

AQIP Systems Appraisal – Baldrige Option

Grand Rapids Community College

Feedback Report

February 5, 2013

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Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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Introduction

The *AQIP Systems Appraisal – Baldrige Option* offers institutions participating in the Academic Quality Improvement Program Pathway the option of incorporating its state or federal Baldrige Application and feedback report into an alternative to AQIP's standard *Systems Appraisal* process. The overall goals remain the same as any AQIP *Systems Appraisal*: to give impartial and independent guidance to institutions on current strengths and opportunities for improvement that would further increase their ability and performance for achieving their goals, and to alert institutions early to any need to strengthen the evidence they need to demonstrate compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and other expectations. The *AQIP Systems Appraisal – Baldrige Option* accomplishes this somewhat differently than the standard AQIP *Systems Appraisal*, in that (a) comes from a state or national Baldrige program and (b) comes from the Higher Learning Commission in this *AQIP Baldrige Option Review*.

This *AQIP Baldrige Option Review Feedback Report* clearly identifies the institution's strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement regarding fulfillment of the Criteria. It constitutes the Commission's official appraisal and feedback on the institution's presentation of the evidence that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation. It analyzes how well whatever evidence the institution presented can demonstrate fulfillment of HLC's current *Criteria for Accreditation*, the standards that HLC uses to make judgments about the colleges and universities it accredits.

This *AQIP Baldrige Option Review Feedback Report* provides the institution actionable feedback that will help it make certain, when it is next formally reviewed for reaffirmation of accreditation, that it can document compliance with all of the Higher Learning Commission's requirements. Even more vital for institutions striving to improve academic quality, the AQIP Baldrige Option Review will highlight actions the institution might take to strengthen and improve its performance in the critical areas specified by the Criteria for Accreditation.

The input the appraisal team used for its *AQIP Baldrige Option Review* included the following materials:

- *AQIP Baldrige Option Summary* of no more than 35 pages,
- *AQIP Baldrige Option Catalog*, listing each piece of evidence referred to in the AQIP Baldrige Option Summary and contained in the files on the *AQIP Baldrige Option Disk*
- *AQIP Baldrige Option Disk*, a DVD file of numerous documents and other items of evidence that the institution has used to substantiate the assertions of compliance it makes in its *AQIP Baldrige Option Summary*. (The *AQIP Baldrige Option Disk* contains only files that are explicitly referenced in its *AQIP Baldrige Option Summary*.)
- Institution's Baldrige application,
- Feedback report received from the state or national quality program that reviewed the institution's application.

All of these items are filed in the Commission's record relating to the institution.

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The Criteria for Accreditation

In the sections that follow, the team summarizes, after each Core Component (which is printed in boldface type), evidence that it reviewed showing (a) that the Core Component is met, and/or, if and when necessary, (b) that the Core Component requires institutional attention (in a separate paragraph or paragraphs).

Following its summary of the last Core Component in each Criterion, the team summarizes its overall judgment that the persuasive evidence has been presented that the institutions meets the Criterion or identifies gaps in the evidence presented that require the institution's attention. This summary may include additional evidence not cited in the discussions of individual Core Components, but it will not repeat or re-summarize the separate discussions for each Core Component.

Criterion One. Mission: *The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.*

- **Core Component 1A: The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.**

GRCC provides ample evidence that its mission is broadly understood within the institution, and is used to guide College operations. GRCC's mission, vision, and values (MVV) are reviewed and validated annually as part of its strategic planning process by an 80-member Strategic Leadership Team. Mission, vision, and values are communicated regularly through multiple mechanisms to students, staff/faculty and other key stakeholders. The MVV are closely aligned with the GRCC Path to Success (GPS), as well as performance evaluations and reward and recognition processes. The systematic deployment of the mission allows senior leaders to align and guide the work of the organization. In the Michigan Quality Council (MQC) Feedback report, this alignment of institutional mission with its operations was noted as a Strength. It is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 1A.

