Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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September 23, 2013

Charles Dassance
Interim President
Colorado Mountain College
802 Grand Ave.
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Dear Interim President Dassance:

Enclosed is a copy of Colorado Mountain College's *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. We ask that you formally acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Your response will become part of your institution's permanent HLC file. Please email your response to AQIP@hlcommission.org.
Sincerely,

Mary L. Green
AQIP Process Administrator

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

SEPTEMBER 23, 2013

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Academic Quality Improvement Program

The Higher Learning Commission NCA

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ELEMENTS OF Colorado Mountain College's FEEDBACK REPORT

Welcome to the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. This report provides AQIP's official response to an institution's *Systems Portfolio* by a team of peer reviewers (the Systems Appraisal Team). After the team independently reviews the institution's portfolio, it reaches consensus on essential elements of the institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by AQIP Category, and any significant issues related to accreditation. These are then presented in three sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*: "Strategic Challenges Analysis," "AQIP Category Feedback," and "Accreditation Issues Analysis.*"* These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating institutional performance, surfacing critical issues or accreditation concerns, and assessing institutional performance. Ahead of these three areas, the team provides a "Reflective Introduction" followed closely by an "Executive Summary." The appraisal concludes with commentary on the overall quality of the report and advice on using the report. Each of these areas is overviewed below.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team has only the institution's *Systems Portfolio* to guide its analysis of the institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently the team's report may omit important strengths, particularly if the institution were too modest to stress them or if discussion or documentation of these areas in the *Systems Portfolio* were presented minimally. Similarly the team may point out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving wide-spread institutional attention. Indeed it is possible that some areas recommended for potential improvement have since become strengths rather than opportunities through the institution's ongoing efforts. Recall that the overarching goal of the Systems Appraisal Team is to provide an institution with the best possible advice for ongoing improvement.

The various sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* can be described as follows:

> **Reflective Introduction & Executive Summary**: In this first section of the *System's Appraisal Feedback Report*, the team provides a summative statement that reflects its broad understanding of the institution and the constituents served (Reflective Introduction), and also the team's overall judgment regarding the institution's current performance in relation to the nine AQIP Categories (Executive Summary). In the Executive Summary, the team considers such factors as: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback; and systematic processes for improvement of

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the activities that each AQIP Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

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. Teams formulate judgments related to strategic challenges and accreditation issues (discussed below) through careful analysis of the Organizational Overview included in the institution's Systems Portfolio and through the team's own feedback provided for each AQIP Category. These collected findings offer a framework for future improvement of processes and systems.

AQIP Category Feedback: The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* addresses each AQIP Category by identifying (and also coding) strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Through comments, which are keyed to the institution's Systems Portfolio, the team offers brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by AQIP Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is often considered the heart of the *Feedback Report*.

Accreditation Issues Analysis: Accreditation issues are areas where an institution may have not yet provided sufficient evidence that it meets the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. It is also possible that the evidence provided suggests to the team that the institution may have difficulties, whether at present or in the future, in satisfying the *Criteria*. As with strategic challenges, teams formulate judgments related to accreditation issues through close analysis of the entire Systems Portfolio with particular attention given to the evidence that the institution provides for satisfying the various core components of the *Criteria*. For purposes of consistency, AQIP instructs appraisal teams to identify any accreditation issue as a strategic challenge as well.

Quality of Report & Its Use: As with any institutional report, the *Systems Portfolio* should work to enhance the integrity and credibility of the organization by celebrating successes while also stating honestly those opportunities for improvement. The *Systems Portfolio* should therefore be transformational, and it should provide external peer reviewers insight as to how such transformation may occur through processes of continuous improvement. The AQIP Categories and the Criteria for Accreditation serve as the overarching measures for the institution's current state as well as its proposed future state. As such, it is imperative that the *Portfolio* be fully developed, that it adhere to

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the prescribed format, and that it be thoroughly vetted for clarity and correctness. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution following this review, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

REFLECTIVE INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

The following consensus statement is from the System Appraisal Team's review of the institution's *Systems Portfolio Overview* and its introductions to the nine AQIP Categories. The purpose of this reflective introduction is to highlight the team's broad understanding of the institution, its mission, and the constituents that is serves.

Colorado Mountain College (CMC) is a large, rural community college with multiple campuses serving a variety of student and community populations. Its 12,000+ square mile district makes it one of the largest rural community colleges in the nation. CMC offers 50 Associate degrees, 70 vocational/technical certificates, and 2 bachelor's degrees. Even with its financial stability, it faces challenges due to the resignation of its president, 2 vice-presidents, 3 Student Affairs leaders, the head of the foundation, the Chief Information Officer, and several other instructional chairs. The College is in the process of updating its strategic plan to increase its focus, effectiveness, and efficiency of processes rather than "trying to do everything."

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight Colorado Mountain College achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

- Category 1: Academic and Student Affairs personnel, with support from the Quality Team, collaborate to develop and improve student programs. CMC has built a unique framework for helping students learn through its Signature Learning Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which are tied to a Strategic Focus Area for students, and monitored through the College's Balanced Score Card. However, it appears the institution has some challenges in collecting and analyzing this data.

- Category 2: CMC has identified six areas of focus in its non-instructional processes – athletics, research, community enrichment, economic development, alumni affairs, and donor relations. However, CMC recognizes the need for processes in this category to become more systematic,

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aligned, and integrated especially because it is heavily invested in serving the community and dependent on community partnerships.

- Category 3: CMC utilizes multiple data sources to determine student's needs. The college is currently developing an improved plan for communicating and using this data college wide. AQIP projects focused on promoting student engagement and success, and implementation of the Bachelor's degree have been successfully employed. The College reports that it needs to use the results from CCSSE, SENSE, CCLA, NCCBP, and IDEA to better advantage.

- Category 4: CMC executed an AQIP Project in 2010 to "Implement an Effective Leadership and Communication System to Become a High Performance Organization." However, they report that the project was not successful in sustaining the desired outcome. The resignation of the last president, and resignations and retirements by a significant number of college-wide personnel set back at least some of these gains and highlighted the need for succession plans. CMC lacks a systematic, college-wide strategy to demonstrate effective decision-making and communications in its relationships with its shareholders

- Category 5: CMC is in the midst of a leadership transition, and the portfolio indicated that the institution expects the employment of a new president to provide momentum to improve its leading and communications function. The College has hired a consulting firm to develop the 2014-21 strategic plan with the goal of aligning the budget, facilities, and IT planning that will provide a focus for the next president. Another consultant is working on a gap analysis.

- Category 6: CMC has begun the process of identifying support area goals. However, these goals are not necessarily integrated into its strategic plan and data collection activities. The portfolio indicated that they are not uniformly supported by leadership nor are they systematically reviewed.

- Category 7: CMC has implemented a systematic approach to institutional assessment, and uses a variety of sources in its benchmarking efforts. KPIs for student, program, and institutional progress and success relative to the strategic plan have been in place since 2008 and are monitored regularly. In spite of this, CMC is not always systematic or consistent in its use of data, and the institution has self-reported concerns regarding the integrity of the data it collects.

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- Category 8: The 2008-11 strategic plan furthered CMC's mission, vision, and AQIP principles and projects; consequently, the alignment of planning processes began to improve. The development of the 2014-21 plan is underway under the guidance of a consulting firm.

- Category 9: The College serves a large and diverse community, making the building of collaborative relationships a complex task. There is an opportunity for developing a more systematic approach to building, monitoring, and assessing collaborative relationships.

Note: Strategic challenges and accreditation issues are discussed in detail in subsequent sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES FOR COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the Systems Appraisal Team attempted to identify the broader issues that would seem to present the greatest challenges and opportunities for the institution in the coming years. These areas are ones that the institution should address as it seeks to become the institution it wants to be. From these the institution may discover its immediate priorities as well as shaping strategies for long-term performance improvement. These items may also serve as the basis for future activities and projects that satisfy other AQIP requirements. The team also considered whether any of these challenges put the institution at risk of not meeting the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. That portion of the team's work is presented later in this report.

Knowing that **Colorado Mountain College** will discuss these strategic challenges, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified the following:

- Establishment of Measures:

  Although the Balanced Scorecard has been developed and is being implemented, the measures are often so broad that they limit the diagnostic information needed for actionable feedback. Further, responses to the Results questions often reference the instruments of measurement, not the measures themselves, nor do they routinely provide data. While qualitative analysis, driven by indirect measures, can provide some useful information, the discipline of using direct measures is useful in overcoming biases and blind spots, and thus can provide a clearer picture of how well

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the College is achieving its outcomes. Providing specific results (tables, charts, graphs, longitudinal data) within the portfolio would help provide evidence of how the criteria are being met.

- Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data:

  While the College reports collecting copious amounts of data, has regularly scheduled reports, and uses a Balanced Scorecard, it is not clear how this information is being transformed into the knowledge needed to make improvement decisions.   As it matures as an AQIP institution, CMC would benefit by strengthening its ability to utilize appropriate data to establish reasonable outcome expectations, set targets for improvement, and track and report its progress over time. The data/information/knowledge/wisdom process could be useful in developing use of data and result in related gains in measuring effectiveness.

- Planning:

  Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, a consulting firm is currently facilitating the development of the strategic planning process. Planning provides the opportunity to be proactive, rather than reactive, in the approach to institutional challenges. Completion and implementation of the new strategic plan should serve to align initiatives with the College's mission and vision.

- Leadership Transition:

  The recently experienced transitions in leadership have underscored the need for the College to establish and implement a succession plan. Processes, results, and improvement planning, while influenced by executive leadership, should permeate the whole institution, and should move the College forward during periods of transition.

AQIP CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following section, the Systems Appraisal Team delineates institutional strengths along with opportunities for improvement within the nine AQIP Categories. As explained above, the symbols used in this section are **SS** for outstanding strength, **S** for strength, **O** for opportunity for improvement, and **OO** for outstanding opportunity for improvement. The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the team members and deserves the institution's thoughtful consideration. Comments marked **SS** or **OO** may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and

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maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

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

CMC demonstrates a commitment to helping students learn though processes for curriculum development and program review. The College is coordinating and aligning the development and assessment of student learning outcomes that are reflective of the state's general education standards and of program-specific businesses and accreditation agencies. Opportunities for developing a more comprehensive assessment program include ensuring consistent collection of data, particularly in regard to direct evidence of student learning; segmenting data as appropriate to better understand student needs; and co-curricular/curricular alignment. CMC has begun to demonstrate that using data to make process improvements, documenting the impact of those changes, refining outcomes, and setting targets improve student learning and enable the College to better achieve its mission and vision.

> **1P1a, S.** Colorado Mountain College developed Signature Learning Outcomes through a collaborative process including faculty, staff, administrative, and other community stakeholders; and these outcomes have been aligned with the five Colorado general education standards. The American Association of Colleges &Universities (AAC&U) assessment model for general education courses adopted by the College could be useful in refining and assessing their outcomes, and developing needed structures and processes. The institution has identified General Education Assessment as one of their AQIP Action Projects.

> **1P1b, O.** CMC is encouraged to continue to review and develop delivery of student learning outcomes for general education such as technological and quantitative literacy that are not being

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consistently addressed in courses. Doing so would enable the College to consistently deliver their student learning outcomes for general education.

1P2, S. Student learning outcomes are designed through collaboration with program faculty, business and industry advisory committees, and state and national standards. With the assistance of the Director of Assessment, program faculty, and the Assessment committee, these learning outcomes are reviewed for consistency with institutional outcomes.

1P3, SS. CMC's two-phase process for designing and approving new courses and programs addresses needs, benefits, employment, resources, and competitive markets, and engages multiple college departments and external stakeholders. This process embodies the AQIP principles of involvement and foresight.

1P4, S. CMC uses the process outlined in 1P3 to create responsive academic programming and there are multiple examples of ways the College uses programs to meet industry and community needs (Go 2 Work, Upward Bound, Concurrent Enrollment, Integrated Energy, ESL, GED programs, online courses, etc.). The College is actively engaged in working with the district high schools for CE and dual enrollments, and developmental courses are provided as needed for all students.

1P5, O. While CMC reports "…numerous methods for determining the preparation needs …," and cites general education courses and prerequisite courses as preparing students for progression, it does not describe specific processes for this. Identification and elucidation of such processes would complement the 2-phase design and development process, and provide evidence of preparation required.

1P6. O. Multiple methods are utilized to build relationships with prospective and applied students in processes for search, financing, selection, and registration. While a number of communication vehicles, such as a website, student portal, print publications, and social media are referenced, the portfolio is unclear as to what the communications encompass and/or if students are required to review them. CMC could benefit from a well-developed rubric to ensure key communication elements are properly communicated to perspective students.

1P7a, S. CMC provides advising assistance to students in program selection (including interest inventories), career counseling services, and Career Services workshops. The student orientation program is also used to this end and was reviewed and improved in 2010. Degree audit software

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assists in the advising process and ensures timely student graduation.

1P7b, O. It is not clear from the portfolio if the orientation program is mandatory. Requiring participation could ensure that all students have at least a basic understanding of the tools and resources that CMC provides to help them succeed.

1P8, SS. CMC has a coordinated approach to help underprepared students succeed. Sub-scores achieved on ACT or SAT tests and/or Accuplacer testing are used for placement. An early alert system is in place for faculty use and a similar system is being implemented for resident assistants on residential campuses. Using supplemental instructional software such as My Foundations Lab, and PLATO learning modules students assist in the development of skills needed to succeed. Other support includes open learning labs, tutoring, library support, Adult Basic Literacy Education, and English as a Second Language (ESL) opportunities.

1P9a, S. A Teaching Effectiveness course is required for all faculty and adjuncts, and the Office of Innovation offers training on an array of innovative technology. In addition, disability services and first generation student programs are promoted and provided to those populations of students.

1P9b, O. While CMC offers faculty a variety of resources to help faculty become more effective teachers and multiple learning modalities are used, there is no mention of diagnostic tools or services to help students assess their learning styles, nor is it clear how consistently faculty identify them and adapt pedagogy to meet them. Further, it is not clear if the required teaching course addresses student learning styles. Increasing faculty and student awareness of learning styles and developing a framework to ensure courses address the different learning styles could benefit the College.

1P10, S. CMC offers learning opportunities for seniors (RSVP), extended hours for evening students, the *Encore!* program for adult learners, pre-collegiate services for first generation students, and has developed specific resources, policies, and procedures (e.g., interpreting services) to assist students with disabilities. It has recently expanded staff and utilized federal grants to provide academic assistance to targeted students.

1P11, SS. CMC has developed a comprehensive approach to professional development to promote teaching and learning for all faculty, including professional development resources for adjuncts. The institution has well-documented guidelines and systems to track and communicate professional development opportunities.

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1P12, S. CMC utilizes a variety of delivery systems, such as, face-to-face, hybrid, distance, learning, outdoor education, experiential education, independent studies, internships and service learning. ITS works with the Office of Innovations in Teaching and Learning to maintain and improve technology infrastructure in support of the multiple forms of course delivery.

1P13, S. CMC ensures courses and programs are up-to-date and effective through a variety of processes including program mapping, academic program review, and oversight of the CTE programs. In addition, the institution uses instructional supervisors to review syllabi every semester to ensure accuracy, quality standards, student learning outcomes, strong academic plans, and important student information on grades and financial aid.

1P14, S. CMC has formal reviews annually to determine continuance of courses, and CTE programs are reviewed informally on an annual basis. The entire program review process was reviewed in 2010, resulting in establishment of a formal policy statement and a two-tiered review process for AAS programs.

1P15a, S. CMC identifies learning support needs through a variety of activities, including initial assessments by the Office of Enrollment Management. A plethora of support encompassing remedial assistance, technological enhancements, and supplemental services for special needs students are offered to address these needs.

1P15b, O. While the institution relies heavily on "referrals" from faculty and others to determine student support needs—and this approach is beneficial—it can be very limiting if the faculty are not closely monitoring the students' progress. Identifying additional measures that could be tracked and monitored for student academic success could help to close this gap. Further, it is not clear how student and faculty needs for global support services (e.g. libraries, laboratories) are determined and addressed; identifying processes to support these needs could complete the picture.

1P16, OO. While CMC sponsors co-curricular learning activities that include film festivals, international travel, archeological digs, health fairs, and ski team competitions, it is not clear how co-curricular development goals align with established learning outcomes. Identification of co-curricular goals could provide the basis for alignment with established learning outcomes.

1P17a, S. CMC assesses general education outcomes utilizing standardized tests. Feedback from advisory groups and employers as well as state and national exams are additional assessment

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methods used.

1P17b, O. The College could benefit from using their Professional Photography program as a model for assessing student learning outcomes at the program level, and by assessing general education learning outcomes at the course level on a consistent basis. This information, coupled with the aforementioned test data, could enable the institution to pinpoint where learning is, or is not, happening and where improvements are needed. The institution may also benefit from joining the HLC Assessment Academy.

