity for maturity will continue to grow and serve Cowley's students effectively

2.2: RETENTION, PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION

Retention, Persistence and Completion focuses on the approach to collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion to stakeholders for decision making. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 4.C. in this section.

2P2 Describe the processes for collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Collecting student retention, persistence and completion data (4.C.2, 4.C.4)

Data are being collected that standardizes student enrollment periods for degree and non-degree seeking students on campus. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness maintains primary responsibility for student retention, persistence and data collection. First time, full-time cohorts with fall- to- fall and fall- to- spring persistence and retention data are collected. KBOR provides a means of tracking student persistence at state colleges. Less clear is the process with respect to how this data are shared, with whom, and how the College uses these data. The same questions apply for the retention data collected on developmental courses and successive courses, such as English composition. A clearer process would help Cowley mature beyond the current **systematic**.

- Determining targets for student retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1, 4.C.4)

Targets for student retention and completion are established by the enrollment management office. The institution follows guidelines from the Kansas Board of Regents. It does not appear how/what are the role of faculty in this process. Targets are set by three-year averages or based on IPEDS. The maturity level is **aligned**.

- Analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion

Cowley has a plan for future analysis but plan does not “close the loop” on how deficiencies are addressed by faculty and if any connection to failure to achieve student learning outcomes are part of the conversation. The conversation appears to occur with enrollment management, not academic affairs. The goals listed have a rationale and a description. It is evident that the collected data will be internally measured against a three year running history. What is not clear in each case is how the

process of collecting outcome data leads to analysis and consequential budgetary decisions that will aid meeting those targets. For example, an international student coordinator position was created and hired, but there is no discussion of what targets have been set for student success of this population. The maturity level is **reacting**.

- Meeting targets for retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1)

Targets are established by the Kansas Board of Regents, but it is not clear who, other than the Director of Enrollment Management, is involved in the process that influences results and analysis. Targets have been met with mixed results. In addition, as a result of some errors discovered in the reporting (Cowley Community College Performance Report AY 2017), the College is reexamining some of the indicators and have updated the Strategic Plan accordingly. A clear process could help by having many people checking data and conclusions. The maturity level is **reacting**.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess retention, persistence and completion (4.C.4)

It is clear who selects the tools and determines the methods for assessment, but a defined process is not evident and rationale for the selected tools, methods, and instruments for assessment is missing. The process for meeting targets is not described. The narrative highlights the inclusion of improving persistence, retention and completion rates, but the process is not articulated, suggesting a **reacting** level of maturity.

2R2 What are the results for student retention, persistence and completion? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley is to be commended for the detailed tables provided. Overall, Cowley students complete, persist, or are retained at the approved rate for five of the six targets. The National Community College benchmark Project indicates completion rates above peer institutions. The student success index shows Cowley is above the community college mean for completion rates at 100%, 150% and 200%. It is evident that Cowley has been collecting and reporting student retention, persistence and completion consistently over time, reflecting an **aligned** level of maturity.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley meets or exceeds the peer groups for retention, and such comparisons are determined through KBOR and/or the NCCBP. Given Cowley's success, the College may wish to consider re-evaluation of its benchmark standards from which goals could be set for continuous quality improvement. The maturity level is **aligned**.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Result interpretation focuses solely upon the unmet KBOR Performance agreement target in relation to a decrease in number of degrees awarded. The one target not achieved—the number of degrees awarded—reflects the decrease in the number of student enrollments, a factor experienced by many

community colleges when the economy is strong. Cowley could improve overall beyond its current **systematic** level by giving more attention to data analysis and insights gained in the areas where targets have been met and address opportunities for growth in those areas that may have future increased impact.

2I2Based on 2R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.C.3)

Understanding Cowley student subgroup populations and putting processes in place to track their needs will be significant for future planning. It may be helpful to see which learning outcomes are not being achieved and improving student retention in developmental education courses. Cowley plans to implement a new data analytic software for improved data analysis, and refine the retention module and associated processes, to positively impact student retention. This should help to further advance the work in this area.

2.3: KEY STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

Key Stakeholder Needs focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of key stakeholder groups, including alumni and community partners.

2P3 Describe the processes for serving the needs of key external stakeholder groups. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Determining key external stakeholder groups (e.g., alumni, employers, community)

Reflecting a **reacting** level, no clear process is provided. The president and administrators build and sustain relationships, but details lack in terms of the process for determining who external stakeholders are, how these might change, and how to identify these groups. Further delineation of the process used by the president, the Board, department chairs, etc. to guide stakeholder, agency or donor relationships would strengthen the overall mission leading to systematic.

- Determining new stakeholders to target for services or partnership

The College has realigned an Associate VP position to address new stakeholder needs to increase growth in Workforce and Community Education. There is an established consultative process available to new stakeholders to address training needs. While Foresight 2020 has measures for increases in higher education attainment and improving economic alignment, it is unclear how Cowley is creating a process for itself that addresses some of these potential new targeted/stakeholder groups. The College may wish to consider how it uses indicators of new growth and new job opportunities. A clear process might include the kinds of state and national reports consulted, participation on workforce development teams, connections with major industries, and service by administrators, faculty and staff on local, state, and national boards. These actions could move the College beyond its current **reacting** state.

- Meeting the changing needs of key stakeholders

The College uses feedback from multiple groups to make adjustments that meet current and changing needs. The advisory council structure is the primary vehicle that systematically and annually addresses changing program needs. Evidence of a stakeholder survey from October 10, 2017 was presented; however, there was no indication of to whom it was administered nor were there any results. A consideration for maturity improvement beyond the current **systematic** would address

how the data from these varied sources improve responsiveness to student and other populations.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess key stakeholder needs

Individual areas of the College determine the tools they need to meet their responsibilities. Surveys appear to be the preferred tool, but the description provided does not explain how the survey, or any tool, is determined to be the most useful method, nor is there mention as to whom makes the determination. It is not clear if there is a process for reviewing the choice of tool. These considerations could move the College beyond the current **reacting** stage.

- Assessing the degree to which key stakeholder needs are met

Cowley relies heavily on surveys to assess whether stakeholder needs are met. The community survey is the principal instrument that addresses and gathers data from a wide variety of stakeholders. It may be of interest to reflect whether or not the current community survey is adequately weighted to obtain information in relation to all aspects of the tripartite mission statement, some attention to holism as found in the vision, and further attention and balance given to values and strategic themes. The survey instrument has value, but further alignment with the language and emphases found in the Mission Statement and Commitments could lead to stronger feedback. A similar observation could be made in relation to the Employee survey. It is not clear how useful information is gathered, distributed, and reviewed, nor is it clear how the information is used and by whom. The maturity level is **reacting**.

2R3 What are the results for determining if key stakeholder needs are being met? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Community surveys are distributed every three years. 95 persons completed the survey, but it is not clear how many surveys were distributed, so it is not possible to determine the meaningfulness of the results. Survey results demonstrate areas of weakness related to business, industry and community satisfaction, and engagement. Other numbers show enrollment numbers (Golden Tigers) decreasing and below a target. The processes for collecting and assessing results provide a solid framework for comparative data and would lead to beyond the current **reacting** level.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley provided a few comparisons in other sections but did not provide targets or benchmarks in this section, indicating a **reacting** level of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

The information provided is limited. Interpretation is focused solely on single areas and not necessarily evaluating continuous quality improvement in areas where results show favorable or expected results. Reporting just the results does not provide the level of interpretation that is helpful. For example, the reduction in the number of Golden Tiger enrollments is attributed to the retirement of a position, but no information is provided for a change in the future. Robust interpretation helps

colleges with strategic planning and goal setting, so Cowley may wish to revisit some of these areas to move beyond the **systematic**.

2I3 Based on 2R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Process improvements highlight two key hire areas that will have the most impact on addressing key stakeholder needs: the alumni relations position and the revised job description for the AVP of Workforce and Community education position. An alumni database project sounds like a good investment, but it is not clear how this improvement was determined. Under direction from the KBOR, Cowley will also focus on community and workforce development, as well as adult learners. Cowley's new AVP of Workforce and Community Education will lead these efforts.

2.4: COMPLAINT PROCESSES

Complaint Processes focuses on collecting, analyzing and responding to complaints from students or key stakeholder groups.

2P4 Describe the processes for collecting, analyzing and responding to complaints from students and stakeholder groups. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Collecting complaint information from students

The institutional policy 404 addresses a clearly defined approach for handling student grievances that is coupled with steps outlined in SDT 010. Other helpful resources exist to aid student awareness about how to address their complaints including handbooks and even an online feedback system, "Tell it to the President." Cowley's "Right to Know Page" guides students to the appropriate office with complaints. Grievance processes are outlined in the College catalog, student handbook, and additional publications. Online students have an additional mechanism for filing complaints that follow a national policy. While the policies are provided, the process within the student handbook is not easily found. A formal process for how these are handled may be helpful. The level of maturity is **aligned**.

- Collecting complaint information from other key stakeholders

Cowley relies on two primary processes for collecting complaints from external stakeholders – external surveys routed to departments and the "Tell it to the President" link. While the Portfolio states that varied offices have unique processes and this is noted with examples of appeals in the result section later, some schematic showing the integrity of the varied complaint processes would strengthen the maturity position for addressing such stakeholder concerns beyond the current **systematic**. It is also not clear how these complaints are recorded and what timeline exists for responding to these complaints. It is not clear what the final resolution documentation means and if there is a process for determining patterns.

- Learning from complaint information and determining actions

While each department is responsible for tracking and analyzing complaints, Cowley's position on learning from them would be strengthened and move beyond the current **reacting** stage if a more uniform tracking and review process existed, allowing Cowley to identify patterns across divisions to ensure that all complaints are addressed uniformly with intent to learn from them. Other

stakeholders use the same "Tell it to the President" form. It is not clear how these are recorded and if there is a timeline for responding to these complaints.

- Communicating actions to students and other key stakeholders

Cowley takes a proactive stance that gives direct responsibility of communicating actions to the students by the department through which the complaint was reported. Multiple forms of communication include phone calls, emails, and letters. With this autonomy, however, it is not known if a tracking or reporting process exists to collect what is communicated to these students. It is not clear if there is any appeals process built in. The information provided is general and does not indicate a systematic and repeatable process, resulting in a **reacting** level of maturity.

>Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to evaluate complaint resolution

The "Tell it to the President" form was chosen by an AQIP committee, but it is not clear what else was considered or what this form/method may have replaced. It is not clear if this process is reviewed for effectiveness or how effectiveness would be determined. The maturity level is **reacting**.

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley provides some trend tables for key offices including business, housing, and financial aid appeals. The College also provides charts of the various complaints to the various offices, although it appears that there may be some overlap. The summary does not include the average time to respond to a complaint or provide indications of how these complaints were shared. As noted earlier, these are areas of opportunities that could move the College beyond its current **systematic** level of maturity.

2R4 What are the results for student and key stakeholder complaints? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P4. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

The AIM document is foundational for Cowley's tracking system. Cowley utilizes internal data averages for comparison on the majority of these measures; however, no external benchmarks are used. The College may wish to consider a cohort among the local community colleges when it comes to complaints about the food, residence halls, and so forth. Three-year averages are used; however, it is not clear if these averages led to the College proactively trying to reach a goal of very few complaints. The use of internal targets reflects a **systematic** level of maturity, but the lack of external benchmarks indicates a **reacting** level.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Cowley provides examples of how the interpretation of the data has provided insight for change. Examples provided included changing the processes for communicating withdrawal dates when students complained of missing the dates and improvements to food services. However, there is no mention in this section of interpreting results related to academic complaint processes which is an important area of opportunity, given the purpose and mission of the College. The maturity level

is **systematic**.

2I4 Based on 2R4, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Based on the complaint data analysis, Cowley plans to review and revise the policies related to enrollment and billing as this was the source of concern for a high number of appeals. Additionally, the College plans to add further structure to the informal complaint process in order to ensure that the loop is being consistently closed with the complainant. Other improvements include collaboration between Academic Affairs and the Business Office in response to an increase in appeals due to scheduling and enrollment.

2.5: BUILDING COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Building Collaborations and Partnerships focuses on aligning, building and determining the effectiveness of collaborations and partnerships to further the mission of the institution.

2P5 Describe the processes for managing collaborations and partnerships to further the mission of the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Selecting partners for collaboration (e.g., other educational institutions, civic organizations, businesses)

Cowley's selection of partners for collaboration is very informal in nature. When a partnership opportunity arises, Cowley applies four criteria to ensure alignment with the mission and determine feasibility. Transfer partnerships are determined based on data and proximity with Wichita State University, serving as the main transfer institution. Outreach to civic organizations, industry, and businesses do not appear to be of priority, but as the College considers changing needs in the community, it may wish to develop a clear process for initiating these relationships that could move the College beyond its current **systematic** level.

- Building and maintaining relationships with partners

The College indicates a robust and varied approach to being engaged in the community, including hosting civic meetings on campus, service on boards, and volunteerism of the students. Various methods of communicating with partners are employed. However, Cowley failed to clearly outline the process for building and maintaining these relationships. The informal approach does not allow the College to consider what is working well, what is not, and to consider how to use resources more effectively. A process plan can help Cowley be more strategic and move beyond the current **reacting** stage.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess partnership effectiveness

Cowley utilizes quantitative reports, such as transfer reports, enrollment data, new business partnership numbers, training course enrollment data, and surveys to assess partnership effectiveness. While it is unclear how these tools and methods were originally selected and no process describes routine evaluation of the effectiveness of these tools and approaches, Cowley acknowledges the need to improve effectiveness measures for the College beyond its current **reacting** stage.

- Evaluating the degree to which collaborations and partnerships are effective

A variety of surveys is used to gather data. The primary data point appears to be the number of people attending an event, enrolling, etc. While quantitative data is a key indicator, it is not the sole measure of effectiveness. Cowley may see more meaningful increases in partnerships if the College is able to systematically assess and analyze other variables. Doing so could help the College move beyond its current **reacting** stage.