- **Core Component 1B: The mission is articulated publicly.**

GRCC utilizes multiple approaches to articulate its mission publicly, both to internal audiences -- such as students, staff and faculty -- as well as external stakeholders, suppliers, partners, and collaborators. Deployment is achieved through the College website, marketing initiatives and materials, distribution of the strategic plan, and during interactions and meetings. The mission is featured on a variety of public access print and electronic documents such as monthly board agendas, placards, brochures, and letterhead. The MQC Feedback Report notes this as a Strength. Based on the evidence provided, it is opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 1B.

- **Core Component 1C: The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.**

GRCC is a two-year community college serving more than 32,000 students. GRCC provides evidence that it actively understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. The College recognizes its role to educate and serve a multicultural society and formalized this role through the adoption of Diversity as a central value. Diversity is supported through consideration of students and the broader community from a multicultural perspective as GRCC develops programming. Last year, more than 6,000 college and community members participated in training and learning offerings at GRCC's Diversity Learning Center.

The College meets the needs of an aging society through community outreach, training, and educational programming geared toward older adults and those who work and care for them. GRCC has established processes and activities that align with the College's commitment to human diversity. The Board of Trustees (BOT) adopted a "Treatment of People" Executive Limitations policy intended to ensure all people are treated fairly and with respect. The BOT receives an annual report on activities related to this limitation. Based on the evidence provided, it is opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 1C.

- **Core Component 1D: The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.**

GRCC provides ample evidence that its mission demonstrates commitment to the public good. The MQC Feedback Report noted as a Strength the systematic and well deployed nature of several aspects of GRCC's governance system, including accountability for management actions, transparency in operations, independence of internal and external audits, and protection of stakeholder interest. The College has identified and engages with external constituencies at many levels, and provides many venues for stakeholders to interact with leaders, to provide feedback, and to directly address the Board of Trustees. The MQC Report also noted as a Strength the deployment two-way communications mechanisms used by leaders to engage with the public, including community conversation and coffee meetings. It is not always evident how GRCC assesses and monitors its support of key communities or the impact of such support. This was identified as an Opportunity in the MQC Report. Based on the evidence provided, it is opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 1D.

Overall Comments on Criterion One

There is little doubt that GRCC's MVV are indelibly etched in the operations of the institution. While it is not always necessary to revise an institution's mission statement when a new president is selected, and this practice can be viewed as an indication of institutional instability, such is not the case with Grand Rapids, primarily because of the process the College embarked on with the arrival of its new president in 2009. That process was an inclusive, collaborative review of what was and recommendations for what was to be and eventually provided the College with a set of new guiding principles embodied in a mission statement, vision statement, list of institutional values, and new Ends. The MVV are clearly displayed institutionally both

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physically and electronically for easy access by the public the College serves. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC clearly meets Criterion One.

Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct. *The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.*

- **Core Component 2A: The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.**

GRCC has implemented ethical codes and policies for its Board, administrators, faculty, and support professionals (staff) and has a Policy on Development and Issuance of College Administrative Policies that clearly describes the College's fair and open process for policy governance. In addition, the College has a formal Ethics Monitoring System that provides multiple means for its stakeholders to report possible ethics violations. The President's Cabinet reviews complaints reported to identify any systemic issues and subsequent steps to address those issues. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 2A.

- **Core Component 2B: 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.**

The College relies on its catalog and website to provide its stakeholders with clear and complete information. This information is kept current by the corresponding various departments and units within GRCC. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 2B.

- **Core Component 2C: The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.**

There is every indication that the publicly elected College Board of Trustees (BOT) maintains sufficient autonomy in its governance of GRCC. Conducting its meetings in open session, the BOT decision-making is guided by policies determined in open session that were and are designed to preserve and enhance the College. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 2C.

- **Core Component 2D: The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.**

It appears that Grand Rapids has a complex approach to governance that includes a myriad of policies for every level of its operations. Consequently, the College is able to document its commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning through its academic freedom policy. Having such a policy is certainly a vital component to

being able to support and encourage freedom of expression. At Grand Rapids, the academic freedom policy is embedded in a BOT policy on Executive Limitations for the President, hence the complexity to an outside viewer. The College is encouraged to review the content of its policy to determine that its wording accurately reflects institutional intent. As currently worded, the GRCC policy on academic freedom reveals an institutional commitment to freedom of expression in terms of community standards, leaving sufficient ambiguity to make the statement unclear, and therefore worthy of review by institutional leadership. With that caveat and based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 2D.