1P18a, S. Faculty are actively involved in the assessment process to evaluate student learning outcomes using VALUE guidelines, Bloom's taxonomy, etc. and attend yearly meetings with other colleges to review best practices. Since 2011, a full-time Director of Assessment has assisted in the collection, analysis, and storage of assessment data.

1P18b, O. Structures and processes are described; however it is not clear how comprehensive assessment efforts are at the College. As CMC continues to develop capacity in assessment, creating a model that ensures that there is a systematic method for assessing student learning in all courses could result in a more complete picture of student learning.

1R1a, S. CMC uses Key Performance Indicators and a Balanced Scorecard to capture key pieces of data from the many types of measures that are collected, and shares these via a variety of formats to stakeholder groups. Some longitudinal data are used, and some benchmarks have been established.

1R1b, O. While CMC is developing an assessment culture, there is room for improvement. The measures referenced are informative, but may not provide the diagnostic information needed to identify issues and strengths. This could limit the College's ability to improve student learning. CMC also has the opportunity to report on the new General Education assessments that have been collected, but are not yet ready for review and reporting with this portfolio.

1R2a, S. CMC has collected several years of data regarding retention, course completion, graduate satisfaction, and course assessments in order to establish baseline and trends. Indirect measures have been generally positive and consistent over a five year period. Indirect measures on the BSC demonstrate consistent improvement in course completion and student satisfaction although a decline is noted in retention.

1R2b, O. While multi-year data are provided, it is unclear how these data have been used to

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specifically improve processes or make changes in student learning assessments. Analysis could be improved by segmenting these data to understand how subgroups of students (e.g. underprepared, first generation, part-time, etc.) are faring and to better understand student learning.

1R3, O. For those programs that have specialized accreditation, CMC collects and analyzes data to ensure students can demonstrate competency. However, although CMC states that specific program performance results are reported on a five-year reporting cycle, these results are not included.

1R4, S. Generally, surveys of community and businesses indicate a relatively high level of satisfaction with graduates. Transfer rates compare favorably with other 2-year institutions. CMC graduates are transferring to four year institutions at a rate rivaled by only 16 other community colleges in the nation.

1R5a, S. CMC has adopted a continuous improvement process in its assessment of Student Affairs and as a result has developed best practices, standardized evaluations, and uses the data to further improve processes and identify student needs.

1R5b, O. While CMC reports general outcomes related to learning support processes, except for Student Affairs, it does not appear that the institution has measures in place to track performance results specific to these processes. The College may wish to expand its data collection and analysis to better measure results in this category.

1R6, S. CMC utilizes NCCBP, CCSSE, CCLA, IDEA and IPEDS for comparative data analysis and reports results of each, including those areas that need further improvement. Of note is the recognition of being in the top 20 for student success rates.

1I1, S. CMC has made a variety of improvements based on analysis of processes which address several aspects of helping students learn such as learning outcomes assessment, benchmarking, delivery methods, student orientation, program development, and communication.

1I2, S. CMC is developing a comfort level with continuous progress strategies, and uses various AQIP tools to plan improvements on an assortment of operational and academic topics.

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AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives: This category addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of its mission. Depending on the institution's character, it examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 2.

Although CMC has listed six areas of other distinctive objectives, work needs to be done to progress past individual campus projects toward a more institutional focus. The participation by community members on advisory boards, the positive press, and the donor base attest to the value the community places on the services offered by CMC. Identification of specific processes, specific goals, data collection points, documented results, expanded comparisons, and strategic approaches to Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives could provide a basis for a more unified and comprehensive approach. CMC recognizes the opportunity for considerable growth in this category.

2P1, O. While CMC has identified six non-instructional functions that serve key stakeholder groups, the portfolio was unclear on how they were determined to be goals, what strategic goal or object each of these exemplifies, nor the process that is used or will be used to evaluate effective accomplishment of goals and objectives. By clarifying these processes CMC has the opportunity to determine how well they are serving their significant stakeholder groups.

2P2a, S. Objectives are determined by a variety of employees using a range of data and inputs and connected with current strategic planning. The College has a clearly defined process for internal constituents to propose projects to the College Leadership Team (CLT); community advisory groups for each campus share information about initiatives and opportunities for CMC.

2P2b, O. CMC describes a process whereby an individual may request that a project be approved for implementation. However it is unclear what process is used for project selection, how these projects are aligned with institutional goals, and what the process is for implementing and assessing achievement of goals. CMC has the opportunity to describe how projects are determined to be appropriate for implementation, how they align with the goals of the institution, and how they will be assessed to determine if these goals were achieved.

2P3, O. While CMC uses a variety of communication tools to convey expectations, the portfolio

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offers little guidance as to how, when, and to which audience its objectives are communicated. Developing strong, clear lines of communication could ensure successful implementation of these initiatives.

2P4, O. Assessment and review of the objectives is done in conjunction with the strategic planning involvement of all members of the CLT; however, it is unclear how this assessment takes place or what criteria are used to determine value and appropriateness. The College could benefit from coordinating reviews in order to avoid possible duplication of effort while ensuring needs are met.

2P5, O. Faculty and staff needs relative to the distinctive objectives and their operations appear to be determined reactively rather than proactively and are addressed when they "…surface during the over/under allocation process…" Proactive determination of faculty and staff needs could provide a more strategic approach.

2P6, O. It appears that readjustment of these objectives and processes is solely based on available resources. Determination of needed resources prior to implementation of a project could ensure a more strategic approach to projects chosen.

2R1, O. While a process is described regarding how CMC quantifies partnerships and foundation activities, this does not describe results from the six non-instructional distinct objectives listed in **2P1.** CMC has the opportunity to describe results from each of the six initiatives described in 2P1 and results from each project or a sample from each objective in order to better measure desired outcomes.

2R2, OO. Although the portfolio summarizes data regarding partnerships and donors and there is some informal analysis, very little specific data is shared. The College needs to develop and use measures for its projects that will provide information needed for making improvements. As more data are collected, the College will also have the opportunity to consider results longitudinally.

2R3, S. The College has comparison data from the AQIP Partnership Survey and from the NCCBP; while the specific data are not shared and results are generally summarized, CMC compares favorably with the selected counterparts.

2R4, S. The College reports that their results, if well publicized, enhance creditability resulting in attracting good faculty, increased financial investments, and support from local municipalities. CMC enjoys positive press, as well as, positive "word of mouth" in their region.

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2I1a, S. The College reports a number of improvements, including the establishment of the alumni association, naming of major auditoriums, ArtShare, and a Director of Career Services which serve their communities and strengthen CMC.

2I1b, O. As noted in the portfolio, the College has the opportunity to continue to become more systematic in its processes and better aligned with other areas. Continuing this quality journey could create stronger integration of the distinctive objectives.

2I2, O. The portfolio notes that CMC generally uses its strategic planning process to target improvements and although a number of "opportunities" are described, it is not clear if or how these were selected. Clarifying these targets can better inform stakeholders of success toward possible improvements.

AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs: This category examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 3.

Student Affairs has developed an understanding of continuous improvement tools, processes, and effective use of data that could serve as a model within the College. CMC has a systematic process for dealing with complaints. As noted in the portfolio, there is a need to make better use of data. Helping employees and departments move through the data/knowledge/understanding/wisdom process could make data more relevant and create actionable feedback for making improvements.

3P1a, S. CMC utilizes multiple methods of data collection at the institutional, program, and course level which are shared in various venues. Comparison with benchmark institutions and discussion of the data lead to initiatives for selection of courses of action.

3P1b, O. It is unclear how other student needs –e.g. financial aid, counseling, tutoring - are identified, analyzed, or how final decisions are made. Further expanding the definition of "needs" could provide a more comprehensive picture for current and future improvements.

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3P2, SS. The College begins building relationships with high school students through dual-credit programs and close relationships with high school counselors. Several modalities serve as continuing contact points for students once they begin to express interest in CMC, such as open houses, pre-enrollment events, and orientation, which recently was put online for students who could not attend the face-to-face orientation. Enrolled students are offered multiple opportunities through campus life activities.

3P3a, S. Needs of key stakeholders are identified by internal and external community surveys and forums.

3P3b, O. Development of criteria and processes for utilization of the survey data could assist CMC in creating a more systematic approach to selection of courses of action.

3P4a, S. The College builds and maintains relationship with its key stakeholders through the use of advisory boards, active involvement of faculty and staff in the community, and sharing space with entities such as the Chamber of Commerce. CMC is also engaged in sustainability projects with the community.