2R5 What are the results for determining the effectiveness of aligning and building collaborations and partnerships? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P5. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Summary data include volunteer hours, number of campus visits, and community satisfaction. Results show trending data for community satisfaction, educational impact, and business-workforce efficacy. Goal Measure 10 on Community Service and Partnership in the AIM document demonstrates improvements for the institution. Goal Measure number 9 on student recruitment in the AIM document illustrates department specific recruitment becoming more effective. Community survey results have shown the College to be effective in this area; external stakeholders and advisory committee members are positive about their relationship with the College. It is not clear how the results are reviewed and utilized. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley utilizes internal data averages for comparison for these measures, and has not identified any external benchmarks in this arena. It remains unclear how Cowley sets internal partnership effectiveness targets. The College may wish to consider how non-competitive community colleges in Kansas compare and use these colleges for benchmarks. Given that community workforce needs can be improved, the College may wish to review its processes to improve the results. The current approaches suggest a **reacting** level.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Cowley has determined that surveys may be administered too frequently, but few other insights were provided. The College may wish to revisit the process by which it chooses tools. The College may also wish to consider how it engages the various communities. Broadening the scope of the processes for assessing partnership effectiveness, establishing benchmarks that meet, exceed, or strategically lead the state of Kansas community colleges to meet its 10 year strategic agenda (Foresight 2020) or beyond would reflect growth in meeting local and state partner needs in higher education, economic alignment, and further contribute to higher education excellence. These suggestions could help Cowley move beyond the current **reacting** stage.

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Cowley plans to streamline its surveying tools and methodology to improve data collection effectiveness and avoid survey participant fatigue. The coordination of surveys by the Institutional Effectiveness office will be a strong opportunity to integrate and evaluate survey data across the institution and move it toward great alignment by making connections across divisions. Leadership changes and new focus in the CEP schools and WCE programs seem promising. Cowley's Golden

Tigers will see additional health and wellness offerings per the feedback to the College. Due to increases in dual credit partnerships and enrollments, Cowley is planning to allocate additional personnel efforts to this program. Finally, the newly designed position of AVP of Workforce and Community Education will focus on business and community relationships and ensuring alignment with Cowley's mission.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Cowley is an established, recognized, and valued partner in the service of meeting educational, community, and business partner needs. With its history as an AQIP institution, it has the knowledge to create even stronger repeatable processes that align the institution to meet these stakeholder needs and stand above other community colleges in leading the state of Kansas to meet its overall strategic initiatives moving forward. The College needs to demonstrate how it can establish goals, targets, and/or benchmarks that will provide long-term growth and stability. Written, established processes that are repeatable and reviewed periodically will strengthen the work in this area.

CATEGORY STRATEGIC ISSUES

The review team noted some consistent patterns that suggest strategic issues that Cowley may wish to address. These include the coordination of stronger, more uniform processes to evaluate and share information regarding partnership effectiveness and consider complaint concerns across the institutional units. Continuing to establish data-driven processes will allow Cowley to more uniformly research and evaluate changing student needs. Stronger processes to identify student sub-population needs across campus and evaluate present and future adjustments in services to these students will be an opportunity for Cowley to move toward **alignment**.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

III - Valuing Employees

Explores the institution's commitment to the hiring, development, and evaluation of faculty, staff and administrators.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Hiring, Evaluation and Recognition and Development.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

CATEGORY 3: VALUING EMPLOYEES

Category 3 explores the institution's commitment to the hiring, development and evaluation of faculty, staff and administrators.

3.1: HIRING

Hiring focuses on the acquisition of appropriately qualified/credentialed faculty, staff and administrators to ensure that effective, high-quality programs and student support services are provided. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 3.C. in this section.

3P1 Describe the process for hiring faculty, staff and administrators. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Recruiting, hiring and orienting processes that result in staff and administrators who possess the required qualification, skills and values (3.C.6)

Cowley has in place clear policies and systematic recruiting, hiring, and orientation processes that include coordination of related activities by the Human Resources department and the individual hiring area. There are general orientations for all new employees, based on the Employee Handbook, conducted by Human Resources. Additionally, there are area-specific orientations based on position and/or constituency group, such as New Faculty Orientation. The work is repeatable and coordinated across campus. Cowley may wish to consider how these processes are assessed to determine that the hiring pool is robust and the all-employee orientation session meets the needs of the College and the employee. These changes could contribute to moving beyond the **systematic** level.

- Developing and meeting academic credentialing standards for faculty, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortia programs (3.C.1, 3.C.2)

Cowley demonstrates a process for developing and meeting academic credentialing standards for all faculty. These processes are governed by policies in the negotiated master agreement, the Procedure EMP007 and EMP008. Adjuncts, dual credit, and online instructors must meet the same qualifications. Faculty credentialing guidelines are in place, in keeping with both KBOR and HLC requirements. Tested experience and a schedule for how to meet minimum degree qualifications are clearly outlined. Cowley may wish to consider a regular review schedule to determine patterns of concern or improvement.

Cowley has developed credentialing standards for faculty which reflect the needs of the College and the individual departments that include master's degrees, bachelors, and specific experience depending on the discipline. A rubric guides the adherence to these standards. Cowley indicates that each area makes changes in the rubric depending on the needs of the area but does not mention a regular cycle of evaluation at the College or department level.

EMP007 clearly defines the scope, definition, and procedure for hiring qualified faculty per program need. These procedures also apply to dual credit faculty. A rubric documents each faculty member's credentials with a clear process for continuing education in place if for some reason the preferred minimum is not met (i.e., 6 credit hours minimum of study/year). The overall maturity level is **aligned**.

- Ensuring the institution has sufficient numbers of faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom programs and activities (3.C.1)

Course enrollment patterns appear to be the primary mechanism to determine if the institution has sufficient faculty. Full-time faculty vacancies are opportunities to determine whether to refill the line or to transfer it to another department. No mention is made of a review of release time, special assignments, sabbaticals, or administrative duties that may impinge on the instructional hours within a department. Program review also provides an opportunity to address hiring shortfalls with regard to instructional programs; however, it does not appear that there is a data-driven mechanism in place for systematically reviewing if there are sufficient faculty to carry out all expected faculty duties and responsibilities outside of the classroom. Additionally, a detailed, repeatable process with particular benchmarks does not appear to be in place, which Cowley may wish to consider for the future as it moves beyond its current **systematic** level.

- Ensuring the acquisition of sufficient numbers of staff to provide student support services

Cowley's process for determining sufficient staff does not appear comprehensive and repeatable, suggesting a **reacting** level of maturity. Although the budget prompts discussion of staffing needs, no comprehensive metrics to determine if staff are sufficient is described. While an annual needs analysis by the administrator over support services is reported, it is unclear how Cowley continuously identifies the needs of its changing student populations, and subsequently, how it assesses the efficacy of the student support services that the College provides. It would be helpful to understand the metric that determines when more tutors, library staff, or advisors are needed.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

Cowley indicates that HR Office tracks data related to the processes of recruiting and hiring. The time

between posting a position and hiring appears to be the primary metric tracked. Another measure listed is to track method of job listing in relation to ROI; however, it is hard to determine the means in which return on investment is scored – qualified candidates, diverse qualified candidates, successful candidates who have earned tenure (faculty), etc. There is also mention of other measures, such as retirement data and employee survey on hiring and training; however, it is not indicated how this is part of a regular coordinated process. Effective May 2019, new tools, such as PAYCOM, are being implemented with hopes for maturity beyond **reacting** of this area in the future.

3R1 What are the results for determining if recruitment, hiring and orienting practices ensure effective provision for programs and services? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 3P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley has clearly identified employee dissatisfaction and deficiencies in its recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes via the 2017 Noel-Levitz employee satisfaction survey and the follow-up Cowley Communication Survey, which was administered in December 2018. Through the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected from these surveys, Cowley has obtained useful information to inform their work on the related strategic initiatives established to address these issues and move beyond the **systematic**.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley provides information that demonstrates improvement between the 2016 and the 2018 NLCESS with respect to processes related to selection, orientation and training of new employees. However, it does not appear that specific targets were set, and no peer gap for this period was provided, resulting in a **reacting** level.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Reacting

Cowley indicates that hiring processes are within range when compared to other institutions, but satisfaction with new employee orientation remains low. No interpretation or insights about these facts are provided. A more robust interpretation is needed to progress this work beyond the current **reacting**. As Cowley works to improve satisfaction, understanding the specific concerns of employees could be an important part of the process. Maturity will, and satisfaction may, increase if Cowley considers setting its own benchmarks for improvement areas and not simply rely upon its peer institutions for setting the satisfaction bar.

3I1 Based on 3R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley has hired a new Director of Human Resources and established a strategic planning goal to develop and maintain onboarding processes and training that increase employee confidence and competence. The Paycom tool should provide better tracking of hiring and training processes. The work related to this goal will help to increase the maturity level of this area in the future.

3.2: EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION

Evaluation and Recognition focuses on the assessment and recognition of faculty, staff and administrators' contributions to the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 3.C. within this section.

3P2 Describe the processes that assess and recognize faculty, staff and administrators' contributions to the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Designing performance evaluation systems for all employees

Policy 114 requires all full-time employees be evaluated. Faculty evaluations are determined by the master agreement, and the frequency depends upon length of service and tenure status. Evaluations include student feedback. All other staff are evaluated yearly through a annual performance appraisal that includes staff and supervisor input. The process was recently updated to include a focus on continued improvement, professional development goals, and the use of Cowley's core values as section headers. While these improvements are recent, they are clear and repeatable.

It is not clear how these evaluations are used to reward excellent results or to provide improvement. For example, no information was provided about the process for helping an employee who does not meet standards. The process for a staff member who does not agree with the evaluation lacked details other than it will be reviewed. Additionally, the evaluation processes for adjunct faculty and part-time staff were not addressed here. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Soliciting input from and communicating expectations to faculty, staff and administrators

A clear, regular process is in place for the communication of the review process to faculty, staff, and administrators via College policy and the Human Resources Office. Additionally, all faculty, staff, and administrators provide input into the annual evaluation process. The process includes a meeting to discuss the performance appraisal and goals for the upcoming year. However, other than the job description and the annual meeting, it is not clear how expectations are conveyed. More avenues for input including forums and survey would mature the work beyond the **systematic** in this area. As previously noted, communication has been identified as an area of improvement for the College. Additionally, the evaluation cycle of the policies and processes themselves does not appear to follow a discernible pattern.

- Aligning the evaluation system with institutional objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services

Cowley's evaluation system clearly incorporates Cowley's Core Values and is aligned with instructional and non-instructional services. While the non-faculty employees address their professional development goals annually, faculty create individual job targets that make explicit their individual goals that address teaching, service, and core values in alignment with the College's mission, vision and strategic plan. This is a novel reflective faculty exercise and commendable. The level overall is **systematic**.

- Utilizing established institutional policies and procedures to regularly evaluate all faculty, staff and administrators (3.C.3)

Cowley has established policies and procedures to regularly evaluate faculty, staff, and administrators. Both full-time and part-time faculty in all modalities are evaluated at regular

intervals. In-class and online observations are completed and students complete an evaluation of instruction at the end of each course. Full-time and adjunct faculty evaluation processes are clearly stipulated in the master agreement and Policy 279 Adjunct Instructor Classroom Assessment respectively. The master agreement is reviewed on a regular schedule; however, Policy 279 was last revised in 2008. Similarly, as articulated in Policy 114, annual performance appraisals are in place for all full-time staff and administrators; however, this policy was last reviewed in 2012. Therefore, Cowley may see greater results related to effective evaluation by reviewing and revising College policies and procedures on a regular basis. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Establishing employee recognition, compensation and benefit systems to promote retention and high performance

The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan emphasizes valuing people. Part of this Strategic Initiative is the development of the MORALE (Motivating Others by Respecting Accepting Listening and Empowering) team which is planning special recognition events. Current recognition awards include those for retirements, years of service, teaching excellence, etc. It is not clear if these awards are assessed or if they effectively support and contribute to the achievement of Cowley's retention and performance excellence goals.

The processes to determine compensation and benefits for faculty are clearly articulated in the master agreement; however, this level of detail has not been provided for non-faculty. Moving toward further maturity beyond **reacting** may include providing a picture of how these structures are evaluated for effectiveness and what actions are taken to support continuous quality improvement.

- Promoting employee satisfaction and engagement

Cowley is working to promote and improve employee satisfaction through improved communications as articulated in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, Institutional Priority 3, Goal 3.1, Strategic Initiative 3.1a: Develop a process for increasing internal communications. Communication was identified as a key obstacle to employee satisfaction through the NLCESS and Communication Surveys. The newly formed communication team has been tasked with establishing a new intranet site to facilitate internal communication and information sharing.

The Shared Governance Strategic Leadership Team released *Cowley College Shared Governance: A Guide to Communication and the Decision-Making Process* in Spring 2019. Cowley indicates that participation in shared governance is the primary vehicle for promoting employee engagement. This document is the result of Strategic Initiative 6.1a: Develop a shared governance structure that reflects best practice. The Shared Governance Team includes an administrative council member, representative from each campus location, at least two faculty members, and at least two staff members who tend to the culture at Cowley. The team would support best practices that would include oversight for the noted concern area of communication across the College. It is unclear if the team has been formed and how the efficacy of the team, document and related processes will be assessed. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

Cowley identifies three different tools used for tracking employee outcomes and satisfaction: the NLCESS, turnover rates, and years of service awards; however, the College does not describe the process of using these tools, including the selection and implementation timeline, how often they are conducted or plan to be conducted, and who is charged with implementing them and reviewing their

effectiveness. By articulating a more descriptive process for identifying which measures are addressed after the data is collected and analyzed may help Cowley advance their improvement efforts in this area beyond the current **systematic**.

3R2 What are the results for determining if evaluation processes assess employees' contributions to the institution? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 3P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley provides a summary of one of the surveys used, the NLCESS, which reflects a gap score, highlighting that Cowley may not consistently follow clear processes for orienting, training, or recognizing employees. The only other information provided was a years of service award table for the past three years. While the number of awards given is tallied, there is no reference as to how this is used to inform improvements and to positively affect employees' sense of value. The maturity level is **reacting**.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley notes that the College's NLCESS results remain below their comparison peer group; however, when comparing to their internal trend data, the College has realized some improvement, albeit less than their established goal. Overall, there appears to be little analysis of the comparative years, given the detail of the survey instrument. Additionally, it is unclear how the internal target was set, which representative group is evaluating this 2018 survey data and making recommendations for improvements, and if Cowley is exercising a holistic data analysis or only focusing on those areas defined by out-of-range GAP scores. Addressing these concerns could move Cowley beyond the **reacting** stage.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Cowley notes that the College has experienced a significant change in administration and a new student information system, which the College correlates qualitatively to a decrease in employee satisfaction. Leadership changes do happen, but AQIP institutions have effective and repeatable processes in place to provide the stability to weather the change in most cases. Due to the very low survey response rate, it is unclear if Cowley had a statistically valid sample size to analyze and interpret. However, based on the limited information, they determined that employee training and recognition needed to be addressed, and subsequently targeted initiatives were incorporated into the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan to do so. Additionally, in an effort to increase survey participation, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will begin overseeing the administration process. These changes would help Cowley achieve more than a **reacting** stage.