- **Core Component 2E: The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.**

Primarily a teaching institution, Grand Rapids addresses teaching and learning in Criterion 3. In addition, the College approaches the issue of the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge in terms of research oversight by an Institutional Review Board, guidance on the ethical use of information resources, and policies on academic honesty and integrity. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 2E.

Overall Comments on Criterion Two

It appears that Grand Rapids has a highly developed governance structure that embraces a complex system of policies. These policies allow the institution an avenue of response to procedural questions, but having these policies does not ensure that their content has been fully implemented. For example, the College's Ethics Monitoring System (EMS) could very well serve as a Best Practice for those institutions seeking an effective method of reporting, collecting, and acting on ethics violations and student complaints. However, within that system, the College is encouraged to examine possible gaps between simply distributing printed material to new students and employees about the EMS and actually providing effective ethical and responsible conduct education for its students and employees. The GRCC policy governance model is equally impressive but also has possible gaps. Having and even following such a model does not in itself ensure that the Board will follow fair and ethical policies and processes. It certainly provides a structure, and the College is encouraged to monitor adherence to that structure as a means of closing any possible performance gaps. The structure described leaves little doubt that the College is acting with integrity, and that its conduct is ethical and responsible. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Criterion Two.

Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support. *The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.*

- **Core Component 3A: The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.**

In the MQC Feedback Report, GRCC's systematic, well-deployed approach to ensuring

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academic programs are designed, managed, and reviewed for improvement is listed as a Strength. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for each degree and certificate program have been identified. The Course Approval and Review Process (CARP) is used to develop new courses or revise existing courses to ensure that all sections of a particular course work toward consistent learning outcomes. This also governs all modes of delivery. All programs that result in a degree or certificate prepare students in each of the four GRCC Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) identified as Communication, Critical Thinking, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. The expectations for the level of competency in the ILOs are determined by the faculty content experts and are based on the purpose and intent of the program. Although GRCC states that consistency of quality is ensured through a faculty evaluation processes in which evaluators review faculty members' fidelity to CARP documents, the MQC Feedback Report considers the need for a fully deployed performance management system, particularly for adjunct faculty, as an Opportunity. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 3A.

- **Core Component 3B: 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.**

GRCC provides evidence that they value broad skills that transfer to any profession or career and facilitate life-long learning. This learning begins in the context of GRCC's general education program and is carried out through the GRCC Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) in all academic programs. Their General Education program underwent a pilot year (2011-2012) for determining distribution and learning outcomes. The MQC Feedback Report sees the various learning outcome results (retention, completion, graduation, and transfer) as Strengths. However, it also notes that results from developmental education students (AFP) are an Opportunity, particularly because one of their Core Competencies is minimizing barriers for underprepared learners. GRCC provides faculty with professional development and research support opportunities to continue to build knowledge and contribute in both their specific fields and in teaching and learning, and the MQC Feedback report sees this as a Strength. However, the need to employ a systematic process to ensure that employees continue to train and develop and to ensure training meets the needs of the participants is an Opportunity. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 3B.

- **Core Component 3C: The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.**

GRCC follows the HLC Assumed Practice regarding faculty credentials. Instructors who teach in GRCC's dual credit and contractual programs are all hired by the College and must meet the College's hiring standards. The MQC Feedback Report cites GRCC's systematic approach to assess workforce needs and capacity as a Strength. However, the organization is in the early stages of developing an approach to manage workforce change, and it does not have a strategic approach to recruiting a diverse workforce. These areas are considered Opportunities by the MQC. Through the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), the College

provides professional development to full-time and adjunct faculty, and the College has agreements with regional four-year institutions of higher education so that faculty professional development programming and events are shared. GRCC utilizes faculty evaluation systems dependent on the status of the faculty. In addition to Office Hours required by faculty contracts, the Academic Governing Council (AGC)'s Academic Standards for Faculty state that faculty are expected to 1) establish a professional relationship with students and between students and 2) create and maintain a community of learners. The MQC Feedback Report notes the number of relationship building activities for students as a Strength as are the student satisfaction results with service areas. However, MQC Feedback Report points to unstable trends in active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners, benchmarks measured by CCSSE, as Opportunities. Regarding support services, another Strength noted is an effective process for innovation in program development such as the programs that assist students through the student life cycle. Student feedback also leads to action projects and improvements and results indicate strong student satisfaction in service areas considered key to the organization. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 3C.