3P4b, O. While the connections between employees and their communities are valuable, they are not necessarily systematic; moreover, communication about CMC may vary and/or may be impacted by other factors. The College has an opportunity to be more systematic in building and maintaining relationships with key internal and external stakeholders.

3P5, S. The institution utilizes program reviews, community surveys, informal channels of communication, and student performance to determine the future needs and success of a new or revised educational offering.

3P6, S. CMC has identified five categories of potential complaints and the related processes are widely publicized. Each complaint is reviewed by the appropriate administrator and a hearing officer.

3R1, S. Multiple local and standardized instruments (CCLA, CCSSE, etc.) are used to determine student and stakeholder satisfaction, including surveys every semester.

3R2a, S. CCSSE data for general student satisfaction is shared and there appears to be a positive trend for this measure.

3R2b, O. Other data about student satisfaction are referenced, but not shared. The College

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recognizes the need to make more appropriate use of its data. Engaging stakeholders in discussing what the numbers mean to them and moving through the data/knowledge/understanding/wisdom process could help people understand how data relate to their work.

3R3, O. While summary results are described from IDEA, SENSE and CCSSE, the specific performance results are not reported. The College has the opportunity to map its learning outcomes relating to student engagement onto its processes, events, and courses in order to better connect data with the area being measured.

3R4, O. The College references indications of positive relationships, but results are not reported for the segmented stakeholders identified in 3P1. Identifying and relating measures for each group could provide a clearer picture of stakeholder satisfaction and make results more relevant to appropriate departments.

3R5, S. Performance results regarding building relationships with key stakeholder groups, although limited in scope, indicate a generally favorable attitude about the institution from partners as well as graduates.

3R6, S. CMC compares well against their counterparts as reflected by being named as one of the top 20 schools nationwide for student success. In addition, the College understands the strengths and areas for improvement suggested by these data.

3I1a,O. While CMC has made improvements, there is an opportunity to learn how to make better use of data. As noted in the portfolio, Student Affairs provides a successful model for this. Developing a better understanding of what data mean, how it can be used to understand strengths and weaknesses, and how it relates to processes could enable the College to excel.

3I2, O. While CMC has processes for setting targets in the Balanced Scorecard, prioritizing targets could be more systematic. Systematically setting targets and prioritizing targets could ensure that strategic goals are achieved and resources are allocated appropriately.

AQIP Category 4: Valuing People: This category explores the institution's commitment to the development of its employees since the efforts of all faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel

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evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 4.

CMC recognizes that it faces challenges in the Valuing People category. The diversity of its stakeholders, absence of a succession plan, and the complexity of multiple sites create issues for the institution. While the College has basic systems in place to serve its people, it could benefit from comprehensive and systematic data collection, analysis, and utilization plan aligned with institutional goals and objectives in order to track its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement in this category. In several places the portfolio references processes which are "under review" with little to no information on the current processes; consequently, it is difficult to determine what is guiding the institution and its practices. Some past practices and AQIP teams have made changes that could be used as a model for future teams.

4P1, S. CMC follows standard procedures to identify the credentials and skills required in the selection of employees. Job descriptions are regularly reviewed.

4P2, S. Employee selection procedures at CMC follow a universally recognized process including multi-level participation, cross representative search committees, and budgetary considerations, etc., with the Human Resource Office overseeing the recruitment process. Professional development is available to support ongoing attainment of needed skills.

4P3, S. CMC utilizes standard advertising and recruitment methods in the selection of employees. All communication with prospective employees is coordinated by the Human Resource Office. Several incentives for retention include professional development, competitive salary, benefits, and wellness initiatives as well as listening to employee feedback.

4P4, O. CMC is taking actions to strengthen its employee orientation program. The College recognizes the need to orient employees to its history, mission, and values.

4P5, OO. While CMC uses its budget development process to plan for changes in personnel, it does not have a plan to determine where and when staff should be employed nor is a succession plan in operation. Such a plan could enable the College to function more effectively despite expected and unexpected changes when vacancies occur, especially at the higher management levels.

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4P6, O. Although the KPI related to satisfaction has improved, the College could benefit from a review of employee groupings to better define skills, provide flexible assignments, and cross-train employees. A consolidation of efforts could provide data for analysis to determine success. CMC may wish to reinstate its "grow your own leaders" development program as soon as conditions allow.

4P7, O. While CMC has IRB processes for research and scholarly practices, coordination of student complaints, financial audits and expectations of ethical behavior and administrative integrity, it is not clear how CMC ensures that all employees behave ethically. The current review and updating of the BOT policies and procedure present a good opportunity to include a strong statement of ethical practice, not only for the Board and administration, but all employees.

4P8, O. Although CMC has utilized AQIP projects and discussions with the Faculty Senate to determine training needs, it is not clear how training plans are aligned with organizational needs. Planning for and instituting processes tied to organizational needs could move the College from reactive to proactive.

4P9, S. New employees at CMC are provided job-specific training for their employment area. Each campus conducts two staff development days annually and adjunct instructors are paid for their participation. Ongoing faculty development is available via multiple means as well as support for conference attendance.

4P10, S. Faculty and staff annual evaluation processes using goal setting and goal evaluation are in place and utilized. Faculty evaluation includes supervisor observation and student feedback. Continued efforts to reward employees based on the College's progress toward the Key Performance Indicators could be of benefit.

4P11, O. Although CMC reports multiple venues for employee recognition and has addressed market adjustment of salaries, it is unclear how systems are designed to align with instructional and non-instructional programs and services. Development of a comprehensive recognition and compensation process along with criteria for the awards could underscore how employee activities support the institutional objectives.

4P12, O. While it appears some motivational issues are being addressed, there is no systematic process described for determining, analyzing, and selecting courses of action for such issues. Creating a process and/or building on existing related processes could enable CMC to focus on

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issues that are current and that matter most to employees.

4P13a, S. CMC utilizes a monthly wellness newsletter, wellness coaches, and a wellness stipend to encourage employee health and well-being. Employee surveys and focus groups are conducted regularly. The Director of Risk Management monitors risk exposures at the institution.

4P13b, O. CMC recognizes the need to develop a comprehensive plan for the use of input and data to address employee satisfaction, health, safety and well-being. Doing so could provide data by which improvements could be made.

4R1, O. While CMC regularly reviews KPIs related to professional development, employee satisfaction, and turnover, the College recognizes the need to determine and analyze specific measures, particularly those that involve recruitment, faculty evaluation, and diversity in its work force. The portfolio notes there are some opportunities relative to the faculty evaluation system and the effectiveness of related training.

4R2, O. CMC reports increases in employee satisfaction but below average results in work environment. CMC performance results in this category have been inconsistent and/or contradictory in that the overall score on the Great Colleges survey was "fair to mediocre" which offers a different picture from the KPIs. Continued focus on identifying desired outcomes and creating measurements to determine results as well as exploring why there may be differences in these measures may be helpful in understanding strengths and focusing on improvements needed.

4R3, O. Although CMC reports results of the Employee Survey administered from 2005-2012, it is unclear how these results evidence effectiveness in achieving the institution's goals. There is no further evidence presented related to productivity and effectiveness. Conducting analysis that addresses alignment of results with goals could provide a clearer picture in this area.

4R4, O. CMC has compiled limited but important information comparing its performance in this category to other institutions. It has an opportunity to conduct an external survey to verify self-assessment which could contribute to validity of the current instrument. There is also an opportunity to display data addressing these comparisons individually, as well as among campuses, and to address the work environment issues raised on the Great Colleges to Work For survey.

4I1, O. Although CMC reports having identified several areas for improvement in the category of Valuing People, it is unclear that these have been implemented. Doing so could provide data

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for analysis to evidence and recognize improvements.

4I2, O. CMC recognizes the need to develop an infrastructure to identify and implement processes and set benchmarks for areas they describe as "warranting attention."

AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating: This category addresses how the institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide planning, decision-making, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction-setting, use of data, analysis of results, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 5.

In several places throughout the portfolio, the institution references many things that are either pending or in process. Reliance on strategic planning processes to define mission, vision and values appears to be an inverse relationship. The opportunity exists to incorporate succession planning into the process which could help limit the amount of disruption when there is transition in leadership. Developing metrics for leading and communicating, encouraging employee participation in surveys, and engaging employees and leaders in understanding results and making improvements could develop leadership and the AQIP culture.

5P1a, S. Colorado Mountain College utilizes an annual strategic planning cycle with input from stakeholders to develop its mission and vision. With the current transition in leadership, the Board of Trustees (BOT), with the help of a consulting firm, has been actively involved in creating an interim strategic plan and gap analysis.