3I2 Based on 3R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley is attending to its institutional priority of valuing people. Goals and strategic initiatives to improve communication, onboarding processes, professional development, and recognition programs,

have been established in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Started in Fall 2018, it is important that the teams establish targets and benchmarks to quantify improvements in the identified processes, and communicate progress to employees to demonstrate improvement and build employee confidence and morale. Additionally, new shared governance teams, a better collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and new leadership in Human Resources are all improvements that have been put in place that should help to mature the work in this area.

3.3: DEVELOPMENT

Development focuses on processes for continually training, educating and supporting employees to remain current in their methods and to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers at the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.C. and 5.A. in this section.

3P3 Describe the processes for training, educating and supporting the professional development of employees. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Providing and supporting regular professional development for all employees (3.C.4, 5.A.4)

The expectations of professional development for all employees is stated in the Training/Staff Development Policy 115, which was last reviewed in 2011. Cowley has made recent efforts in the creation of the Professional Development Action Project Team to seek employee input and provide robust offerings for Cowley employees during the biannual Professional Development Days. The scope of its objectives and presentation materials are maintained on Cowley's website. In addition, processes exist for employees to request funds or partial tuition reimbursement related to educational expenses; however, the amount of the allocation and how it is prioritized is not clear. Addressing some of these issues could lead to more than the current **systematic** level of maturity.

- Ensuring that instructors are current in instructional content in their disciplines and pedagogical processes (3.C.4)

Cowley asks instructors to complete 16 hours of professional development annually; however, it is not yet clear if this applies to all faculty or to only some since there are different processes of evaluation for adjunct instructors and full-time tenured/non-tenured instructors. It is clear that Cowley provides financial resources, on-campus, relevant professional development opportunities, and support to ensure that full-time faculty remain current in their discipline and pedagogy. Through the Individual Job Target Plan, Instructor Self Evaluation Form and Faculty Appraisal Report Summary, it is evident that the processes are clear and well developed to ensure that full-time faculty engage in meaningful development experiences. However, there is no mention of how this is all coordinated and which office/position is responsible for ensuring that professional development happens in a repeatable, consistent manner for all instructors. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Supporting student support staff members to increase their skills and knowledge in their areas of expertise (e.g. advising, financial aid, etc.) (3.C.6)

Cowley invites faculty and full-time employees to be academic advisors. Mandatory Advisor training is required before assignment of advisees. Throughout the year, advisors attend ongoing training and receive updates via emails called "Advisor Drop-In Notes." Student Services Enrollment Specialists are encouraged to attend the Kansas Association College Registrars and Admissions Officers conference where process improvement for enrollment management is discussed. Librarians are

encouraged to attend state library association meetings. It is not clear how those working in tutoring, financial aid, advising, etc. continue to develop professionally. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Aligning employee professional development activities with institutional objectives

The College provides ongoing training in FERPA, Title IX, and other broad areas of knowledge and development crucial to all. Performance appraisals guide the professional development needs of individual employees, and these appraisals are aligned with Cowley's core values. However, more detail of the process and responsible parties is needed to see how that information is collected and assessed to determine training needs at the institutional level. Surveys are also used to help determine need. The Portfolio indicates that in-house training is coordinated at a department-work group level using the LMS tool, but no evidence is provided to support that statement nor to know how consistently it is used across the institution. A clearer description of the process would help Cowley move beyond the current **systematic**.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

Tracking of measures is done through the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey with questions related to training and professional development. Professional Development days are evaluated via an internal survey as well to measure perceived usefulness of individual sessions and satisfaction with the overall programming. There is an opportunity for growth beyond the current **systematic** to design a tracking system with tools that relate directly to its professional development outcomes as outlined in the Goals and Objectives for Professional Development linked on the web, those referenced in 3P3.A, and via the performance appraisal forms and processes. This would provide a structured way to identify development gaps, determine which professional development needs are met, and which need more attention, resources and support.

3R3 What are the results for determining if employees are assisted and supported in their professional development? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 3P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley provides results of the internal post-Professional Development Day evaluations and the NLCESS yearly survey questions related to professional development, however, participation in both of these are very minimal. Without increased participation, these results will continue to not provide enough data to make meaningful change. Additionally, the limited data provided regarding professional development expenditures appears incomplete and is inconclusive in terms of how these experiences developed the individual and/or benefited the institution and/or positively affected student success. NLCESS indicates that this is a targeted area of improvement. With strong processes in place and support structures operationalized, the potential for addressing the satisfaction gap will improve and help Cowley achieve more than the current **reacting** stage of maturity.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

The NCLESS provides internal trend and comparative data. No significant difference with the peer group was shown. It is hard to determine if there may be needs by constituency groups (staff, faculty, administration) that are not seen in this approach. Additionally, due to the low response rate, these

may not be good indicators of the work. More work on garnering a higher participation rate is needed. Finally, no evidence of Professional Development Day survey data using satisfaction indicators with trend data is evident. These areas for improvement correlate to a **reacting** stage of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

A robust interpretation was not provided, only that the NCLESS survey results were used to create strategic initiatives related to professional development improvement efforts as published in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Without higher survey participation rates, it will difficult for Cowley to have sufficient information for data-informed decision-making. Additionally, while Cowley will continue to fund at the required levels per the master agreement for full-time faculty, it is unclear how fund allocations are made for other constituency groups, such as adjunct faculty, administrators and staff. Finally, no insights were reported on the effectiveness of the current professional development programming related to desired outcomes, reflecting a **reacting** stage of maturity.

3I3 Based on 3R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley has launched the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan which includes strategic initiatives designed to improve onboarding, professional development funding allocations and programming, accessibility, and the evaluation thereof. In Fall 2018, teams began work on these initiatives and qualitatively report that progress has already been made. The College has implemented Paycom, a technology tool, to assign and track professional development work and expenditures, and ALLY to improve the accessibility of all materials posted in Blackboard. These efforts will help move the College forward in this area for future years.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Assessing improvement in each of these areas may still need work to ensure that long-term growth can be evaluated and employees can see clear support and evidence for Cowley's ongoing commitment to their growth and development. Currently, the NLCESS is the primary assessment tool currently used to track these areas, but Cowley is encouraged to design others that evaluate various aspects of valuing people at Cowley. A variety of tools may be used to ensure that the needs of all stakeholders are assessed, and that targets and outcomes are monitored institutionally to ensure steady progress towards both internal and external benchmarks. It is not clear how employee evaluations are used to both strengthen performance and morale, and the process for allocating resources is not apparent. Next steps include working closely with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to identify a more robust set of tools for this work to include better tracking mechanisms for professional development funding and increasing the overall survey participation rates of employees. Cowley shows promise in **trending towards Systematic**

CATEGORY STRATEGIC ISSUES

Strategic issues include an onboarding process that does not appear to meet the needs of the new employee or the College, the lack of a clear process to tie evaluation to performance improvement, and a lack of process to allocate professional development funding to all stakeholders. Additionally, it is unclear which mechanisms are in place to ensure that all employees receive the support and

training they need to reach a desired level of performance excellence, employee engagement and satisfaction at Cowley. Therefore, this presents two strategic issues related to the coordination and the assessment of professional development related policies, processes and programming. Finally, in order to collect meaningful data for analysis and data-informed improvements, the issue of low response rates on key surveys needs to be aggressively addressed.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

IV - Planning and Leading

Focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and lives its vision through direction setting, goal development, strategic actions, threat mitigation, and capitalizing on opportunities.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Mission and Vision, Strategic Planning, Leadership and Integrity.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

CATEGORY 4: PLANNING AND LEADING

Category 4 focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision through direction setting, goal development, strategic actions, threat mitigation and capitalizing on opportunities.

4.1: MISSION AND VISION

Mission and Vision focuses on how the institution develops, communicates and reviews its mission and vision. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 1.A., 1.B. and 1.D. within this section.

4P1 Describe the processes for developing, communicating and reviewing the institution's mission, vision and values, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Developing, deploying, and reviewing the institution's mission, vision and values (1.A.1, 1.D.2, 1.D.3)

Cowley College last reviewed and updated the mission in 2015, engaging the entire college before presenting the revision to the Board of Trustees for approval. The mission statement was modified and a new vision statement crafted to reflect the relevance of the community college. The mission and value statements are easily located on the website, and the engagement with the communities it serves reflects its mission and values. It is evident that the Board is aware of the mission and values, but an established review process and cycle may be considered to ensure their guiding forces remain relevant and meaningful to their communities. It is not clear how input of HLC Steering Committee

and input from Cowley employees at an all-college in-service activity help shape, deploy and review this work. Other responses in this section stray from the question posed. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Ensuring that institutional actions reflect a commitment to its values

The employee satisfaction survey does serve to self-report how employees view Cowley as an institution and its actions are reflective of its values. Cowley updated the non-faculty employee evaluation process to include accountability to upholding values. Although this is an important step in reminding individuals of their commitment to values, no process is described that does this similarly for faculty or explains how the overall actions and strategies of the College are ensured or coordinated across units to reflect and assess the values. Other considerations for further maturity beyond the current **systematic** include stronger presentation of evidence how institutional hiring practices during interviews incorporate this consistently. Visual branding on diplomas and certificates is one institutional action that was recently designed to communicate values at Cowley to its students reaching graduation.

- Communicating the mission, vision and values (1.B.1, 1.B.2, 1.B.3)

The mission, vision and values of the College are communicated through its website, in College documents, in the catalogs and handbooks, and displayed in every campus building. To strengthen the area beyond the current **systematic** and fully align, Cowley could demonstrate multiple other relational processes that stakeholders come to know and practice mission, vision, and values.

- Ensuring that academic programs and services are consistent with the institution's mission (1.A.2)

Cowley's process for approval of new courses and programs includes demonstration to the Academic Affairs Council of transferability and relevancy, reflective of its mission to provide workforce development opportunities and a pathway to a four-year degree. Movement toward further alignment beyond its current **systematic** level may include incorporating the questions or a rubric criterion instrument related to mission viability and effectiveness in the new program approval process. Further evidence of how these program and course selections are chosen or envisioned to ensure consistency with the mission is an opportunity that can further define the institution within its community as it seeks to engage these stakeholders further. The mission is supported through the variety of personal enrichment courses available and the responsiveness to community development opportunities.

- Allocating resources to advance the institution's mission and vision, while upholding the institution's values (1.D.1, 1.A.3)

The budget process begins with departments and works through to the administration before presentation to the Board of Trustees. It is solidly **systematic** in that budget proposals are linked to the strategic plan and the 24 strategic initiatives. Cowley's stance for allocation of resources related to its mission may be advanced in maturity by possibly incorporating a reflective step in the budget process and timeline to address and ensure how the proposed allocation supports people, accountability, integrity, and leadership because every budget is a moral document that communicates its institutional values. Some further clarity on how competing requests for resources are prioritized, and more explanation of the process used to determine the final budget allocation for Cowley is needed. For example, it is hard to determine how compensation versus non-compensation numbers are determined. Are there targets for a ratio between the two? If a high-cost new program

(equipment heavy) is needed, how is that processed and prioritized?

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. brand studies, focus groups, community forums/studies and employee satisfaction surveys)

The employee satisfaction survey (NLCESS) is the primary instrument Cowley provides as evidence of a process to track how well it embraces and incarnates its mission and values. Cowley relies on a variety of tools, such as a Strategic Planning Survey, Work Group Analysis Reports, Advisory Council surveys, and additional surveys. It is unclear how the reliance on these other surveys was determined to track outcomes related to mission and vision, how the data were compiled and analyzed, and how data are disseminated to inform meaningful improvement in this area.

Strengthening maturity beyond the current **systematic** in this area may involve enhancing or making clear connections in survey instruments chosen for the development, deployment, or review of institutional mission, vision, and values

4R1 What are the results for developing, communicating and reviewing the institution's mission, vision and values? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

NLCESS scores reflect 57 participants. The data provided focus on the NLCESS survey and highlight the gap difference between Cowley employees' response to the statement that goals are consistent with mission and those of the comparison group. The Stakeholder survey provides relevant data from a variety of stakeholders; it is unclear why more details were provided about the 2016 survey than the most recent survey, especially as no table to show a change in response to certain statements was provided. No other data, such as from the many surveys referenced earlier, were provided. Perhaps strengthening the participation rate in the Stakeholder Survey will provide greater comparative and trustworthy data moving forward. Consider providing information in table form on how many households were sent the survey to evaluate the strength of result feedback. From a process perspective, Cowley may even consider making a more direct question in the community survey related to its mission, vision, and aspects of its values to further educate external stakeholder on Cowley's purpose and niche for education in the region because of its vision statement. In general, it may be helpful to show trend data for all surveys once accomplished to provide better context and what the achievement goals/targets are for interpretive insights. The maturity level is **reacting**.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley has one tracking instrument that provides comparative data and targets. Enhancing the number or variety of measures with clearly established targets (i.e., internal and external) with rationale would strengthen Cowley's position to assess its ability to communicate and serve its mission, vision, and values. For example, the ongoing use and adaptations to the Stakeholder survey hold promise as a further measure. It is stated that the 2016 and 2018 surveys show a larger GAP score on several items, so some descriptive comment on those areas would address results meaningfully. The current maturity level is **reacting**.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Cowley is giving attention to gap scores of significance and it recognizes that employees are concerned about institutional approaches to valuing people. One insight regarding a staff position is viewed as the primary weakness for not meeting targets for local businesses. As noted elsewhere in the feedback to the Systems Portfolio, the standard interpretation of results appears to be job creation or reallocation. In this case, the results of not meeting the community needs, which is not thoroughly analyzed elsewhere, is determined to be the demands on the AVP. His job has been restructured to allow for more time to community and business development. The narrative does not suggest how this solution was determined. It would be helpful to understand the process for reaching interpretations and insights. Who is consulted? What is the process for determining that one interpretation has more merit than another? How will it be determined that this insight led to the correct choice of a solution? In general, more robust and developed interpretation of results for insight is encouraged to move Cowley beyond the **reacting** level.