- **Core Component 3D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.**

GRCC provides a complex infrastructure and resources supporting its educational mission, including student support services to meet the needs of the student populations. Services such as tutoring, counseling, advising, disability support, support for students in occupational programs, and service learning are provided free of charge, and student satisfaction results with these services make this an area of Strength according to the MQC Feedback Report. However, the Report also suggests that segmentation of student data in these areas could provide more accurate information for improvement planning. The Academic Foundation Program (AFP) provides Developmental Education as needed. As noted in 3B, the results of these courses are an Opportunity. The mature approach to orientation programs is considered a Strength by the MQC. However, the Early Alert Flag System is not reviewed by student segments to determine trends or opportunities for continuous improvement when students are at risk; therefore, this is considered an Opportunity. The lack of a systematic process for proactively identifying programs and services for its students also presents the institution with an Opportunity. MQC notes that faculty portfolios including personal statements of teaching and learning philosophy, evidence of effective teaching, and evidence of student service are a Strength. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 3D.

- **Core Component 3E: The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.**

The GRCC Experience states: *“GRCC provides students with co-curricular experiences that help them develop their citizenship skills.”* The institution measures this by 1) the number of students involved in a campus organization, and 2) the percentage of classes that offer a co-curricular component (service learning). However, the MQC Feedback Report notes that Indicators of Success lack comparative/competitive data in percent of students in

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clubs/organizations/athletics, courses with co-curricular activities, and community collaborative partnerships, making this an area for Opportunity. Determining and using comparative and competitive information could help GRCC to strengthen its core competencies, address strategic advantages and challenges, and meet the Ends (Strategic Goals). Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 3E.

Overall Comments on Criterion Three

GRCC provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. Its degree programs are current and require the necessary standards for the degrees awarded. Learning Outcomes are identified on an Institutional, Program, and Course basis. CARP helps ensure the institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations. The general education program is comprised of courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Quantitative Skills and Natural Sciences. Students have opportunities such as the Honors Program and Service Learning to contribute to scholarship, creative, and community work. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of appropriately credentialed faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty. GRCC supports faculty and staff in their professional development through the Center for Teaching Excellence and external relationships. Student support services staff, including financial aid advising and academic advising, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. GRCC provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. In Academic Support, there are seven subject-specific drop-in tutorial labs, a peer-tutoring program, and several targeted programs that support high-risk classes. The Counseling and Career Center provides free services to all students, and a program is designed to work with students who are first generation college students and who meet federal income guidelines. Accuplacer Test scores and career counselors are used to place new students in appropriate courses. GRCC co-curricular programs are suited to their mission and contribute to the overall educational experience of its students. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Criterion 3.

Criterion Four. 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.*

- **Core Component 4A:** *The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.*

GRCC maintains a practice of regular program review that is systematic and well deployed, and the MQC Feedback Report deems this to be a Strength. The New Program Development Process determines the need for additional programs based on stakeholder requirements and to ensure the design of the program meets learner needs. Also, a modified Program Review Process has been developed in response to internal and external feedback to provide a more relevant and meaningful review of academic programs. The transfer agreements that GRCC maintains, the ease of transfer of credits, and the success of their students who transfer to 4-

year institutions are all evidence of quality programs. They also maintain an extensive system for transcript evaluation processes for non-traditional, military, and prior-learning experience. The quality of its programs extends to learning resources where GRCC maintains authority through the various units that deliver those resources and through institutional committees that oversee and monitor the resources that are provided by outside vendors. GRCC demonstrates its commitment to supporting student learning by focusing resources on instruction, and MQC cites this as a Strength. Quality education is also reflected in how GRCC remained 100% compliant for regulatory and accreditation requirements from 2007 to 2011 in ADA, OSHA/MIOSHA, EPA, and Workforce certification/licenses. Student Success is part of the *GRCC Indicator Report* that documents and demonstrates the status of those indicators the Board has selected to monitor for each of the six College Ends (Strategic Goals). The report provides updated performance levels for each of the Indicators of Success (IOS), historical data reaching back five years, benchmark data, and targets. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 4A.