5P1b, O. Development of specific processes by which the mission, vision, and values are defined and reviewed independent of the strategic plan could create a more solid base for planning. CMC has the opportunity to take ownership of the plan and initiatives.

5P2, S. The policies of Colorado Mountain College are set by the BOT and it is the responsibility of the President, in conjunction with internal committees, to execute those policies and initiatives to further the mission, vision, values, and strategic plan.

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5P3, S. CMC's planning process includes input from employees, trustees, current and former students, and other key stakeholders. Currently the institution is using a consulting firm to conduct surveys, meetings, and focus groups with employees and key stakeholders to identify the needs and expectations of its stakeholders and incorporate them into a revised strategic plan for the Board's review and approval.

5P4, O. Although CMC reports a variety of activities to enhance student learning, it is unclear how leadership seeks future opportunities and guidance. Proactive efforts to identify and act upon future opportunities could help internal and external stakeholders take ownership in the processes.

5P5, O. While CMC has many standing committees, ad hoc committees/teams, temporary committees, working groups, and others in the decision making process, the portfolio is unclear as to how the actions of these groups are coordinated, carried out, and administered at the institution. The Communications Action Team has recently proposed revisions to the committee structure to streamline operations and improve communications.

5P6a, S. CMC reports making advances in allocating resources in alignment with its mission and priorities including the creation of four-year degrees and an adoption of zero based budgeting and has worked these initiatives into future plans. The BSC provides data related to the strategic plan.

5P6b, O. CMC recognizes the need for better understanding and use of data collected which could result in improved decision making. It is further noted that perceived concerns have existed over the past 2-5 years between goals and specific initiatives

5P7, O. While the College has created an action team to address communication issues between and among levels of the institution, CMC could benefit from continuing to develop a comprehensive and consistent communication system to ensure all constituents have access and are updated regularly. Further implementation of the recommendations made by the team can provide data for analysis to determine the success of new actions to improve communication.

5P8, S. CMC has worked over the past three years to engage internal and external stakeholders in the revision of the mission, vision, and values. The institution's leadership developed the "Five Strategic Focus Areas" to communicate this mission and vision throughout the organization using a portal in its website, brochures, etc.

5P9, O. Although CMC has utilized an action project to develop the leadership skills of its

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administrative leaders, it is unclear how leadership abilities are encouraged and strengthened among faculty and staff. Providing training, opportunities for leading, and giving feedback to leaders and to employees who are not currently in leadership positions could support succession planning.

5P10, OO. It is unclear if a succession plan had been developed and/or implemented. The College is aware of its need for the development of such a plan which could ensure a more thoughtful and purposeful transition.

5R1, O. The portfolio is unclear as to which performance measures are collected and analyzed regularly. There is some reference to surveys which are administered and provide "suggested" needs for improvement, but they do not appear to have a specific focus or purpose in mind. Identifying specific measures for elements of leadership and communication, and tracking them over time, could provide useful feedback and diagnostics for improving related processes.

5R2, O. While a few results are available from multiple survey tools, outside of employee satisfaction, little to no trend data is reported. Therefore, it is unclear what results of leading and communicating have been captured and analyzed. Collection and data analysis specifically addressing leading and communicating could provide the basis for improvement efforts.

5R3, O. Although CMC participates in some comparison surveys, recent results tend to be lower than peer institutions and prior internal results; low internal completion rates may be skewing results as well. Engaging both employees and leaders in identifying challenges which they could address quickly could promote progress and lead to addressing the deeper issues involved. In addition, using employees and leaders who have had experience in other successful action projects could build on existing strengths and further develop those individuals.

5I1a, S. Many internal and external constituent groups have been involved in meetings and are providing discussion into the mission, values, and strategic plan. Institution of a quality team and extensive training of employees on quality topics has occurred since 2009. CMC has made recent improvements to its strategic planning process, has successfully implemented the Bachelor's degree programs, and has utilized an AQIP project team to study and recommend improvements to the College's communications processes.

5I1b, O. The portfolio does not reference a comprehensive and systematic improvement process/plan. It appears this responsibility is on hold pending the employment of the next

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President.

5I2, O. Although the institution has some employee survey data to inform its planning processes, CMC   recognizes extensive opportunities for improvements in leading and communicating and in setting targets.

AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations: This category addresses the variety of institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 6.

CMC reports multiple processes and measures to address student success and employee satisfaction, and has implemented many improvements. However, identification of metrics for specific support services and development of a more systematic and comprehensive plan for collection and use of this data could assist in determining if they are collecting the appropriate data and to compare results to benchmarks in order to determine trends and areas for improvement.

6P1, O. Although CMC reports multiple data analysis points for student and key stakeholders, it is unclear what processes are in place to determine specific support service needs for students and other key stakeholders. A proactive, rather than reactive, approach to determining support service needs could ensure support services are in place and attended to prior to user identification of missing or inadequate services.

6P2, S. CMC uses constituent groups to identify faculty, staff, and administrator support service needs. Administrative support needs are identified at the department or campus level and referred to the college-wide constituent group; recommendations are sent to CLT for a final decision.

6P3, S.   CMC maintains a risk management department that identifies and evaluates risk exposures and leads efforts to maintain safety and security on campus. The department communicates its activities to the college community by way of quarterly newsletters, email, and the portal.

6P4, S. Administrators from several levels collaborate on day-to-day operations; constituent

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groups and advisory groups provide feedback on needs.

6P5, S. CMC relies on a variety of tools to document its support services, including numerous handbooks, survey results, scorecard data and the budget. Information is shared through myCMC portal, the website, e-mailings, and student blogs.

6R1, O. Although CMC reports several points of data collection concerning student success and employee satisfaction, it is not clear how they relate to institutional support processes. Identifying metrics that measure these processes more directly could provide useful data for improvement for the departments involved.

6R2, O. There are no results shared nor is there any description of how data referenced in other sections of the portfolio might relate to support services. By establishing clear goals in the area of student support services and other institutional operations, stakeholders and decision makers can provide valuable input on areas to improve.

6R3, O. The portfolio references increased participation in professional development opportunities from 08/09 to 10/11. While this shows a 46% increase, there are no results presented for other measures or discussion of the data used to select them. Identifying appropriate measures, gathering and analyzing data, and using it to inform decisions and improvements is central to an AQIP organization. The College has an opportunity to reflect on whether this is being done at CMC and addressing gaps as needed.

6R4, S. SALT, student affairs, and academic affairs use CCCSE and SENSE data for annual comparisons and generation of improvement projects.

6R5, O. Although CMC reports multiple sources for comparative data and that it compares relatively well with other colleges, a more robust process of data collection, analysis, and reporting would provide evidence to identify strengths and areas of improvement.

6I1, S. CMC has accomplished numerous improvements in many Institutional Operations processes. These changes have impacted Academic and Student Affairs, Business Office, Facilities, Information Technology, and Human Resource functions.

6I2, O. Although CMC reports strategic planning process review, it is unclear how the infrastructure and culture address support service needs or how targets are set. Focused attention could provide the benchmarks for success comparison.

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*AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness: This category e*xamines how the institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data both at the institutional and departmental/unit levels. It considers institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 7.

CMC makes use of a Balanced Scorecard to measure its performance in five focus areas that include 24 key performance indicators, and the College collects information on a variety of topics. However, understanding what these data mean and finding data that provide actionable feedback are central to continuous improvement. The portfolio is unclear as to whether this is consistently happening. The data/information/knowledge/wisdom process could be useful in developing use of data at CMC and result in related gains in measuring effectiveness.

> **7P1, O.** While data are selected based on strategic planning and best practices, and are reported through the Balanced Scorecard, CMC recognizes the opportunity to update their strategic plan, mission, vision, and values in order to better plan for what data should be collected, analyzed, and used for more effective decision making.

> **7P2. O.** Although the College distributes data at meetings and via the website, CMC recognizes the need for a more systematic approach to using data for planning and continuous improvement.

> **7P3, S.** Needs are determined by campus/department/functional area and by IE. IR and IE collaborate in prioritizing requests. The data request system is available on the web to internal and external users.

> **7P4, SS.** CMC utilizes a Balanced Scorecard to coordinate data collection in five focus areas involving 24 key performance indicators. The scorecard includes performance targets and multi-year comparisons; it is published on the internal and external websites.

> **7P5a, S.** CMC utilizes external benchmarks and recognized data sources (IPEDS, NCCBP, CCBA) as well as best practices for comparison data. Selection is based on demands from

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external agencies or internal needs related to the mission or goals.