4I1 Based on 4R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Although not discussed in earlier sections, the College determined employees did not understand how decisions were made and the use of data that informed decision making. Mission, vision, and values are being intentionally highlighted by the administration to address a lack of understanding of decision-making processes by employees and it is being addressed in an ongoing way through Tiger Talks by the President. As Cowley continues to learn from their data and increases target benchmarking, maturity will unfold.

4.2: STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic Planning focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 5.B. and 5.C. in this section.

4P2 Describe the processes for communicating, planning, implementing and reviewing the institution's plans and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Engaging internal and external stakeholders in strategic planning (5.C.3)

The strategic planning process gathers information from a wide variety of surveys and reports. The listing of sources given internal and external stakeholder data are clearly identified. The process map has a clear timeline embedded for strategic planning with key leaders identified that include the Strategic Leadership Team, the Administration, and the HLC Team. The usefulness of the workgroup analysis reports using SWOT and inservice focus groups are noted and informative, but little information is provided sharing how often these instruments are conducted, who conducts them, and how the information is collected for analysis to utilize it across the varied source documents identified. However, as Cowley considers further maturity beyond the current **systematic** and improvement of the process for strategic planning: 1) Be more explicit about data processes, 2) Identify a clearer role for ongoing and more expansive feedback from the various communities at the College throughout the process, including students. The map suggests that stakeholder and employee input happens at one primary moment in the process – annually in the fall, and 3) Establish clarity on when this strategic planning process itself is reviewed for effectiveness and ways it may be improved or adjusted.

- Aligning operations with the institution's mission, vision and values (5.C.2)

The Strategic Planning Process was the outgrowth of a Strategy Forum. With respect to operations, the focus in this section is the Budget Development Timetable. It gives evidence of how operations supporting financial sustainability of the institution proceed across a calendar year that integrate the strategic goals, initiatives, and action plans following from the Strategic Plan process involving varied stakeholders and source information. Additionally, the mission, vision and values are published on its key working documents to support keeping them top of mind for employees in all positions within the operation. Yet, enhancing maturity beyond the **systematic** would be to broaden examples of aligning operations. For example, it is not clear how campus security determines that its functions and actions align with the mission, vision, and values. Globally, there is opportunity to explain how decisions across the campus are made with mission, vision, and values as the guide.

- Aligning efforts across departments, divisions and colleges for optimum effectiveness and efficiency (5.B.3)

The President is responsible to organize the staff and services according to Policy 102, Organization and Policy 108 outlines the expectations of the three major areas – Academic affairs, Student affairs, and Business services. The Administrative Council functions as the coordinating approval body that has oversight for academic plans, student affairs, and business affairs, thus ensuring that proposals from these different areas support the other areas of the College, too. It is not clear in this portfolio, however, how the College fosters effectiveness and efficiency in the development of plans and proposals.

Individual employees across the institution are reflecting upon and setting goals that align with college values and strategic initiatives. This is a strength for Cowley's process of alignment as each employee has an annual opportunity to reflect on their work in light of the larger mission, values, and strategic plan of the College. The AQIP Steering Committee was broadened in scope in forming the Strategic Leadership team; however, it is not clear in the listing of names who or what departments, divisions, etc. make up this broad group of employees and the rationale for that change in an effort to optimize alignment and ensure planning efficiency and communication.

Structured teams and committees, including external stakeholders, help to bring effectiveness and efficiency to the College. Position titles would be helpful in such a listing for reviewers to assess the scope of the participation in the alignment occurring across Cowley College Committees. Ways that these group members, if representative in scope, communicate this back to their own departmental areas or divisions would have added value to a repeatable process for improving alignment. It was noted in the review of names on committee lists that there is much overlap of personnel, which may have the advantage of committees keeping current with one another, but it also may suggest a possibility of burn out and also too few holding most of the decision-making capacity. The current level of maturity is **systematic**.

- Capitalizing on opportunities and institutional strengths and countering the impact of institutional weaknesses and potential threats (5.C.4, 5.C.5)

Cowley has expanded its geographical footprint and its modes of teaching to better service its communities. New programs have been added, and the College has a financial reserve process in place to sustain itself in difficult economic times (i.e., Cash Carryover Fund) which is a strength in times of economic fluctuation. Greater clarity in tracking would be helpful on the Cowley College revenue history and proposed revenue report as well as the operating budget report since the Cash Carryover Fund is not clearly identified (e.g., is it the "Miscellaneous Income" or related to the "Other Local Income" line items?).

Evidence of ways Cowley capitalizes on academic opportunities is listed by new program offerings, site locations, and online offerings; however, based on the cited survey to Sumner County stakeholders, more information about the specific process used to capitalize on opportunities or counter weaknesses and threats named in the instrument would be helpful and increase maturity beyond **systematic**. Clearly, Cowley is acting in ways that exercise these functions and uses technology to coordinate persons, but more information on how Cowley does this as a repeatable, reflective process, who is responsible for doing it, and how the institution then prioritizes these opportunities or threats to act upon in any given fiscal year in light of its strategic initiatives would be desirable. For example, what is the mechanism for determining that the flour milling technician program was the best use of its resources, and how will Cowley know when to expand or contract this and other initiatives?

- Creating and implementing strategies and action plans that maximize current resources and meet future needs (5.C.1, 5.C.4)

Through the strategic planning process, Cowley has been able to strategize ways to meet current and future needs. The SLT is the primary agent to create and prioritize Cowley's plans for future needs; this is shared with other stakeholders at the College and informs processes to meet future needs (e.g., budgeting for needs). The tripartite components of Cowley's mission are stated to be the center of all decisions which is a strength. In a movement toward further maturity beyond **systematic**, decision-making tools or important summary documents may even make explicit reference to this question to ensure consistency by agents in the decision-making processes and strategies at varied levels across the institution.

The College has enjoyed great success and strengthening of its Foundation and fundraising, but the strategy and philosophy to meet future needs by these agent groups are not explicitly included. More detail would be helpful to ensure that these efforts and processes to meet future needs can be maintained or even be adjusted for improving future momentum.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. achievement of goals and/or satisfaction with process)

There is a clearly defined process to track strategic initiatives with champions for each identified. The annual report gives evidence of progress achievement which provides an important reporting function for continuous quality improvement and tracking. The final report gives a long-term perspective on annual progress and timelines over which outcomes for the strategic plan are tracked and/or completed. Good things are happening at Cowley in its strategic initiatives. From a process perspective, it is not clear how follow-up is provided on specific initiatives and stalled projects re-energized. Some projects are noted as being closed, yet it is not clear by process how the designation of "finished" was determined in relation to benchmarks/targets. The maturity level is **systematic**.

4R2 What are the results for communicating, planning, implementing and reviewing the institution's operational plans? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

The annual report, as tied into the final report, is comprehensive in providing a snapshot of measured

progress in each initiative along with some interpretation of action steps and adjustments needed. Information is scant in some places. The Portfolio indicates that sometimes initiatives changed in importance from one year to the next, sometimes new leaders had to be appointed, and some were successful.

The KBOR performance agreements show Cowley's progress toward the external benchmark Foresight Goals with a 3 year average baseline target provided. The KBOR report for 2015 is included, but the link to the 2018 plan does not provide the correct document. Endowment funding growth is reported, but it is not clear the relationship of this funding to a specific reported initiative. Given 4P2 mention of the financial reserve process to ensure sustainability in times of economic fluctuation, one might expect to see table summary results of the Cash Carryover funds used to address shortfalls and/or ways to address specific strategic initiatives. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Because of a missing document, it was hard to respond to arguments about the KBOR targets and achievement of the targets. Operational plans information presented focused primarily on KBOR benchmarks and mention again the NLCESS data. Broadening the scope of reporting of operational plans related to each strategic initiative with its benchmarks and targets would be helpful, as this was the primary process reported in 4P2 in the section related to outcomes and measures. It is noted that Cowley reports reaching the required 4 of 6 KBOR benchmarks each year. It is noted that in the process section there are only 5 identified KBOR PA listed. The reported results (i.e., Strategic Initiatives in Strategic Plan) mark only 2 titled goals as #KBOR Performance agreement related. This might well be sorted out at a document reporting level; however, the larger question about process and reporting relates to institutional goals. How is Cowley addressing the ways it meets 4 of 6? What plans or goals are in place to meet the other 2 KBOR PA benchmark goals? Comparative data that shows how these are met across time and processes to address them would be helpful and help Cowley move beyond the **reacting** stage.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Through the interpretation of the data collected, Cowley identified the need to further educate employees on the connection between their input and the strategic plan. A repeatable process for communicating the strategic plan, its elements, and relationship to employee and institutional participation will strengthen employee connections to the plan. The narrative about employees not understanding the strategic planning process focused on the intentionality of focus on strategic planning during professional development days, but no data related to the success of this initiative were provided. It remains unclear if the professional development activities were assessed to determine if the employee concerns were addressed. Maturity opportunities to move beyond the current **reacting** stage exist in this area.

It is notable that scholarships are being addressed, but it is not clear why this particular focus is given at the exclusion of other results in Cowley's strategic initiatives when referencing other initiatives and the reporting of insights drawn from varied source documents contributing to the development of the strategic plan and its alignment processes mentioned in 4P2. With respect to the Foundation it indicated scholarships accepted were down. A discussion occurred but an action step to correct was not made.

4I2 Based on 4R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the

next one to three years?

Cowley is focusing on education, engagement and stakeholder input with regards to the strategic planning process. It is stated that the College has already implemented changes in the strategic planning process to make it more clear to internal stakeholders. For clarity sake, identifying the parts of the planning process that were ineffective would be important to reflect upon in relation to the process and possibly interpreting the results. It would be helpful to identify and narrate these changes to the process as related to the Strategic Planning Process Map referenced in 4P2. The change in advisory council surveys is attributed to internal turnover, and the Foundation is improving the alumni database through the use of Raiser's Edge software.

4.3: LEADERSHIP

Leadership focuses on governance and leadership of the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.C. and 5.B. in this section.

4P3 Describe the processes for ensuring sound and effective leadership of the institution, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Establishing appropriate relationship between the institution and its governing board to support leadership and governance (2.C.4)

Cowley College follows Kansas Policy, which provides an excellent guide for effective governance relationship and has the appropriate alignment. Because Cowley is a state college, many of the duties and responsibilities for the Board and for the president are stipulated. Policies 103 and 104 further clarify the expectations of Cowley to its governing entities. Service area councils (Policy 108.00) advise the President in its recommendations to the Board of Trustees. It was observed that these various documents indicate a lack of review of at least ten years which may affect relevance and effectiveness. Cowley may wish to consider setting a timeline for review of these policies. The maturity level is **aligned**.

- Establishing oversight responsibilities and policies of the governing board (2.C.3, 5.B.1, 5.B.2)

In addition to the policies stated above, the College also maintains a conflict of interest policy (137.00) that protects Cowley and is applicable to all levels of the institution from employee to Board of Trustee member. The President is responsible for the daily operation of the College and works with faculty to set academic policy. To advance beyond the current **aligned** stage, Cowley could consider providing information on the process for determining those oversight responsibilities outside of Kansas state law and to include how the process is reviewed on a regular basis.

- Maintaining board oversight, while delegating management responsibilities to administrators and academic matters to faculty (2.C.4)

Service area councils (Policy 108.00) advise the President in its recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Processes for delegating academic matters related to curriculum development and textbook selection belong to faculty and are clearly delineated in Policies 205, 207, and 262. The Board is the final approval step for academic matters that have developed through the proper steps of faculty governance. The process is **aligned**.

- Ensuring open communication between and among all colleges, divisions and departments

Communication appears to function through various committee meetings and professional development days. Meeting minutes are shared, and the monthly board reports are available to all. Service area council reports are to be found on the Tiger Connect Intranet for employee viewing; the Board receives reports from varied departments month to month; the President uses Tweets and Take-Aways in weekly communication out to faculty and staff. Although the small news items are a good way to keep people informed, the publication lacked a genuine voice.

Based on employee feedback and the strategic initiative to improve communication, it is not clear what new steps have been taken to provide an effective, systematic communication plan to address open communication. Given that morale and communication are concerns, the administration may wish to think of ways to make themselves more present. Perhaps more frequent open meetings when the president and his staff are available to the entire campus might foster more conversation. Cowley may wish to assess the impact of meetings and postings on the intranet to determine if these are effective means of ensuring open communication. To ensure openness some colleges have a tool so any member of the Cowley community could register some concern, compliment, or complaint from any student or employee to maintain an openness in communication. "Tell it to the President" is not necessarily an open forum in this respect. A tool and tracking these contributions may be an important way to ensure open communication.

Structured committees are listed, but it would be useful to depict how these committees report to others within the institutional structure (i.e., visual map) and to whom they are responsible for reporting to ensure open communication is routinely addressed for all academic and non-academic functions. The commitment to a shared governance model is a strength for Cowley as it encourages employees to take active roles at the all-college-in-service and many of the cross-department teams have a chance to collaborate.

As noted above, Cowley's all-college inservice meetings are effective ways to communicate across the College; given the fact there are more than 400 full-time and part-time employees located on four campuses and a virtual campus, sheer numbers create communication challenges. Movement **toward alignment** may involve review of processes in place to ensure that those employees also get necessary communication related to these bi-annual strategic in-service meetings where key updates and mission functions are addressed.