- **Core Component 4B: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.**

The GRCC curriculum model applies measurable student learning outcomes at the institutional, program, and course levels, enabling faculty to assess student learning at each level. A 6-step process for assessing student learning on an annual basis includes developing an Action Plan for improvement. Program faculty, with their deans, associate deans, department heads, and program directors, are responsible for carrying out the program review and assessment of student learning processes. In the next few years, GRCC will transition to WEAVEonline to warehouse the Assessment of Student Learning information and findings. However, the MQC Feedback Report points to the results for developmental education students (AFP) for Math and English, which show GRCC performance behind the national NCCPB benchmark, as an Opportunity. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 4B.

- **Core Component 4C: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.**

GRCC uses indicators for student retention, persistence, and completion in its monitoring system to track progress of Student Success. Specifically, the College tracks the following in the *Indicator Report*: Percent of students who successfully transfer to another college/university (within three years); Percent of students who successfully transfer or complete a degree or certificate (within six years); Three-year completion rate for first-time, full-time students; Fall-to-fall retention rate for first-time students; Fall-to-winter persistence rate for all students (full- and part-time); Course success rates (% of A-C grades), and Student performance at transfer colleges. The MQC Feedback Report deems its systematic approach to the selection, collection, and alignment of performance measures through these Indicators as a Strength. Collecting and analyzing student retention, persistence, and completion data is primarily the responsibility of the Institutional Research and Planning

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Office. Program Faculty then use the data to evaluate student success, and these evaluations can then lead to Action Plans. As mentioned with Core Component 4B, the MQC Feedback Report credit GRCC for monitoring student outcomes data for credit and non-credit students, yet it notes the lack of segmented results for other students groups as an Opportunity. Where such segmentation is available, it is not being systematically reviewed. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 4C.

Overall Comments on Criterion Four

Through a robust system of program and course reviews, the institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs. It also maintains its high standard for learning environments by following a rigorous evaluation of transcripts and credits, upholding prerequisites for courses, and clearly outlining and assessing student learning outcomes. GRCC maintains quality support services and utilizes a variety of student and stakeholder satisfaction mechanisms to evaluate these services and plan for improvements. The institution evaluates its effectiveness for student learning through a PDIA (Process Design and Improvement/Innovation Approach) system on an institutional, programmatic, and course level. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Criterion Four.

Criterion Five. 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.*

- **Core Component 5A: The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.**

GRCC provides evidence that its resource base supports the current educational programs and plans for maintaining and strengthening quality in the future. GRCC aligns human, fiscal, and infrastructure resource allocation with its mission, vision, values and Ends through the Strategic Planning System, thus ensuring the College has resources available to support and accomplish College Action Projects, instructional programs, student services, and business and general operations.

The fiscal health of the College is evident in several ways. General fund assets increased from \$9.9 M in 2007 to \$11 M in 2011 while costs have been controlled over the past three years. GRCC has managed operations within budget since 2007 while facing declines in revenue sources. GRCC dedicates 53% of its revenue to instruction which reinforces the College's commitment to the End of Student Success. GRCC has maintained an S&P bond rating of AA since 2008. In addition, the College saved more than \$3.5 million in the 2011-12 academic year from several sustainability initiatives and targets additional savings in 2012-13. The College reduced its use of electricity, natural gas, water, and sewer. This was noted as a Strength by MQC. Based on the evidence provided, it is opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 5A.

- **Core Component 5B: The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.**

GRCC provides evidence that that its governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable it to fulfill its mission, promote leadership accountability, decision making at the point of service, a focus on the future, and high performance.

There is an opportunity for GRCC to use performance data to improve its governance and leadership systems while fulfilling the values of excellence and accountability. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 5B.