7P5b, O. Proactively determining what data are needed and the best collection method could streamline collection and result in a more cohesive and comprehensive outcome.

7P6a, S. CMC utilizes its Balanced Scorecard as a tool to ensure institutional indicators are monitored, analyzed, and acted upon on a regular basis.

7P6b, O. CMC compiles a copious amount of data on a multitude of topics. However, it is not clear how units within the institution analyze, utilize, and share this information. The College may wish to formalize a simple process to ensure departmental involvement.

7P7a, S. CMC has implemented new tools, such as the Informer Query Tool and the Operational Data Store, conducts nightly data replication, and provides monthly employee training to improve its information systems.

7P7b, O. As noted in the portfolio, while improvements have been made, the College has an opportunity to continue to improve accuracy and reliability of their data. This could include such things as improving response rates to surveys to ensure that results are useful, or assessing the data training mentioned to ensure that it is effective.

7R1, S. The IT department uses an annual survey which includes satisfaction data, the Help Desk tracks FCR data, and the College tracks non-availability data for the website and portal. In addition, CMC is currently auditing its IT operations.

7R2, O. While CMC reports improvement in measuring effectiveness, the portfolio was unclear what evidence in this area was a result of comparisons, internal benchmarks, or results of analysis of outcomes and targets. Identifying the source of the result could provide a more clear picture.

7R3, O. While CMC compares its performance results through numerous sources, such as CMC's Top 20 ranking, CCSSE benchmarks, SENSE results, CCLA scores, and data from the AQIP partnership survey, it is unclear what data is compared that indicate success of the College's *processes* for measuring effectiveness. A clearer understanding of processes involved in measuring effectiveness could provide the basis for detecting areas in need of improvement in the system.

7I1, O. While CMC recently added Great Colleges to Work For, AQIP Partnership Survey, and CLA to help measure its effectiveness, it would benefit by developing a more comprehensive and

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systematic approach to measuring its effectiveness on a consistent basis. CMC could benefit from more effective data usage; the College is aware of this opportunity and is encouraged to pursue it further.

7I2, O. While the College uses AQIP tools, local, state, regional, national, and international trends, etc. to select processes for improvement, it is unclear how specific processes for measuring effectiveness are part of the culture and infrastructure. CMC has the opportunity to develop a systematic approach to collection and use of data for measuring effectiveness, as well as target setting which could provide a more comprehensive picture of where the College needs to focus its efforts for improvement.

AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement: This category examines the institution's planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping to achieve the institution's mission and vision. It examines coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 8.

CMC finds itself in a culture of transition, with much relying on the outcome of the new strategic plan, alignment of all planning processes, and the implementation of the plan. The College has taken steps toward planning for continuous improvement within its organization. The College has identified basic planning processes in five key areas, and has made some improvements as a result of these processes. Currently, these processes appear segmented by institutional function, rather than focused on overall organizational goals, and lack a clear relationship to the mission and vision of the institution. The College may benefit from implementing a more comprehensive and systematic planning process that would incorporate benchmarks and/or acceptable levels of performance into their planning efforts and tie that planning process to its mission and vision. In addition, CMC has an opportunity to better define its performance measures and reporting of results, and to expand its use of data in planning improvements and measuring progress toward goals.

8P1, S. CMC has identified five key planning processes, including the Strategic Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Annual Budget Plan, Program Reviews, and Ad Hoc AQIP-Based Teams. AQIP teams have completed 11 action projects, with two more currently underway. The Strategic Plan defines goals and sub-goals; leaders and measures are identified and the Strategic Planning

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Committee manages the implementation of the plan.

8P2a, S. CMC utilizes trends in higher education, demographics, results from previous plans, and action team projects to select its strategies. Long-term strategies are derived primarily from facility master planning and program reviews. The annual budget process and action team projects produce short-term strategies.

8P2b, O. Although the portfolio addresses how individual planning processes are implemented, it is unclear how global long- and short-term strategies are selected. By developing a more comprehensive and consistent selection process, the College would be better positioned to align its strategy selection with its mission and vision.

8P3, S. Action plans are developed for each sub-goal within the Strategic Plan goal identification process. Program leaders and sponsors are assigned the responsibility to develop action plans within their scope of responsibility.

8P4a, S. The CMC Strategic Planning Process blends budget development with academic program reviews and feedback on key performance indicators contained in the Balanced Scorecard. The student affairs program review model is well defined and can serve as a model for other areas of the College.

8P4b, O. Currently only the timing of strategic planning and budgeting are coordinated; CMC is in the process of coordinating the remaining planning processes and is encouraged to follow through on this opportunity. The College may also consider how planning might be coordinated across levels. These steps could bring greater focus to CMC's planning and goals.

8P5, O. While CMC indicates that "Objectives, measures, and performance targets are developed", the processes used to accomplish these tasks are unclear. The College could benefit by designing a well-developed process of selecting measures that will provide actionable data appropriate to its mission and goals, and establishing benchmarks for the metrics it measures.

8P6a, S. CMC uses AQIP project objectives to influence key strategies, which in turn influence budget allocations. The College has specific criteria to prioritize technology and instructional equipment allocations. The budget includes funding designated specifically for action projects.

8P6b, O. It is not clear how future needs are taken into account in selecting strategies. The College might improve the efficiency of its operations by clarifying the relationship between

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resource allocation and strategy selection.

8P7a, S. CMC recognizes the danger of creating expectations beyond its ability to support with available resources. The number of sub-goals in the Strategic Plan to be addressed annually has been reduced, and the amount of unallocated financial reserves has been increased to deal with the unexpected.

8P7b, O. The portfolio provides little information about how its review processes help identify and calibrate risks and opportunities, or how results are incorporated back into the planning process. By addressing these risks as part of its overall planning procedures, CMC could be proactive rather than reactive in dealing with risk issues.

8P8, S. CMC uses professional development activities, internal communications, and cross-functional teams to assist employees in staying current with changing conditions. Trainers have been employed to encourage faculty/staff utilization of effective technology, and a number of employees have been trained in quality improvement techniques.

8R1, OO. Although CMC utilizes the Balanced Scorecard and lists several instruments that are collected and analyzed regularly, it is unclear how or which items within these instruments provide results related to the planning processes. Development of specific measures could provide results that are individualized to the planning processes.

8R2a, S. CMC reports results germane to each of its five key planning processes. Over forty desired outcomes were accomplished relative to strategic plan, program review, and AQIP-based team activity. Additional positive results were reported in the budget and facilities planning processes.

8R2b, O. CMC acknowledges that attempts to track performance results may not be aligned and coordinated system-wide.

8R3, O. Although CMC has identified twelve goals to be achieved over the next three year period, performance targets established by the College tend to lack specific objective measurement that can be used to determine if desired outcomes have been achieved. The institution may benefit by identifying more precise targets to measure performance in its strategies and action plans. Further efforts to establish benchmarks and specific metrics to be used in tracking performance outcomes could give the College a better understanding of what worked, what did not, and what needs to be changed.

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8R4, SS. CMC has implemented a process of comparing its results in this category with a select group of other colleges. The survey provides a basis for comparative data with other like institutions. Although subjective, the responses provide helpful information about continuous improvement approaches used in higher education.

8R5, OO. CMC did not respond to this question.

8I1, O. While CMC has noted several recent improvements related to this category, including program reviews, increased Trustee involvement, and embedding of improvements into college-wide processes, integrating more systematic and comprehensive strategies into its planning processes may enhance performance results for planning continuous improvements.

8I2, O. Although CMC is in a phase of transition, culture and infrastructure can continue to provide processes for strategic planning. Identification of and application of these fundamental characteristics are key components to improved institutional performance.

AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships: This category examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Colorado Mountain College** for Category 9.

CMC is quite candid in the Introduction to this category that they have considerable work to do in the area of building collaborative relationships. The college serves a large and diverse community, making the building of collaborative relationships a complex task. It has been most successful in establishing close ties with the high schools sending students to the institution, and has also benefited from business and industry support for scholarship and foundation activities. The College has also expanded internal collaboration efforts through its Office of Innovations. What remains unclear is how or if the College coordinates appropriate identification, assessment and improvement initiatives consistently across the area.

9P1-5, O. CMC has built numerous partnerships within and external to higher education. However, it is unclear how these partnerships are prioritized. Establishing priorities could help to

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ensure beneficial partnerships. CMC recognizes that their approach is reactive and "…it is not typical to plan how we build collaborative relationships in a consistent manner, monitor progress of those relationships, and gauge how successful and productive they are."