- Collaborating across all units to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards (5.B.3)

The Academic Affairs Council membership ensures processes of collaboration across departments and Cowley's administrative leadership team. Collaboration is enhanced by the generation and sharing of monthly minutes. Further evidence of how the Business Services Council at Cowley establishes membership would be a helpful addition to this evidence section, particularly given the first example of the necessary work addressing the SIS adoption problems. Similarly, the input of meeting processes and minutes that are shared by the Student Affairs Council would round out the evidence of its contribution as a unit in the maintenance of high academic standards. It was noted that focused collaboration appears to occur when there is a problem, rather than a sustained recurring process. For example, the conflict of student and academic policies led to collaboration to resolve the issue, but collaboration before the policies were in place would seem a good practice. Given the strong organizational structure of these three councils, it is yet unclear how they collaborate actively with each other across units with regards to the maintenance of high academic standards. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Providing effective leadership to all institutional stakeholders (2.C.1, 2.C.2)

Leadership is developed through committee work and team participation. Designated Leader-champions are instrumental to the efficacy of Cowley's strategic initiatives. State and regional opportunities exist for employees to advance leadership skills and networking. Students develop as leaders through student government opportunities. The Cowley County Community College Education Association (CEA) supports faculty as leaders within a local association with impact state-wide. All these examples are places where leaders can be developed, but an opportunity exists for process maturity beyond **systematic** to articulate how someone who aspires to more leadership training would express interest and find assistance

- Developing leaders at all levels within the institution

The governing board handbook sets out the policies and responsible actions required of its trustees to uphold Cowley's mission and vision. The code of ethics establishes for each Board member their solemn responsibilities; it may be an opportunity to review and include explicit reference to the mission, especially since it was stated in the strategic planning process that the tripartite aspect of Cowley mission was the central question to all decision-making (cf. 4P2). Elemental board training materials are in place. What processes exist to review this material and on-board new members? Is there a function of off-boarding members to train new members? Evidence of such activity can ensure seamless orientation for new members and thus assist them in acclimating to their role and responsibilities to act in accordance with Cowley's mission and vision. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Ensuring the institution's ability to act in accordance with its mission and vision (2.C.3)

While HLC Criterion 2C3 focus on governing board function, there is an opportunity to address how this looks across the institution. For example, the College could provide information on expectations with respect to the president, or how staff persons are provided guidance on acting in accordance with mission. Does everyone have annual ethics training? How are people prepared to manage budgets and grants? Taking this responsibility down to core operating areas of the college and showing how they ensure their work is consistent with the mission and vision would advance this work beyond the current **systematic** stage.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

Noel Levitz is referenced as the tool to determine employee satisfaction with the Board/Leader effectiveness. Given these questions, the process is unclear how this data is utilized to inform improvements. No mention is made of other ways the Board is determined to be effective. The other measures cited including compliance with KOMA, completed required training, and satisfaction of stakeholders are not explained explicitly as to their importance for tracking effectiveness in the governance/leadership at Cowley; none of these measures, while mentioned as important, are reported in the following results section (4R3). With respect to the broader institution, additional tools for assessment to track the leadership work would aid Cowley; also, an opportunity exists to make mention of the number of people who have received leadership training, or who have attended some type of national meeting. The maturity level is **reacting**.

4R3 What are the results for ensuring long-term effective leadership of the institution? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

NLCESS provides some information to the Board about Cowley leadership; it is noted that the total number of respondents is given, but there is no indication of the percentage rate of the total invited to fill out the survey (e.g. faculty, staff, and administrators). AIM Measure 11 reflects the satisfaction of stakeholders, but what is the relationship of these responses to Cowley leadership with respect to the Board, the Administration, or other leaders which 4.2 addresses? Satisfaction with a program or with the College overall may be qualitatively different than satisfaction with the College leadership and the structures that support the programs. How is the College measuring performance of leadership and the health of the governance structure for its long term effectiveness? The presented Noel Levitz data are probably not strong enough to produce data needed to address these questions. Reconsideration of what data are needed to measure this, the process to obtain it, who collects it, and ways to track it across time may be useful for ensuring long-term effective leadership and the health of the College and help the College move beyond the current **reacting** level.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Advisory Council Surveys use 85% as the target. Providing a rationale for the basis of this 85% benchmark against comparative programs at other institutions or community colleges may be valuable for the broader Cowley community. Given the nature of 4P3 focus on leadership internal to the institution, how might results be gathered at the program level or taken up for consideration by within the Academic Affairs Council, Business Services Council, or Student Affairs Council? External benchmarks in each of these areas would provide measures and comparative data on leadership for program services related to any one of these Councils.

The NLCESS was referenced, but it is not clear how Cowley will use the data to improve leadership structures itself or how setting benchmarks would shape the use of that data overall. The information provided does not suggest Cowley fully understands how to use and set benchmarks productively in this particular area and then compare results accordingly. The maturity level is **reacting**.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Improvements in GAP scores likely follow from some processes of improvement at Cowley that led to the differences in scores. The review team wants to ask, “Why do you suppose they improved?” Similarly, in relation to communication concerns, what processes have shifted at Cowley that may have diminished or not strengthened necessary communication leading to quality employee satisfaction as evidenced in NLCESS? The interpretation of results follows from intentional actions and reflective processes at the institution. Making these connections explicitly will assist Cowley to become further integrated in its leadership capacity using data and advance Cowley beyond the current **reacting** stage.

4I3 Based on 4R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley leadership is listening to and using the 2017 NCLESS data to improve communication among its employees with initiatives in the strategic plan. A survey identified needs for on-boarding which has resulted in the action of Administrative Council members sharing information with new employees. This action will be tracked and assessed with the next employee survey. It is commendable that a process has been created to address the concern. Tracking, comparing, and even setting new benchmarks lay ahead as Cowley sustains this new process moving forward.

4.4: INTEGRITY

Integrity focuses on how the institution ensures legal and ethical behavior and fulfills its societal responsibilities. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.A. and 2.B. in this section.

4P4 Describe the processes for developing and communicating legal and ethical standards and monitoring behavior to ensure standards are met. In addition, identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Developing and communicating standards

Legal and ethical standards are developed at the state level with input from a wide array of governing bodies and college associations. Policies and standards are stated in the employee handbook, which all new employees are required to read, as evidenced by their signature that they have done so. Key standards are communicated and publicized on the web.

For consideration of ongoing maturity for developing and communication standards beyond the current **systematic**, address a process for engaging the Cowley community for the development and review of its policies. It would be helpful to include the timeline cycle upon which they are reviewed. The handbook was last reviewed in 2016. It would be helpful to know how shared governance policies are reflected in the development and review of the handbook. It was also noted that a process for the development and communication of academic integrity standards is not provided in this section, but Cowley presents results in 4R4.

- Training employees and modeling for ethical and legal behavior across all levels of the institution

Cowley utilizes its bi-annual in-service days to incorporate training sessions, as modeled in its most recent one where employees had options to learn about ALICE, Stop the Bleed, Hands-Only CPR, and Accessibility. FERPA training happens at new employee orientation. There is no mention of a process to revisit FERPA or other legal requirements for current faculty and staff after orientation, which may be important to ensure standards are met, among others. The College on-boarding process is under revision and it is addressing better ways to help new and current employees to access and understand standards more effectively. On a related topic, it is not clear if there is an ombudsman position or some other mechanism for investigating unethical or illegal behavior which would be important for maintaining standards. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Operating financial, academic, personnel and auxiliary functions with integrity, including following fair and ethical policies and adhering to processes for the governing board, administration, faculty and staff (2.A.)

The College maintains policies on the Cowley website and they are found in the employee handbook. The Board Handbook outlines the expectations for Board members. Strong comprehensive policy evidence and processes address common academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. The review cycle of these policies and procedures is unclear, however. It is not clear if Cowley goes beyond providing the policies through the handbook and on the web, such as onboarding training for new employees or refresher training. Internal processes governing financial integrity and internal audits in the day-to-day business function areas are not explicitly cited; however, there is evidence of the required external independent college audit in 4R4 which keeps financials **systematic** in maturity.

- Making information about programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships readily and clearly available to all constituents (2.B.)

The College website is the primary communication vehicle providing updated information about programs, requirements, costs, faculty and staff, and accreditation information. Handbooks for various constituents also makes relevant information available to them in print or electronic format. Other printed materials including fact sheets and syllabi provide related appropriate program information and requirements. More information on how students receive information through deliberate methods like orientation, Cowley's first-year experience program, and advising outreach would be helpful to mature this work beyond the **aligned**. The "Right to Know" document, available online, is thorough and easy to navigate.

4R4 What are the results for ensuring institutional integrity? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P4. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

External audit process provides an annual review of Cowley's financial integrity. Compliance with Clery Act reporting on a safe campus is provided. Goal Measure 14 – Safe and Secure Campus Environment indicated crimes are above the benchmark target. A benchmark is great to see here; however, what is it and how much over it was it? Goal Measure 15 in AIM provides overall academic integrity performance, but further detail related to the processes of how Cowley addresses varied types of academic integrity violations, repeat violations, etc. would be useful when reporting strong processes governing student integrity and even faculty/staff deployment of the reporting process. They are not covered in 4P4 and this an area of concern. Providing academic integrity result information based on the NLCESS does not provide much insight. More information such as audit report related to violations, repeat violations, etc. would be helpful. In this respect, this summary section is limited and reflects a **systematic** level of maturity

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Limited processes are reported in results and fewer have comparative data provided. The information provided suggests a lack of meaningful targets and benchmarks for comparison and reflects a **reacting** level.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

This result section reports that there is an academic integrity review process and standard through which the English department identified concerns among a particular student subpopulation; Cowley addresses the situation through a curriculum revision of its First Year Experience course. How and why was the First Year Experience course curriculum changed and not the English curriculum? There is likely summary data and rationale reporting the effectiveness of this curriculum revision since the inception of the FYE, but it is not provided in this section alongside the mention of this insight. Information related to the targets the institution hopes to achieve by a curriculum revision would be useful information when comparing results and further making adaptations to the process for addressing the integrity issue.

The Goal measures on Safe and Secure Campus are important and Cowley notes a fluctuation. This is

difficult to fix and some aspects of the data do not show emergent trends for understanding. With such insight, Cowley may consider revisiting processes and standards in these areas to ensure that deeper understanding of the campus safety data may be tracked and understood in forthcoming years. The current maturity level is **reacting**.

4I4 Based on 4R4, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The new SIS upgrade continues to be a major identified area for process improvement related to accessing and easily evaluating student program progress. The student cost calculator has been revised, and campus security has been improved. It would have been helpful to understand the context for this improvement. The team appreciates these notations, but wonders how these specifically mentioned on-going improvements correlate with 4P4 and 4R3 topic processes and data.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Cowley is intentional in its mission to provide its students and its community an online or campus experience of learning excellence, personal achievement, and community engagement. Cowley has developing processes in place that keep its mission central like the strategic planning process. Cowley has a lot of survey data. Some results appear to be below what the institution is striving to be. At present Cowley has discovered a disconnect among employees with their understanding and role in moving the strategic plan forward and leadership is addressing this concern. The strategic plan is a fairly well-developed process that Cowley continues to adapt to ensure its institutional priorities move forward to serve the College and the communities it serves. The tracking of its initiatives and longitudinal scope of those initiatives is a strength for Cowley at this juncture as it makes continuous quality improvement. The Board appears to receive support on duties and responsibilities, and information is available online and in handbooks about expectations and policies with respect to integrity and ethics. Leadership and governance structures are in place and being reviewed for effectiveness in light of recent employee and external constituent data. Legal and ethical standards are embodied in common processes across the institution in **systematic** ways.

CATEGORY STRATEGIC ISSUES

Overall Cowley might re-evaluate the types of processes it uses, the tools and data it collects to give evidence of strong process functions, establish clear benchmarks with rationale for both internal and external targets, and then report and track these to establish comparative trends. This process may be useful as the College endeavors to communicate the importance of necessary adaptations or change to its employees.

In general, through Category 4 there was a lack of description of processes, for the emphasis seemed on providing the policies, not on how the policies were developed, by whom, and when reviewed. Results were often lacking in detail and without evidence of more comprehensive and thoughtful interpretation. Detailing processes and using them consistently will strengthen Cowley's future position in times of change.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

V - Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship

Addresses management of the fiscal, physical, technological, and information infrastructures designed to provide an environment in which learning can thrive.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Knowledge Management, Resource Management and Operational Effectiveness.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

CATEGORY 5: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Category 5 addresses management of the fiscal, physical, technological and information infrastructures designed to provide an environment in which learning can thrive.

5.1: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge Management focuses on how data, information and performance results are used in decision-making processes at all levels and in all parts of the institution.

5P1 Describe the processes for knowledge management, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Selecting, organizing, analyzing and sharing data and performance information to support planning, process improvement and decision making

Cowley's Institutional Effectiveness Office has a clear structure under the direction of the Executive Director, who maintains dashboards, files state reports, and share information widely distributed. A Strategic Initiative process with a champion, chair and team members includes a structure for data collection and distribution. Cowley describes a Student Information tracking system and provides the AIM document which is a detailed, 34 page dashboard of reports as evidence. However, there is no description of a process for analyzing the data and making data-based decisions. Further, it is not clear how the College selected AIM as a tool and how it ensures that, as a primary tool, it is serving the purposes intended, which is a necessary component of a fully-developed knowledge management

process and to move beyond a **systematic** level of maturity.

- Determining data, information and performance results that units and departments need to plan and manage effectively.

While the steps and timelines associated with the planning processes are undefined, there is a framework set up to guide this work. Specifically, the College provides clear goals for each institutional priority, but the alignment is lacking between these performance indicators and any specific sub-goals. For example, it does not appear that the College has established a relevant indicator related to professional development. Likewise, there appears to be no link between the data showing how the College is increasing the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process by their plan to provide targeted support of classroom instruction. Similarly, the description of how the work-group analysis process relates to strategic initiatives and how data are used from those reports to inform planning and management lack clarity. Overall, the College's **systemic** process might strongly benefit from fully bringing all of the components of the process into alignment with each other.

- Making data, information and performance results readily and reliably available to the units and departments that depend upon this information for operational effectiveness, planning and improvements

Cowley is at an **aligned** level of maturity. The Institutional Effectiveness office provides the leadership team with regular information on enrollment, retention and completion. Budget reports are made available on a monthly basis for the Board of Trustees and the leadership team. This is accomplished through the monthly "Board Book," which is also available publicly for online viewing. Zogotech Software allows users to create reports and dashboards. Departments use the software to access data as needed, and training for Zogotech is available for all users. There is, however, no plan for determining the defectiveness of the all of the processes related to use of these tools.