- **Core Component 5C: The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.**

GRCC engages in systematic and integrated planning. The MQC Feedback Report identified the systematic nature and robust deployment of the GRCC Strategic Planning System (SPS) as a Strength. The SPS includes environmental scanning, student inputs, strategies, Indicators of Success, and College Action Projects, providing a system for strategy development and implementation. The SPS is integrated with the Grand Rapids Community College Path to Success (GPS) which aligns overall direction with mission, vision, and values.

The College continuously gathers and analyzes information from a variety of key sources to facilitate informed decision making when developing strategies and action plans. Consideration is given to technology shifts, market/demographics changes, student preferences, and regulatory requirements. These inputs are collected and analyzed through Institutional Research and Planning (IRP). A Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) consisting of more than 80 members representing all areas of the organization reviews the MVV and uses visioning exercises, an IOS exercise, and a Mix-Max session to formulate short and long term strategies. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 5C.

- **Core Component 5D: The institution works systematically to improve its performance.**

GRCC provides ample evidence that it works systematically to improve performance. It implemented a dashboard system at the College, VP, and department levels. Department and CAP team Indicators of Success align with the dashboard IOS and include department-specific key measures. The Michigan Quality Council noted the Strategic Planning Process as a key strength as it creates an environment for organizational performance improvement and the accomplishment of its mission and strategic goals. In addition, a Board Monitoring Report process provides the opportunity for discussion and mid-course correction. Throughout the MQC Feedback Report, limited systematic cycles of evaluation and improvement for many of GRCC's key processes were identified as an Opportunity. For example, some key processes such as the leadership process for Board President assessment,

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GRCC Path to Success (GPS), the Strategic Planning System (SPS), Ethics Monitoring System (EMS), and the Work System Development process all lack systematic cycles of improvement and learning. This begin said, based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Core Component 5D.

Overall Comments on Criterion Five

In these trying economic times, it is clear that GRCC's strategic planning process has provided the institution with the resources necessary to effectively accomplish its MVV and Ends. Effective strategic planning processes that provide viable, practical guides to institutional operations serve the institution well as personnel and outside influences continue to change. GRCC has a sound economic base, adequate resources, and institutional planning processes well established to meet challenges both in the near and long-term future. Based on the evidence provided, it is the opinion of this team that GRCC meets Criterion Five.

Team advice and counsel on institutional improvement and future directions.

The comments in the sections above relate specifically to explicit accreditation expectations and the institution's presentation of the evidence that it meets them.

Since the Academic Quality Improvement Program is equally concerned with the need for quality institutions to strive continuously to improve their performance, the following constitutes additional advice and counsel the team wishes to share with the institution to further its journey toward excellence. Attending to this advice and counsel is not an explicit requirement related to continuing accreditation, but doing so is vital to the health and success of the institution.

Grand Rapids Community College is an institution dedicated to accomplishing its MVV to provide an open, quality learning environment to the publics it serves. To accomplish this, the College has a complex system of policies which are designed to provide clear directions for its leadership and those involved in providing the College's educational opportunities. Without actual involvement in the institution, it is impossible for this team of outside observers to make definitive statements about the College's policy structure. It appears to be working quite well. That is most likely a tribute to those GRCC personnel responsible to carrying out or working within and under each policy.

While we are impressed with this administrative structure, we can also see the possibilities for conflict, depending on who is reading and applying a particular policy. In the spirit of the statement above, the team respectfully submits that College leaders fully assess the value of its policy structure. If that structure is serving the institution well and meeting its objectives, then College leadership deserves high commendation. If that structure serves to confine in any way the creativity and enthusiasm of College personnel in meeting the MVV, then College leadership is encouraged to take steps to revise that structure so it more truly allows the good people at the College to do their good work.

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The team is impressed with the quality of materials presented to document the College's continuous improvement journey. From those materials, we are convinced that GRCC is fully vested as a continuous improvement institution, and that the publics it serves are the beneficiaries of that vestment. The College can be seen as a leader in the AQIP process by the nature of its involvement in the Baldrige movement and using those materials as the base for its AQIP process. We encourage the College to continually celebrate its successes and continue its participation in this innovative method of documenting its continuous improvement journey.