9P2, O. While the portfolio notes articulation agreements and "partnerships" with colleges and community industry, CMC has an opportunity to more deliberately build and foster such relationships in order to provide a clearer picture of the knowledge and skills students will need to develop at CMC in order to be successful in their places of employment.

9P3, O. While it is evident that CMC makes developing collaborative relationships with educational institutions and employers a high priority, it is not clear how the College focuses its relationship development efforts on organizations that provide services to its students. This is an opportunity the institution may wish to pursue in the future.

9P4, O. CMC recognizes there is not a systematic and district wide plan for consistently identifying, prioritizing and assessing their external partnership opportunities.

9P5, S. CMC has developed key collaborative relationships with community organizations in a variety of ways. The recently opened Bachelor degree programs offer students practical experience with community leaders, governmental agencies, and local elected officials.

9P6, S. CMC conducts partner satisfaction surveys that allow partners to provide feedback to the College concerning the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements

9P7a, S. The College utilizes meetings, in-services, training through the Office in Teaching and Learning, workshops, mentoring, emails, and the establishment of Adjunct Professional Development Representatives at each site to create and build relationship among departments and units.

9P7b, O. The College recognizes that current communication efforts are not always successful. Identifying ways to foster relationships within CMC and between CMC units could increase effectiveness, streamline processes, and minimize duplication of effort.

9R1, S. In addition to the standard measurement related to recruitment and employment, CMC utilizes community surveys to ascertain patron satisfaction levels and programming needs. The College also conducts an economic impact study to demonstrate the value of the institution to the communities served.

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9R2, O. While several anecdotal reports of successful partnerships were mentioned, CMC recognizes response rates of surveys are lower than desired and comparisons with other colleges are not where the College would like to be. The collection and analysis of data specifically identified to address partnerships could assist the organization in prioritizing and maintaining effective relationships.

9R3, O. Although partnership satisfaction and workforce training effectiveness have been discussed, it is unclear how the processes for building collaborative relationships compare to other institutions. Having participated in NCCBP since 2006 it would seem that there would be some quantitative results to share. CMC has the opportunity to review results of processes which could benchmark its performance in this category.

9I1, O. While the College describes a number of improvements in this category that are planned or have been accomplished, it is not clear how data or existing structures were used to identify needs for improvement. Identifying useful and appropriate sources of information that provide actionable data/feedback, and systematically collecting and analyzing them could better support the improvement process.

9I2, O. Although CMC reports there are numerous opportunities to build collaborative relationships, it is unclear what specific processes are in place to do so. Precise attention to how culture and infrastructure support building collaborative relationships could serve to clarify needs and opportunities and to set targets for improvement.

ACCREDITATION ISSUES COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

The following section identifies any areas in the judgment of the Systems Appraisal Team where the institution either has not provided sufficient evidence that it currently meets the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation* (and the core components therein) or that it may face difficulty in meeting the *Criteria* and core components in the future. Identification of any such deficiencies as part of the Systems Appraisal process affords the institution the opportunity to remedy the problem prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

The review team has identified Core Components 1A and 1B; 2B, 2D, and 2E; 5B, 5C, and 5D that are labeled "Unclear, or Incomplete" as Accreditation Issues.

Criterion 1: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	1A	1B	1C	1D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.			X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.	X	X			
Criterion 2: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.					
Adequate but could be improved.	X		X		
Unclear or incomplete.		X		X	X
Criterion 3: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X		X
Adequate but could be improved.				X	
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 4: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	4A	4B	4C		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X				
Adequate but could be improved.		X	X		
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 5: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	5A	5B	5C	5D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.					
Adequate but could be improved.	X				
Unclear or incomplete.		X	X	X	

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

Unclear or incomplete

The CMC mission statement is reviewed annually with stakeholder input at various retreats and meetings, and the Board of Trustees begins each meeting with a review of the CMC Mission/Vision/Value statement, but there is no evidence to indicate that the mission guides the operations of the College. Further, the portfolio is unclear as to how the mission is used to guide the planning process or if the institution's mission is broadly communicated and/or understood. It appears the strategic planning process was developed and led by the previous President and is currently outsourced to a consulting firm (MIG) that is employed to facilitate the development of a seven year strategic plan. CMC acknowledges that that there is a need to become more focused rather than "trying to do everything".

1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

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Unclear or incomplete

> The 2008 mission statement was revised slightly in spring 2012, and CMC is currently in the process of reviewing the mission using outside facilitators who meet with stakeholders to examine the mission, vision, core values. The strategic plan overview, including mission, was shared college-wide via email and at meetings, and is posted on the web portal. However, it is not readily evident how the College articulates the mission to the general public, or if the mission documents explain the extent of the various aspects of its mission, or if they identify the nature and scope of programs and series provided.

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

Strong, clear, and well presented

> In accordance with its mission, CMC offers both credit and non-credit programs including ESL and GED preparation throughout the 12 county area in addition to college preparation courses and dual enrollment programs for high school students. Through the Gateway Program, in partnership with county resources, the College provides a training and employment program for Garfield County, helping eligible parents achieve economic and emotional self-sufficiency. CMC meets the needs of the community to prepare for employment and job training through the *Go 2 Work* program, which is made possible through partnerships between the College, the Colorado Work Force, Garfield County, Eagle County and other government, private and nonprofit entities. The College offers courses and programs through a diversity of methods (face-to-face, online, hybrid) and at a variety of hours for students and adult learners. CMC offers disability services, and in partnership with two local school boards, offers pre-collegiate services to first generation high school students.

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

Strong, clear and well presented

> The primary responsibility of the BOT is to ensure that CMC understands its accountability to the communities it serves and its responsibility as a public trust. Seven at-large College Board of Trustees are elected by all voters in the six counties comprising the CMC District thereby providing representation of the various counties/regions served by CMC. In addition, Advisory Boards made up of community and business stakeholders provide input into the programs, and many public sessions have been held regarding the upcoming 2014-21 strategic plan. CMC surveys and gathers information from its key stakeholders in order to identify the service needs

that determine the future direction of the College. As a result, the College has created bachelor's degree programs to meet unmet needs of the region in areas including sustainability.

2.A 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.

Adequate, but could be improved

CMC conducts periodic financial audits and human resource reviews, as well as audits mandated by governmental and regulatory agencies. The College has a complaint process that entails five categories: (a) Student Code of Conduct, (b) Grade Appeal (c) Financial Aid Appeal, (d) Student Members, and (e) Community Members. Institutional Research, Grants, and college personnel assist the Institutional Effectiveness office with overseeing the Institutional Review Board process and ensuring the integrity of research and scholarly practice. Senior management and supervisors are expected to model ethical behavior by abiding by the policies and procedures and expressing CMC's values of truth, trust, respect, and responsiveness. Administrative policies and procedures and those for the Board of Trustees are updated for appropriateness and compliance requirements as well as for institutional needs.

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.

Unclear or incomplete

While it is clear that CMC has a comprehensive student recruitment and marketing program in place, and a number of communication vehicles, such as a website, student portal, print publications, and social media are referenced, it is not clear from the portfolio how or what information is presented.

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.

Adequate, but could be improved.

The CMC Board of Trustees is an elected body, ultimately responsible to the voters who elected them to office. The "undue influence" statement in the CMC Board Policy Manual provides a clear expectation of personal accountability for Board members. Further, the CMC Board Policy Manual clearly establishes that "The Board's role is to govern the College; the President's role is to execute Board policy and administer the College organization.

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

Unclear or incomplete

> Effective teaching and learning expectations are communicated through the Adjunct Professional Representative program, and the CMC Student Handbook contains policies related to academic honesty and integrity/misconduct. Each syllabus also includes this information.   However, although CMC makes a strong effort to support teaching through an extensive professional development program that includes full-time and adjunct faculty, statements addressing academic freedom are not presented. Further**,** it is not clear from the portfolio how CMC indicates its commitment to freedom of expression.

2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Unclear or incomplete

> Information about policies related to academic honesty and integrity/misconduct are included in the Student Handbook and in syllabus templates. Faculty and administration are responsible for enforcement.   Further, CMC offers workshops and webinars on such topics as copyright, plagiarism, and Turnitin to educate faculty, students, and staff about acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge responsibly. However, participation data is not included making it difficult to determine if the institution "ensures" responsible action.