- Ensuring the timeliness, accuracy, reliability and security of the institution's knowledge management system(s) and related processes

Cowley has systems that are password protected and that appear to adhere to FERPA rules. The College provides a good example of how it reviews Perkins information before sending it to the state. However, it is not clear how the College protects itself against malware or intrusions, and there appears to be no process in place to ensure accuracy and reliability of most data. The timeliness of when the college reviews its security protocols is not shared. Little information is provided about the timeliness of the processes for reporting purposes or for updates and maintenance of the Jenzebaar database system to maintain the reliability of its data. In addition, in 5I1 there is reference to a Data Standards Reference Manual labeled as a "DRAFT" put together by a Data Integrity Task force in May 2015, but there is no mention if this manual was ever finalized, how it informs current processes at Cowley, or the ways it may assist in data system stability. Given the increasing security threats to colleges, Cowley may wish to invest appropriate resources into a process to protect data or provide additional documentation of how it is doing so in a more consistent way in order to allow it to move beyond a **systematic** level of maturity.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (including software platforms and/or contracted services)

There is a history of the SIS needing to be updated that was previously identified by the College as an area of concern and ongoing improvement, yet it is unclear if this issue has been addressed. The response to this criterion lacks critical details. For example, it is not clear how performance of the LMS is tracked and satisfaction with the LMS is measured. No information was shared to explain how and why it was determined SIS needed updating, and it is not clear how, since 2016 the performance of this new system has been measured. No data are provided that clarifies how the decision-making process was used to determine that certain services will be contracted and others will be completed in-house, nor how the performance of each is being assessed. It appears that a team has been established but it not clear who is on the team, what the status of the team's work is, in terms of addressing the challenges identified, and what the timeline is for implementation of next steps. The leaves the College at a **reacting** level of maturity.

5R1 What are the results for determining how data, information and performance results are used in decision-making processes at all levels and in all parts of the institution? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 5P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

Cowley describes the tools used to measure their work including dashboards and studies and provides examples; however, the summary information provided does not always appear directly relevant to this category; therefore, Cowley is at a **reacting** level of maturity. For example, it would have been beneficial if the College had included other information about Blackboard, such as the number of complaint tickets or how many help desk requests it receives. Likewise, more information about how financial information is shared and used on campus would have be helpful in determining how the College is meeting this criteria. Additional relevant information would included default rates or even how crime statistics are used in campus planning and decision making. As it stands, while data are provided, Cowley says very little about what any of these dashboards or studies tell the College and how the College in turn uses them in its decision-making processes.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

With few exceptions, very general targets and benchmarks have been set. Information provided lacks important components. For example, with respect to the Ally tool, Cowley provides actual usage, the benchmark and the goal, but additional information such as a comparison to other Kansas colleges using the tool, or a discussion of the setting of the target, would provide context. Cowley provides little in the way of showing how it meets this criteria. The information provided by the Kansas Association of Community College Business Officers and KBOR could potentially be helpful if it were internalized. For example, the cost per student is lower at Cowley than most of the other community colleges, which would appear to be useful for benchmarking when determining certain budgets, yet no mention is made of how this data is being used in making decisions. As a result, Cowley is at a **reacting** level of maturity..

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Cowley provides no interpretation or insights. General information is shared but it is not connected to the planning or decision making process in any consistent manner. It is clear the College could benefit from a focus on the process by which it will interpret the information, learn from it, and use

it to guide decisions in order to improve beyond a **reacting** level of maturity.

5I1 Based on 5R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley is making strides to address its data management issues with the implementation of the new SIS, new leadership in IR, support training for its employees to access data meaningfully, and revisiting data processes for improvement in its strategic plan initiatives. Also, it appears that new Institutional Key Measures are in the process of being developed. Collectively, these changes will lead to increased efficiency of data and data collection in the future that will help identify areas of improvement.

5.2: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resource Management focuses on how the resource base of an institution supports and improves its educational programs and operations. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.A. in this section.

5P2 Describe the processes for managing resources, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Maintaining fiscal, physical and technological infrastructures sufficient to support operations (5.A.1)

Cowley has an **aligned** process in place for monitoring and maintaining infrastructures to support operations. In order to ensure stability and free up operating dollars, the Trustees approved a financial stability policy which enables the college to manage revenues shortfalls and cash flows, and provides for unforeseen contingencies without impairing the level or quality of services needed to respond to stakeholders. Specifically, Cowley's budget is supported through state appropriation, property taxes, and tuition and fees. Approximately 57% of the budget is allocated to salaries and benefits. A recent additional location site was funded through a ten year half-cent tax property tax increase. Policy and Procedure 113 provides for an annual contingency fund and explains the Board's responsibility should a shortfall occur. Room utilization and physical space needs are monitored through a comparison to Post-secondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual (FICM). Computers are replaced on a planned cycle. It is clear Cowley has many tracking mechanisms in place but does not describe a process in which all of this information is reviewed on a regular basis in order to use it for decision making. The College might benefit from a more permanent committee rather than an ad-hoc committee as it currently has to work with the ongoing administration of infrastructure and budget issues.

- Setting goals aligned with the institutional mission, resources, opportunities and emerging needs (5.A.3)

Cowley's strategic planning process developed goals using feedback from key stakeholders and which are then aligned with the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Themes to ensure alignment with the focus of the overall mission of the College. What is not clear in this process is how emerging needs are included when setting goals. An explanation of the process of how emerging needs are addressed while maintaining the budget and ongoing operations would be useful. Further, it appears that much of the emergent need discussions may take place at the department level which is also where the "budget development packages" given to department leaders are developed, so there may be a linkage

that occurs, but this is not clearly detailed. Likewise, there is no mention of any other feedback loop to the department level leaders for adjustments until the budgets are approved and communicated to them in August. Clarifying both the budget process as it relates to address emerging needs of stakeholders and providing a process statement on how budget adjustments are reviewed and approved would help a great deal in documenting how this criterion is being met beyond a **systematic** level.

- Allocating and assigning resources to achieve organizational goals, while ensuring that educational purposes are not adversely affected (5.A.2)

Cowley's **systematic** budget process clearly links priority plans with the Mission Statement with a focus on education and teaching. It provides a publicly shared process document that was recently updated in 2016-2017, which details each step from the origin to approval of budgets by the Board. What is less clear is how the College considers competing priorities. For example, it is noted that education and teaching receive proportionate funding at a 34%-37% range across the last four years, but there is no discussion of how this level is maintained and how this unofficial benchmark was set in the first place. Additional information about a process and rationale for this benchmark range or other similar measures would be useful to provide as would an explanation of how overall budget decisions are made.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

External audits appear to be conducted annually, and monthly budget reports are shared with Administrative Council and the Board of Trustees. In addition, Cowley used Jenzabar and a tracking system named "School Dude" as their primary tracking tools and SIS to maintain a purchase order tracking system. However, information about the vendor cycle processes are not detailed here, even though they are reported in 5R2. Further, it is not clear how any of these tools were chosen, whether they are reviewed and if so by whom, and how well they are meeting the needs of the college. As a result, it is at a **systematic** level of maturity. Sharing such details would likely allow the College to document a higher level of maturity in this area.

5R2 What are the results for resource management? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 5P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

It appears that Cowley's recent audits have been positive. Also, Cowley does have a macro process in place to compare past budgets to current budgets as a way of determining if they are on target for the year. Some limited measurements are included in the AIM document, such as tracking the use of federal student worker dollars. Although these are potentially important items to track, most of the ones mentioned do not support nor relate to the processes of these section in regards to managing resources. Thus, Cowley's process is **reacting** as there is little to no data given on how the processes that are being used are measured and evaluated. Examples are simply not provided. It would have been helpful, for example, to learn if the IT help desk usage was on target or how usage had changed in a way that triggered a change in how resources are deployed. It could have been helpful to know how often managers had to reallocate funds or how the administration made adjustments to the current budget based on data from the past budget.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Internally, the College does provide some general targets such as tracking to see if budgets are aligned from year-to-year and therefore has a **systematic** process. This is documented in the external audits and does establish an effective overall annual comparison. Still, the AIM goal measures lack contextual information when providing a 3-year trend average and not specific results in terms of meeting targets. For example, a process for addressing quality improvements might still be needed even in an area that shows an increase if it is not on track to meet a particular target. However, without the targets being provided in the first place, it is simply not clear how effective a given quality initiative might actually be. This is further compounded when there appear to be no structures in place to evaluate any of the processes. In terms of external benchmarks, the only one that is shared is that Cowley's default rate is lower than the national average. More and consistent examples would help provide a more complete assurance that this criterion is being met.

- Interpretation results and insights gained

Cowley primarily uses trend data to show that budget priorities are being met. As a result the process is **reacting** in that there is little interpretation and insights provided. Providing data and examples that derive from them would provide a much more robust documentation of how this criterion is being addressed.

5I2 Based on 5R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley has identified two goals related to its process improvement work: one for aligning the resources with the College's goal to achieve FTE sustainability, and one for increasing the Foundation's effectiveness through improved tools and processes, thereby allowing for growth in much needed Foundation scholarships and financial assistance. In the explanation of Goals 5.1 and 5.2, Cowley maintains that these process improvements have a great deal of significance for the College. Therefore, the College might want to carefully choose performance indicators and tools for measuring these goals so that they can be thoughtfully and carefully integrated with other tools and processes governing management of fiscal, physical, and technological improvement efforts found in 5P2 and 5R2.

5.3: OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Operational Effectiveness focuses on how an institution ensures effective management of its operations in the present and plans for continuity of operations into the future. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.A. in this section.

5P3 Describe the processes for operational effectiveness, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Building budgets to accomplish institutional goals

The budget process is **aligned**. An owner of the process in the Vice President of Finance and Administration. and the Board is structurally identified as the final approval authority. Overall, the budget development process has clearly established timelines and activities that directly identify the necessary work as it relates to the strategic plan. Budgets are developed at the unit level with every department responsible for creating budgets based on needs and then are aligned with department

responsibilities and deliverables before being presented to the board for formal approval.

- Monitoring financial position and adjusting budgets (5.A.5)

An **aligned** processes for monitoring of the budget occurs throughout the fiscal year with regular monthly reporting to both the Board and the Administrative council. Again, the College uses trend data only to monitor its budget priorities without any indication of internal and external benchmarks. The monthly board report appears to serve not only as the primary tool for tracking expenditures but also for comparison to the previous year. It should be noted that there is a form for adjusting budgets which appears to add value to the process and all budget managers do have access to monthly reports to monitor spending and make adjustments in their own areas.

- Maintaining a technological infrastructure that is reliable, secure and user-friendly

Cowley maintains a safe and reliable technological infrastructure through the use of software safeguards, monitoring of web traffic, locked screen access across all areas of the College, daily back-ups of data, an on-site firewall management, and the installation of a new fiber infrastructure. What is not clear, however, is the process for determining that current user needs are being met, especially given that programs and disciplines continue to evolve with an ever greater use of technology in most areas of college operations. A description of the current process and timeline for the review or the development of a process for doing so if none exists would mature the work in this area beyond **systematic**.

- Maintaining a physical infrastructure that is reliable, secure and user-friendly

Cowley is **systematic** in that it indicates that the physical infrastructure is being assessed and has contracted with a firm to assist with its deferred maintenance audit. The College also maintain that it provides a user-friendly environment, but it is not clear how it has arrived at that determination. For example, information on accessibility is not provided, and it is not clear how the Cleary requirements align with policies and practices, although it does appear to comply with the campus safety and security reporting requirements. In addition, the College does provide a security surveillance system that is monitored 24/7, and it has a concealed weapon policy that have been clearly established.

- Managing risks to ensure operational stability, including emergency preparedness

Cowley describes an **aligned** process of managing risks to ensure operational stability through using various processes including inventory management, cyber security, and an emergency management plan which is updated annually. The College also maintains an active inventory of all college equipment of \$5,000 value or greater, and it does hold a variety of insurance policies to protect against loss of property or injury to staff. Each campus location maintains a safety officer and campus security and has made arrangement for additional support from the local law enforcement if necessary. ALICE training is required of all employees, but it is not required for students. Providing this training for students might provide an opportunity to reduce the safety risks for students as well. In addition, the College has deployed an app that is readily available to all members of the College community to report any concern. Cowley maintains a detailed and comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

It is not clear that Cowley has a process in place to determine appropriate tools for tracking and measuring outcomes related to budgets, technology or risk management. Nor, is it clear that the faculty and staff have been part of any process to review tools or to explore possible measurements or even how to best use the limited information that is provided. Examples are not given that show how information is codified and by whom and for what purpose. One example might be tracking repeated crimes. If the College did so, it would be valuable to know how this information is tracked, to whom it is reported, and what changes were implemented as a result. In addition, the College continues its pattern of setting benchmarks using a 3-year trend average in AIM Goal Measures, but it fails to provide the rationale for maintaining even these generic targets and is, therefore, at a **reacting** level of maturity.

5R3 What are the results for ensuring effective management of operations on an ongoing basis and for the future? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 5P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

The College is **systematic** in its maturity level. Cowley uses School Dude software as a data tracking tool, and the College provided a copy of its FY 17 audit and shared a set of safety and security data. However, the FY 18 audit is not provided, and there was no evidence of an audit of infrastructure other than to state that the College spent \$1.49 per square foot on maintenance/repairs which is of limited value without providing a basis for comparison of what that number means. Cowley does indicate it has dashboards and software from which data can be extracted, so while only a small amount of data is provided other than trend data, it appears the College is prepared to move towards a more robust data-based processes. A good initial step might be to move away from solely using trend data and establish other data points that are more formally structured and tied to evaluation processes.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

Cowley appears to repeatedly depend mostly on trend data with few internal targets or external benchmarks. Of the few comparison data points provided, the School Dude financial data indicates that the College is generally aligned with its peers, and the NLCCS data indicates the College has concerns with safety. Providing peer benchmark information (# institutions, sizes, trends) would be useful in this section to assess the breadth of Cowley's success against its peers; in general, establishing benchmarks and comparison data points would likely benefit the College's decision-making processes and help it to move beyond a **reacting** level of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

Cowley is at a **reacting** level of maturity as it provides extremely limited interpretation and insights.

One of the few data points offered was that the increase in reportable crimes was due to an increased use of security cameras. No finance-related interpretations provided. Significant work on improving data-sharing and interpretation appears to be needed in order for the College to be able to consistently make data-informed decisions that are routine and apparently not simply a reaction to an issue or event.

5I3 Based on 5R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the

next one to three years?

The College has established a zero-based budget process to help department budgets align with its performance-based budget model. This model also should help Cowley to align budgeting with the goals established in the strategic plan it recently put in place. Further, Cowley has done some work to address risk minimization and is working on establishing a deferred maintenance plan with the help of an outside firm.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Cowley uses a variety of planning tools and dashboards to build and maintain budgets, to keep track of physical assets, to prioritize maintenance, and to provide technology support for the campus. The College's regular audits are clean, and it appears that budgets are maintained. Cowley is aware of some trends in regards to crime on campus. A facility master plan appears to be in the process of being developed over the next year and risk minimization has increased. The College is also looking to the future to establish and implement plans to address its physical structure needs. Cowley indicates it has a strong technology resource base to support its employees in the operational efficiencies of doing their work and has a strong dash-boarding and tracking system to address problems that arise for its employees and students. The College uses a zero-based budget process to help department budgets tie into its performance-based budget model as well as to align with each fiscal year's goals indicated in the recently developed strategic plan. However, of continuing concern is that the College primarily uses trend data for measurements and does not draw conclusions from even those limited data points. Cowley does not appear to have set targets or identified external benchmarks in most areas. The data elements the College tends to report most frequently are those it is required to provide for external entities such as for auditors or to be in compliance with the Clery Act. Locally-determined data points with interpretation are rarely indicated.

CATEGORY STRATEGIC ISSUES

Other than with the budget process which uses clear data points, has timelines and identifies each level of responsibility, Cowley struggles to provide details of its strategic process that is highly repeatable. The College predominately relies on trend data which stifles their ability to be proactive and make high-level data informed decisions. Identifying an inclusive process for consistently establishing internal targets and external benchmarks as well as a process for evaluating their effectiveness would aid greatly in the College's maturity level. Further, improving Jenzebaar training might provide employees with more ability to engage in financial monitoring and oversight. In addition, this would potentially provide for a longer-term fiscal process for addressing physical and capital structure improvements on its campuses as well as help the College to prioritize any deferred maintenance and audit issues.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

VI - Quality Overview

Focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement culture and infrastructure of the institution. This category gives the institution a chance to reflect on all its quality improvement initiatives, how they are integrated, and how they contribute to improvement of the institution.

Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Quality Improvement Initiatives and Culture of Quality.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

Evidence

CATEGORY 6: QUALITY OVERVIEW

Category 6 focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement culture and infrastructure of the institution. This category gives the institution a chance to reflect on all its quality improvement initiatives, how they are integrated and how they contribute to improvement of the institution.

6.1: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

Quality Improvement Initiatives focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiatives the institution is engaged in and how they work together within the institution.

6P1 Describe the processes for determining and integrating CQI initiatives, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Selecting, deploying and evaluating quality improvement initiatives

AQIP has helped guide Cowley in recently revising the process for developing quality initiatives. This adaption was needed to align the KBOR performance expectations with other strategic initiatives at the College in order to keep a focus for the College and meet state expectations for revenue. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) is the primary oversight group for crafting, deploying and evaluating its improvement initiatives. Action teams exist for each initiative and these teams meet monthly for strategic deployment. A timeline for the strategic planning process is provided which is launched at the all-college in-service each year.

To build on this structure, Cowley could provide process evidence on how robust and comprehensive teams are for each initiative that the College addresses. Another next step could be to provide details on the process to determine the projects the institution decides to pursue and how the institution decides to involve multiple stakeholder groups. These changes could move Cowley beyond the current **systematic**.

- Aligning the Systems Portfolio, Action Projects, Comprehensive Quality Review and Strategy Forums

Cowley has been working diligently as an AQIP institution to develop comprehensive strategies since 2001. It is evident that the 2014 Strategy Forum, in conjunction with external influences by the KBOR, have led to many of the structures and initiatives currently at play. Past action projects appear significant to Cowley; some indication of timeline and how these past projects are sustained or adapted to meet and address new needs would strengthen the presentation of this relationship of past projects to current initiatives. The current maturity level is **systematic**.

6R1 What are the results for continuous quality improvement initiatives? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 6P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared.

The summary document on initiatives is fairly comprehensive, but more attention to the establishment of targets and benchmarks is needed. This addition would include a rationale for these targets and benchmarks uniformly expressed across all initiatives. More information related to KBOR integration with initiatives has not been provided, but it is part of an important improvement process change in 6P1. The institution could benefit by demonstrating how continuous quality improvements will direct future change at the institution. These improvements would help Cowley move beyond **reacting**.

6I1 Based on 6R1, what quality improvement initiatives have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Cowley has developed initiatives for the 2018-2021 strategic plan for implementation over the next three years but does not articulate any specific improvements to be put in place based on data it collects. The evidence for these new initiatives would give the review team a clearer picture of what is actually happening in the recent past and the emphasis in the new plan.

6.2: CULTURE OF QUALITY

Culture of Quality focuses on how the institution integrates continuous quality improvement into its culture. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.D. in this section.

6P2 Describe how a culture of quality is ensured within the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Developing an infrastructure and providing resources to support a culture of quality

Cowley has been a participant in the Continuous Quality Network, and the Kansas Award for Excellence Based on Baldrige Criteria. From its early Baldrige days, Cowley established its Quality Leadership Council which has evolved to its current Strategic Leadership Council. Although

participation is open to anyone, and anyone can contribute to the strategic initiatives, Cowley also uses OneDrive technology to aid tracking of meeting and initiative progress; where the Chair of the specific initiative is responsible for reporting. However, it is not clear that Cowley has discovered how to encourage participation and to gain momentum with its internal stakeholders. Addressing this concern would strengthen Cowley beyond the current **systematic** level of maturity.

- Ensuring continuous quality improvement is making an evident and widely understood impact on institutional culture and operations (5.D.1)

The AIM document is reviewed and analyzed by each responsible Vice President, and the AIM document combines all indicators to provide an overall dashboard. In-service activities include a presentation made by the HLC Steering Committee or the SLT presentation updates on strategic initiatives. When an issue is identified, a team is developed to explore solutions. There is a clear process for each employee to reflect upon quality improvement on an annual basis which are then reviewed by an appropriate administrator; more information on how the administrators collaborate and “share-up” information from individuals to the leadership level would provide further maturity in this area beyond the current **systematic**.

- Ensuring the institution learns from its experiences with CQI initiatives (5.D.2)

The strategic initiatives are mapped with action plan steps. An annual update on each strategic initiative is connected to its action plan where information is compiled and targets set for the next or upcoming year. Academic reports are analyzed by the VP of Academic Affairs. Technology reports are reviewed by the VP of Information Technology. Other administrators are responsible for analyzing data related to their service area. More information on how these new targets or actions are developed for the coming year would be useful as Cowley solidifies this process of data collection, reflection, and moving initiatives forward in meaningful, realistic ways year to year. The maturity level is **systematic**.

- Reviewing, reaffirming and understanding the role and vitality of the AQIP Pathway within the institution

Cowley has a history as an AQIP institution in the development and deployment of processes that aid quality improvement. The College made a decision in 2016 to continue under the AQIP umbrella. Cowley appears committed to the principles of CQI, but it is not clear from the narrative how Cowley’s constituencies have incorporated an understanding of and support for the AQIP Pathway into the fabric of the College. References to action projects and long-term results from these projects would help Cowley move beyond the **reacting** stage as it plans its transition to one of the Pathways.

6R2 What are the results for continuous quality improvement to evidence a culture of quality? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 6P2. All data presented should include the population studied, the response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared.

The College has reported recent increases in employee satisfaction on topics related to campus culture and quality improvement efforts on the NLCESS, but it remains unclear if this is part of a full quality improvement cycle. A summary of strategic initiatives, the ongoing development of its targets for upcoming years, and what is learned across those years that the initiative has been addressing are not provided in this section as one might expect given 6P2. There is also an opportunity to see

what Cowley could learn from a process that compiles and evaluates job targets from the performance appraisal process; it's a great thing to do to enhance employees embracing the College's mission, values, and strategic goals, but what message might it send to employees if these targets go unnoticed at a leadership level? This is something for Cowley to explore and possibly celebrate. The current maturity level is **reacting**.

6I2 Based on 6R2, what process improvements to the quality culture have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three year?

The addition of shared governance is a step in the right direction for quality improvement. Clearly defining the shared governance process will greatly mature this work. While this work is great, the identification and use of more advanced tools for measuring results would bring this work to much higher levels.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Cowley has a long history as an AQIP institution and appears to have a strong commitment to continuous quality improvement. Cowley also values employee engagement/teams formed from different areas of the college and has established a new Strategic Plan to streamline reporting and leverage internal resources. With this said, Cowley has not shown how projects, initiatives, and actions influenced or contributed to a quality focused environment.

CATEGORY STRATEGIC ISSUES

Cowley has not demonstrated data-informed decision making. This section is lacking a robust discussion of processes to unite individual projects which would foster a culture of continuous quality improvement. Cowley should be able to provide clear, consistent, and comprehensive progress reports on any ongoing strategic initiatives that would provide evidence for the ongoing work on initiatives at the College. Cowley should address or create a process to show where the progress on strategic initiatives roll up into larger processes shaping the annual budget and communicate this back to internal stakeholders. Cowley may also want to revisit tools/indicators of success and benchmarks to ensure that they are the best ones to achieve the goals Cowley aspires to meet.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Rating

Clear

Evidence

- Cowley reviewed and updated the mission in 2015 through a broad input process before the revision was brought before the Board of Trustees for approval. Based on employee input, the mission statement underwent revision before final approval
- Academic programs are evaluated on a rotation cycle and new courses and programs are proposed and reviewed through Academic Affairs.
- The budgeting planning process begins with all proposals tied to demonstration of how the proposed budget inclusion supports the mission. Budget requests are prioritized by demonstration of support of the mission.
- Core values are also included in the employee evaluation process as part of the evaluation instrument. Less clear, however, is how Cowley core values remain an employee focus during their tenure at the College other than at evaluation review periods.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Rating

Clear

Evidence

- The mission, vision, and core values are communicated through the website, publications, and to new employees during new employee training. Interview questions also seek to capture potential employees' support of the mission. The mission, vision, and values are published in the President's Annual Report, College Catalog, Employee Handbook, Board of Trustees Handbook, Strategic Planning Report and the Alumni Report as well as posted in each building.
- Cowley clearly sees its priorities and plans as part of a state system preparing students for professional programs, technical programs, and a four- year college experience
- The College sees its priorities as part of a state system and meeting the KBOR priorities as well.
- Strategic planning processes are rooted in the mission and vision
- The mission clearly communicates Cowley's role in the community that included credit courses, personal enrichment, community interest, and responsiveness to the changing needs of the populations it serves.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Cowley offers a multicultural program developed through the University of Kansas. Students are provided additional support through mentoring and tutoring services.
- Cowley has dedicated resources to increasing the international student population and supporting these students
- Cowley has expanded its reach and opened a new campus to serve areas with growing population and educational needs
- The Global Learning Outcomes (GLOs) include a focus on "citizenship." These GLOs are embedded throughout the general education curriculum.
- The College provides educational programing targeted to diverse groups of students.
- However, Cowley does not address multiculturalism in its strategic plan and may wish to consider this imperative in future iterations.
- Diversity in its many interpretations is not included as a priority in hiring practices. As Cowley welcomes diversity in students, the College may wish to make diversity hiring of staff and faculty as strategic priority, recognizing the challenge this poses to most colleges.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Board of Trustee members serve as representative of the citizens and are stewards of the finances.
- The mission is displayed throughout the College and is included in all performance evaluation plans.
- Accountability measure include serving the needs of the community.
- In addition to courses and programs, the College serves the community through arts programs, continuing education programs, and training and personal development as determined through surveys of community needs.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Faculty Master Agreement includes processes for filing grievances
- Employees are expected to partake of ethics training upon hire. However, no information is provided as to an annual update on this and other trainings.
- The College establishes clear Board expectations on ethics and conflicts of interest, but it is not explicitly clear that a yearly conflict of interest statement is required.
- Cowley has numerous policies noted in the employee handbook that shape employee culture in maintaining ethical financial practices (e.g., 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137).
- Maintaining culture of integrity for personnel is shaped by policies in the employee handbook related to faculty and staff code of conduct which include 111, 127, 128, 130, 141, 143, and 148.
- Cowley conducts financial audits on an annual basis. Not available were the Board finance meetings' minutes.
- Information on FERPA, Title IX, non-discrimination policies are centralized and available online
- The IRB process for faculty, staff, and students is not clearly documented.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Rating

Clear

Evidence

- Cowley maintains a robust website with links to the academic catalog, employee directory, leadership and Board of Trustees, academic programs, transfer agreements, and services to support students.
- Student, faculty, and employee handbooks are published and available on the website.
- The strategic plan is available to the public
- Agendas and minutes of meetings, including those of the Board, are available on the website.
- The seal of accreditation as well as information about AQIP and HIC are available on the website.
- The cost of attendance is clearly available online, as well as links to financial aid and ways to make college affordable.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Clear

Evidence

- The Board meets monthly and receives prior to the meeting an extensive book of materials for review.
- The Board delegates academic matters to the faculty. Policies 205, 207, and 262 provide guidance on curriculum development, the selection of instructional materials, and the assessment of student performance.
- Policy 103 establishes the Board of Control to the Board of Trustees.
- College Policy 137, Conflict of Interest, defines potential conflicts and gives direction on how to proceed. The Board receives ethics training
- Board members receive training on the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA) and the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA).

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Freedom of expression at Cowley is governed by safety guidelines on demonstrations that includes clarity for demonstrations, rallies, leafleting, etc by all Cowley constituents as adopted in Oct. 2014
- Under Article 3 (Instructor Welfare) of the Negotiated Master Agreement, Section 2 (Academic Freedom) there is clear commitment to a faculty member's responsibility as a citizen and member of a learned profession safeguarding these roles for freedom of expression appropriate to these roles.
- Cowley uses the CITI program to educate its constituents for IRB modules
- A clear and thorough application process is in place for institutional review board and human research activities; these resources appear to be available through a Cowley web portal (no access was given to the review team.
- The makeup of the IRB team, its processes for reviewing applications, minutes, etc that would relate to how a pursuit of a research project is internally handled but is not clear documented..