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

Strong, clear and well presented

> CMC offers an array of certificate and Associate degree programs expected of public community colleges. The College has a new program development process and a five-year cycle review process. Two Bachelor degree programs were recently initiated to meet consumer needs.   With the advent of new four year degree programs, every new course was reviewed by faculty and the Director of Assessment for measurable outcomes and appropriate level of learning, using Bloom's taxonomy. Dual credit programs offered in participating high schools are embedded with the same learning outcomes as traditional on-campus classes, and meet the same rigor.   The diversity of the geographic area served by CMC is provided for through a variety of delivery systems, including traditional classroom, distance learning, independent studies and internships.

CMC maintains specialized accreditation for the following programs: Early Childhood Education, EMS Paramedic program, Colorado Law Enforcement Trailing Academy, National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, and Veterinary Technology program. The College is promoting the Quality Matters best practices, offering workshops, assisting faculty in making sure their course and module objectives are clearly stated and in aligning their assessments, instructional materials, and learning activities with these stated objectives.

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.
Strong, clear and well presented

The College aligns student learning outcomes at the institution and program levels to Colorado's general education standards which include Human Culture and Physical/Natural World; Intellectual/Practical Skills, Personal/Social Responsibility, and Integrative/Applied Learning. The Curriculum Advisory Committee ensures alignment of student learning outcomes. Extensive use of advisory groups for programs and the use of employer satisfaction surveys indicate that learning and skills are being applied by students. Further, CMC embeds broad learning outcomes in general education through international travel programs, foreign language immersion programs, and recruitment of international students. The Common Reader Program and CMC's regional literary journal are examples of how faculty and students contribute to scholarship and creative work.

3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.
Strong, clear and well presented

Appropriate credentials for faculty are established at the campus or department level or through a task force. Applicants must meet pre-established criteria when submitting résumés to the Human Resource Office which screens all applications to ensure each candidate possesses the qualifications established for each vacant position. Performance measures are conducted annually for all employees and include a self-evaluation, goal setting tied to the strategic plan, and a review of the previous year's work. Observations of classroom teaching and student evaluations are included in faculty evaluations. Professional development funds are available for all full-time faculty, staff (including support staff), and select adjunct faculty.

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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Adequate, but could be improved

CMC supports student learning and effective teaching in a variety of ways, including career assessments and counseling, student orientation program reviews, and faculty advising. The College uses the College in Colorado website, the CMC Career Services website, and Strength Quest to assist students in determining their program of study and career goals. CMC aligned the student orientation program with a career component, to assist students in selecting a major. The Department of Student Affairs has created initiatives to develop and implement orientation programs, first year experience programs, college success courses, and other programming to meet students' needs.

The College also provides special assistance to underprepared students through assessment testing and enrollment in developmental education courses. CMC has a formal early alert system that allows faculty members to report unsatisfactory progress by their students in time to take corrective action.

However, there are no specific results presented or any indication of how this data are utilized.

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

Strong, clear and well presented.

CMC offers co-curricular learning activities that provide an enriched learning environment outside of the traditional academic coursework. A variety of activities for various stakeholder demographics includes film festivals, snowboard rail jams, community health fairs, and international travel. The College sponsors a Common Reader Program that provides a vehicle for all faculty and student affairs personnel to utilize in their program and curriculum. Further, CMC provides opportunities in sustainability, where student have used their classroom knowledge to change the dining hall menu, recycling practices, and other green initiatives.

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

Strong, clear and well presented

The College's academic programs are reviewed informally, on an annual basis, to make sure they are staying current with industry standards, and any course/program updates are made for the next academic year. Recently, CMC has implemented an Academic Program Review and Planning Process that formally evaluates each academic program on a five year cycle. This three phase process consists of 1. Program self-assessment, 2. Review of program data and analytics, and 3. Development. The use of program mapping, student learning outcomes assessment, student and

employer surveys, and feedback from Advisory Committees help to inform the institution of relevance and needed changes to programs and courses. Instructional supervisors review faculty syllabi every semester for accuracy, quality standards, student learning outcomes, strong academic plans, and important student information on grades, financial aid, etc.

The College uses the term "credit for prior learning" for: learning acquired from work and life experiences; individual study and reading; civic, community and volunteer work; and participation in formal courses and in-service training sponsored by association, business, government and industry.

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

Adequate, but could be improved

CMC has adopted the American Association of Colleges and Universities Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education assessment guidelines as a foundation for its assessment system.   Faculty coordinators at CMC work with faculty to identify common student learning outcomes, develop common assessment instruments, and create rubrics for scoring. CMC utilizes advisory committees in technical areas to help determine the skill sets required of entry level employees in the fields. However, there are no specific results presented or any indication of how this data are utilized.

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.

Adequate, but could be improved

Since 2009, CMC has tracked persistence and retention rates by campus (12 campuses) and college-wide. Indicators such as attempted/completed credits, barrier course reports, grade distribution reports and successful course completions are tracked and measured. Measures contributing to retention data are numerous, including standardized instruments with benchmarking, surveys, and program reviews. The CMC Balanced Scorecard includes key performance indicators that track enrollment, retention, successful course completion, and remedial Math/English course transition to regular coursework.   However, there are no specific results presented or any indication of how this data are utilized.

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

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Adequate, but could be improved

> CMC utilizes a 3-year strategic plan, and facilities master plan, annual budget plan, action teams, and program reviews to assist in determining resources needed now and in the future.   The Academic Program Resource Committee (APRC) is responsible for determining annual budget priorities for faculty and academic support positions. The College is using AQIP action project objectives to influence the strategic plan which has impacted budgets for resources such as purchasing an accountability management system, hiring faculty and staff, instructional equipment, and technology. The adequacy of these resources is not addressed in the narrative. The coordination of the budgeting process and strategic planning could better ensure that initiatives are properly funded. Further, there are no specific results presented or any indication of how this data are utilized

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

Unclear, or incomplete

> Various committees are used to make recommendations to the College Leadership Team who in turn makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees.   CMC is currently in a transition with many of its leadership team, and the portfolio is unclear as to how (or if) recommendations are gathered and advanced in the absence of these leaders. In 2010, significant efforts were put forth to improve leading and communicating, however, with the transition of the President, the Board of Trustees, the Interim President, and a consulting firm have an increased presence.   However, it is still unclear how CMC will be effectively governed and administered in the future.

5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

Unclear, or incomplete

> It appears the strategic planning process was developed and led by the previous President, and is currently outsourced to a consulting firm (MIG). CMC uses a balanced score card as a strategic management tool to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to review progress on the goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan. The College recognizes the need for better understanding and use of data collected which could result in improved decision making.

5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

Unclear, or incomplete

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CMC has acquired large amounts of data to use to systematically improve its performance. However, it is unclear if there is a comprehensive strategy to use this data for continuous improvement purposes. CMC intends to align its new seven year strategic plan with budget, facilities, information technology and AQIP plans. It is reported that benchmark data and information is presented at meetings and on the website, including the use of the Balanced Scorecard; however, minimal data is presented in the portfolio. Furthermore, there does not seem to be a systematic plan for what data will be collected or for following up on areas needing improvement. The portfolio states that the institution, "tends to be more reactive and less systematic with respect to its use of data for planning and continuous improvement", and that it is hopeful the consulting firm (MIG) will assist in correcting this process. The portfolio is not always clear about how these data are used, and it does not always appear that the measures selected support systematic improvement in performance.

QUALITY OF SYSTEMS PORTFOLIO FOR COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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 organization. In this section, the Systems Appraisal Team provides Colorado Mountain College with constructive feedback on the overall quality of the portfolio, along with suggestions for improvement of future portfolio submissions.

- *The team had some concerns about the consistency within the portfolio. For example, in Category 2, Accomplishing Other Objectives, 2P1 identifies six objectives. However, in 2P5 and other places, the portfolio refers to five objectives. Another example would be that some responses did not address the question asked.*

- *The categories appear to have been written by individuals or groups, but it does not appear that the final product was edited for accuracy, consistency, or voice. As a result, it appears that the understanding of AQIP and related principles is spotty.*

- *It was a recurring issue that Results responses contained language addressing the instruments used, not the results obtained. (This is seen as a strategic issue.). Furthermore, results were referenced but rarely shared in the form of tables, charts, etc. and results described (R2) did not*

always relate to the data collected (R1), which suggested that CMC may not be identifying appropriate metrics.

- *While the team understands the limits on number of pages, in many instances responses were a single sentence. This brevity resulted in the team being unable to sufficiently comment.*

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

AQIP reminds institutions that the Systems Appraisal process is intended to initiate action for institutional improvement. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of this report may include: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned? How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration, and integrity.

AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities in ways that will make a difference in institutional performance.

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