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Clear

Evidence

- Policies are provided on academic integrity: 1) Professional Code of Ethic for the Professional Employee; and 2) Academic Integrity Policy.
- Institutional Review Board and procedures (IRB) to provide oversight on the ethical use of research for faculty, staff, and students is provided but key details could be more explicitly stated.
- Students are oriented to practices of integrity and supported at the course and institutional level, and training is incorporated into orientation and coursework
- The Academic Integrity Policy is included in the Student Handbook, and faculty expectations are outlined in the negotiated master agreement in the section on Professional Code of Ethic for the Professional Employee.
- Academic Integrity Violations are tracked.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Rating

Clear

Evidence

- Courses and programs are reviewed regularly through a program review cycle.
- Degrees and programs align with associate degree offerings.
- Cowley maintains a curriculum map that aligns Global Learning Outcomes to courses and projects.
- A syllabus template is available to all faculty.
- Learning outcomes align with Bloom's taxonomy
- An academic catalog is maintained and available online.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Cowley provides documentation of the General Learning Outcomes to demonstrate how its general education program is appropriate to the mission of the institution and specifically shows how students are engaged in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information and mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments through the use of the GLOs.
- The College uses external industry standards as the basis for many of its competencies in technical programs
- Cowley has an active PTK Chapter and courses that also have service learning components in alignment with its mission
- Faculty and students have opportunities through co-curriculars to engage in artistic, scientific, and other expressions of creativity. Students can contribute to published writing journals, participate in music and theatre events, or attend art shows and talent events on campus. Research methods courses in the sciences provide students an opportunity to engage in scientific research.
- Faculty are eligible for sabbatical and other extended leave opportunities. Funds are available to support conference attendance and travel.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Course enrollment patterns appear to be the primary mechanism to determine if the institution has sufficient faculty for instructional programs and activities. It does not appear that there is a data-driven mechanism in place for systematically reviewing if there are sufficient faculty to carry out all expected faculty duties and responsibilities outside of the classroom.
- Cowley demonstrates a process for developing and meeting academic credentialing standards for all faculty. These processes are governed by policies in the negotiated master agreement, and Procedures EMP007 and EMP008. Adjuncts, dual credit, and online instructors must meet the same qualifications.
- Policy 114 requires all full-time employees be evaluated. Faculty evaluations are determined by the master agreement, and the frequency depends upon length of service and tenure status. Evaluations include student feedback.
- Through the Individual Job Target Plan, Instructor Self Evaluation Form and Faculty Appraisal Report Summary, it is evident that the processes are clear and well developed to ensure that full-time faculty engage in meaningful development experiences.
- The master agreement requires full-time faculty to post 8 office hours per week, information which is posted by their office and communicated to students on the syllabi. Faculty are expected to respond to student emails in 48 hours or less.
- Cowley ensures that non-instructional staff is qualified for their respective positions; however, it is unclear which mechanisms are in place to ensure that these employees receive the support

and training they need to reach a desired level of performance excellence, employee engagement and satisfaction at Cowley.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Placement policies are clear to students and provide support for student success.
- IMPACT provides for first generation college students and has its own support team of advisors, tutors, and support services to help TRIO students be successful.
- Each student has a faculty or staff advisor.
- Tutoring services exist on each campus; online tutoring support through tutor.com
- Some student populations have been highlighted for special support (i.e., international students and military)
- Infrastructure support for physical and mental health care needs of students is in place.
- Cowley developed a First-Year-Experience program through which support services are communicated to ensure student success
- Library services staff are the primary delivery vehicle and support to faculty and students for supporting academic research and information resources.

NOTES

- Training for advisors is unclear across faculty and staff consistently
- Tutor services are reported and steadily used, but effectiveness processes evaluating them not clear
- Apart from library services, little information is provided regarding adequacy of its other physical and support infrastructure.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Annual goal form provides a process for each co-curricular group to self-report which of the global learning outcomes will be reinforced; some indication of the activities are listed yet it is not clear the extent and consistency of this intentional reinforcement at the activity level
- Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have created a form to align co-curricular development goals with teaching and learning through various clubs and organizations. At the beginning of each academic year club sponsors complete an [annual goal form](#) that includes an area to identify which of the GLO are supported by that club or organization. This work provides a direct connection to the mission.
- Goal forms are reviewed at the end of the year by the student life director, but no process of what the review entails is provided or the extent of how that review informs changes to co-curricular programming.
- Student leadership groups exist on campus that support leadership skills
- Nationally recognized honor societies in math are supported on campus.
- There is a holistic offering of clubs and athletics, fine arts, and cultural activities to support enriched student engagement outside of the classroom
- Service learning opportunities exist, but the extent of community engagement across departments at Cowley beyond the single example provided are not fully clear

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Cowley's Program Review process, conducted every three years, is described in detail.
- The College has developed documentation for surveying advisory councils, changing curriculum, changing programs, and discontinuing programs. There are multiple ways in which courses/programs are changed and engage both state, community, and/or college resources to fund the decision-making process for the changes. From faculty and chair involvement to the CAO to the President's Board, stakeholder involvement is clear.
- Transfer policy at Cowley is governed by the State transfer agreement program and thus consistent with state standards that ensures the successful transfer of courses from and to other state institutions. The College's recent efforts focusing on prior learning assessment, especially

in regards to military credits, provides a clear roadmap for moving forward with improvement in this area. It also provides a future opportunity to align the College with other institutions with the Kansas system through the state-level site being designed for this purpose.

- Cowley ensures program rigor across all locations and delivery modes by maintaining the same minimum faculty qualifications for all faculty, utilizing the same course procedure, universal textbook and instructional materials for all sections of a given course, a faculty mentoring program, and faculty evaluation schedule.
- Dual credit processes are monitored and faculty meet accreditation requirements.
- Specialized accreditation pursuit and attainment occur at the department level without evidence of a coordinated process for organizing and gathering information through the Institutional research office or other coordinating body.
- Transfer success of students is monitored and reported along with degree completion data. Cowley monitors employment rates of Career and Technical Education program and rely on feedback from the employers of Cowley graduates for additional data.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Common learning outcomes have been revised most recently in 2017, yet more information beyond the brief history provided on why the revisions were undertaken, the processes involved, who led the process, and evidence of how the most recent revisions took place would provide a clearer picture of improvement
- A structural system for crosswalk between program courses and GLO is provided, but yet a comprehensive and consistent picture of how this is employed across the institution for achieving learning outcomes in both curricular and co-curricular settings is not yet clear.
- There are clear steps provided for the assessment of GLOs accompanied by clear statements of what students should demonstrate with respect to each GLO. Yet, an unclear gap exists in the summary results between 2013-14 and the most recent results for 2017-18.
- Cowley altered its selection of tools for assessment and the process was interrupted when the learning management system changed, phased out national assessment tools, and focused on department level assessment approaches. This caused the rubric to be different and interrupted the assessment efforts.
- Program learning outcomes are governed by disciplinary experts in conjunction with advisory councils; a system of program level outcome assessment is in place but the overall consistency of this process and how it is employed across the institution and its departments to address improvement is not entirely clear. For example, the program review master list shows number of participating departments, but not how assessments led to improved actions at the program level.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Current strategic plan 2018-2021 addresses retention and completion initiatives for improvement with metrics desired to achieve in concert with KBOR performance agreements.
- Targets for completion are reported in AIM using a 3 year average for its internal target level monitoring achievements; yet, it is unknown how these reported internal target measures shape a process for resource allocations for improvement or desired program changes.
- The newly hired IR director is reported to share information with the Executive Director of Enrollment Management for data analysis, but the consistency of processes for analysis was unclear.
- Enrollment management collects information from non-returning students and includes rich source information that is self-reported by students, yet it remains unclear if this is a regular ongoing process shaping persistence data or not since the document provided is not dated and does not indicate academic year timeframes for analysis.
- New hires in IE and addition of a retention coordinator in 2017 improves FTE capacity to address educational improvements related to 4C.
- IPEDS data collection set are in place and utilized for trend data.
- TRIO data is analyzed against its project award objectives to measure its effectiveness.
- Goal Measure 1 (AIM) - Student Goal attainment includes rich data collection sets across varied academic years; for example, there is information related to certification of vocational program completers and Cowley reports a certification rate but it is unclear how this report data is analyzed and used to reshape vocational program direction or influence resource allocations that would shape certification improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Rating

Clear

Evidence

- Policy 115.00 Training Staff/Development Policy was last reviewed in 2011. It stipulates that training begins with orientation and indicates professional development days. Professional development for faculty is also stipulated in the contract and appears better funded. Less clear is how professional development for staff is funded and provided.
- Policy 113.00 Financial Stability Policy provides a contingency reserve to protect the College operations from unexpected financial challenges
- Budgets are prepared at the unit level and presented and refined through a hierarchical review process. Budget reports are prepared monthly and reviewed by the executive team and the Board.
- A uniform hiring process guides the development of a job description, the review of credentials and interview process, and the hiring of new employees. It is unclear how beneficial the orientation process is, how Cowley assesses the orientation process for effectiveness, and who is involved in the design and implementation of the orientation.
- Cowley College's mission--Cowley College is committed to providing opportunities for learning excellence, personal achievement, and community engagement--is supported. The

College has expanded its campus to a new site to better serve the community, the College has invested in online education and student support personnel, and the College organizational chart aligns with its mission.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Service area councils (Policy 108.00) advise the President in its recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Processes for delegating academic matters related to curriculum development and textbook selection belong to faculty and are clearly delineated in Policies 205, 207, and 262. The Board is the final approval step for academic matters that have developed through the proper steps of faculty governance.
- Academic affairs policy and procedures align closely with those of student affairs and business affairs and all policy and procedure changes have to be approved through AC to ensure that all areas are aware of any changes and the potential impact.
- Policies outline the expectations of the three major areas (academics affairs, student affairs and business services) in setting policy. This is accomplished through structured teams and committees consisting of internal and external stakeholders. Faculty expectations are further defined in the negotiated Master Agreement and through the shared governance process.
- The commitment to a shared governance model is a strength for Cowley as it encourages employees to take active roles at the all-college-in-service and many of the cross-department teams have a chance to collaborate.
- Less clear is how students are involved in the processes.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- The Strategic Planning Process developed as an outgrowth of a Strategy Forum. With respect to operations, the focus in this section is the Budget Development Timetable. It gives evidence of how operations supporting financial sustainability of the institution proceed across a calendar year that integrate the strategic goals, initiatives, and action plans following from the Strategic Plan process involving varied stakeholders and source information.
- Individual employees across the institution are reflecting upon and setting goals that align with college values and strategic initiatives. This is a strength for Cowley's process of alignment as each employee has an annual opportunity to reflect on their work in light of the larger mission, values, and strategic plan of the College.
- Through the strategic planning process, Cowley has been able to strategize ways to meet current and future needs. The SLT is the primary agent to create and prioritize Cowley's plans for future needs; this is shared with other stakeholders at the College and informs processes to meet future needs (e.g., budgeting for needs). The tripartite components of Cowley's mission are stated to be the center of all decisions which is a strength.
- As a state institution that often finds itself without clear indicators of the level of state support during the planning cycle, Cowley College has been proactive by maintaining a Cash Carryover fund that is able to sustain the institution if expenses should exceed revenue.
- Less clear was how the College proactively plans for the continuing change in technology, safety and facility support, and changing demands of the student populations. These areas often have substantial impacts on administrative budgets.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Rating

Adequate

Evidence

- Evidence of effectiveness is an area that Cowley has recognized as an opportunity for growth. HLC Evidence teams have been established to address the needs in this area
- An area of improvement for Cowley is the documentation of processes and an explanation of how data are used to improve processes. Cowley can provide evidence that "something" is done, but the process of how "something" is done is too often not evident. As noted elsewhere, reflecting on who chooses what tools, why these tools, and how these tools are useful to the process would be an important improvement.
- Cowley dedicates resources to improve institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, as evidenced by planning and execution of the new location. Less clear is how lessons learned from one project or by one team are shared throughout the institution and used to bring about positive changes to processes and outcomes.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Reflective Overview	
2	Strategic Challenges Analysis	
3	Accreditation Evidence Screening Summary	
4	Quality of Systems Portfolio	
5	AQIP Category Feedback	
I	Helping Students Learn	
II	Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs	
III	Valuing Employees	
IV	Planning and Leading	
V	Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship	
VI	Quality Overview	
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Clear
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Clear
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Adequate
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Adequate
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Adequate
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Clear
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Clear
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Adequate
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Clear
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Clear
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Adequate
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Adequate
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Adequate
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Adequate
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Adequate
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Adequate
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Adequate
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Clear

5.B	Core Component 5.B	Adequate
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Adequate
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Adequate

Review Summary

Conclusion

The challenge when completing a systems portfolio is sharing the good work of a college that reflects the complexity of populations served, the processes for meeting the mission, the results for all the processes, the governance structure that includes the administrative hierarchy and shared governance, and the collection and analysis of data that indicate the dedication to continuous improvement. This must all be done comprehensively yet concisely. The task is not easy. The Review Team acknowledges the good work that Cowley College has shared and appreciates a Systems Portfolio that narrates a compelling story of how the College serves its students and multiple communities.

Cowley will soon be transitioning to a Pathway model, so the Review Team sees limited value in providing great detail to support improving the AQIP Systems Portfolio. Overall, however, the team agrees that Cowley will be better served by careful consideration of how it collects, analyzes, and uses data. The College appears to rely heavily on surveys for information, and at times laments low response rates. Perhaps Cowley would benefit from an inventory of exactly how often faculty, staff, students, and the community are contacted, by whom, and with what request. Most colleges struggle with the admirable goal of providing good communication to their constituencies, particularly as our constituencies continually shift their preferred means of receiving community, and how to not overwhelm. In addition to considering how and why the survey is the preferred instrument, Cowley may wish to also consider how to best use the data collected through the AIM instrument. The dashboard is robust, but it was not always clear how the data were being reviewed and used. The team found an overall lack of evidence of how decisions were determined by data, and more importantly, how changes and improvements were dictated by data and then reviewed for subsequent improvement.

Another recommendation is for Cowley to consider how to provide evidence of processes. Although the Pathway model will not require this same attention to describing processes, most colleges benefit from being able to identify key processes at work. All agree that Cowley appears to manage the functions of running a college, but articulating a process provides the opportunity to reflect on the steps taken to repeatedly address a problem or opportunity. Many schools are challenged to do more than provide some examples rather than provide a clear overview of how and why a certain action is taken. As Cowley continues its strategic planning, more attention to the description of processes may prove helpful.

Finally, Cowley is encouraged to consistently and meaningfully set targets and benchmarks. As one of the larger community colleges in the Kansas state system, Cowley can assist others by becoming a benchmark in many ways. Employee morale and efficient use of all resources improve when clear targets and benchmarks are established and reviewed.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Adequate

Sanctions Recommendation

Not Set

Pathways Recommendation

Not Set

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.