

Name of Institution's *Present*

1. Distinctive organizational features

Iowa Lakes Community College was officially organized in 1967 when the first locally-elected board of directors met to begin planning for the organization and development of the college. It was the last of the 15 Iowa Legislature-authorized community colleges to be established. Currently, five campuses, located in Algona, Emmetsburg, Estherville, Spencer, and Spirit Lake, serve area residents. Over 73,000 people reside in this predominately rural five-county district encompassing approximately 2,900 square miles.

Iowa Lakes Community College is noted for its innovative and visionary programming. In 1982, it was the second community college in the state to build an Instructional Television Fixed System (ITFS) providing interactive television access to five college sites and 14 secondary schools. A federal Title III: Strengthening Institutions grant provided funding to convert the ITFS system to fiber optic technology between 1998 and 2003. Broadcasts may now originate from any of the 10 classrooms, reducing travel costs for the college and travel between campuses for faculty, while increasing opportunities for more effective interaction between faculty and students at all locations.

In 1999, Iowa Lakes offered its first online course. Through the assistance of the same federal grant that built the fiber optic interactive TV system, Iowa Lakes faculty were trained in online course development and delivery best practices. More than 90 online courses have been developed as a result. Students may earn an associate degree entirely online. Through a partnership with six other Iowa Online Community College Consortium members, students may pursue an associate degree with courses offered by Iowa Lakes faculty and faculty from the other consortium colleges. Iowa Lakes is currently the fiscal agent for the Consortium's Title III A – Strengthening Institutions grant project, which will develop an online faculty mentor program, online at-risk student advising processes, and one-stop student services coordination with a Consortium-sponsored Student Services Concierge.

In 1985, Iowa Lakes became the first Iowa community college to mandate developmental testing of all new freshman students. The goal of this developmental testing program is to help all students be successful in college by ensuring development of minimum competencies in mathematics, writing, and reading prior to graduation from Iowa Lakes.

2. Scope of educational offerings

Iowa Lakes Community College is a public, comprehensive community college, offering diploma and associate degrees in more than 100 majors. Iowa Lakes offers the only degree program nationally in Wind Turbine Technology and was among the first to offer a degree in computer forensics. Our continuing education division offers lifelong learning opportunities to individuals and customized training and retraining for area business and industry for credit and non-credit. Our online learning opportunities and our dual-credit offerings for high school students are among the fastest-growing areas of our college.

3. Students

- More than 3,600 students enroll in diploma and associate degree programs; continuing education offerings serve approximately 30,000 annually.
- Nearly 70 percent of our college student body is of traditional college age; enrolling at Iowa Lakes within one year of high school graduation.
- The student body is somewhat gender-balanced with approximately 57% female; 43% male.
- 76% of our student body is a first generation college student; more than 62% are Pell grant-eligible.

- Average ACT composite score is 19.3; less than 50% have completed the U.S.D.E. recommended high school core curriculum; more than 25% graduate in the top quartile of their high school class.
- More than 49% take at least one developmental education course.
- Across all degree programs, 65% of our students persist through their second fall term of enrollment compared to 52% nationally; approximately 48% graduate within 3-years.

4. Collaborative or partnership arrangements

- Iowa Community College Online Consortium (seven community colleges) offers online courses to students nationally and internationally, leading to an associate degree.
- Area school districts offer dual credit for career preparation and college transfer on one of our campuses or through agreements at the local high school.
- Corridor of Opportunity CEO group provides resources and partnerships to leverage programming and funding student scholarships, and in providing lifelong learners in terms of continuing education, and economic development training and retraining initiatives.

5. Faculty and staff

- Administrator/Supervisor: (31)
Gender: 14 males, 17 females
Education: 2 Doctorate; 17 Masters; 8 Bachelors; 2 Associate; 2 no degree
- Faculty: (93)
Gender: 44 males; 49 females
Education: 5 Doctorate; 50 Masters; 24 Bachelors; 7 Associate; 5 Less than Associate
- Professional Support (76):
Gender: 24 males; 52 females
Education: 12 Masters; 20 Bachelors; 14 Associate; 30 No degree
- Hourly Clerical, Custodial, Food Service and other service workers (89):
Gender: 22 males; 67 females
Education: 2 Masters; 11 Bachelors; 11 Associate; 3 Diploma; 67 No Degree

6. Three operational environment requirements

- We operate five campuses in five separate counties, each connected via a collegewide computer network and fully-interactive distance learning (TV) classrooms.
- Iowa Lakes has experienced rapid, sustained enrollment growth during the past decade, which has required the college to expand the number of buildings, mediated classrooms, programs/majors, and instructional laboratories.
- During this time, state general aid revenues to our operational budget have decreased by seven percent during the past five fiscal years. Local tax funding accounts for only 5% of the total college budget. The only other revenue source for operational costs is student tuition. Students can absorb only a finite percentage of tuition increase before our funding strategy reaches a point of diminishing return.

7. Three important competitors

- Buena Vista University: Although BVU has outreach sites on our campuses and a great collaborator for transfer students, they are also among our most important competitor for place bound freshman and sophomore students.

- Phoenix University: Because of their broad-based name recognition and reputation for quality among those wishing to take online courses/degree completion and working adults.
- The Iowa Regent University: Provides students wishing for a college location that is NOT close to home, those who enjoy the environment of Division 1 sports, and those who want to attend a college with a strong reputation for quality of academics.

8. Three important opportunities and three critical vulnerabilities

Three Important Opportunities.

- Five campuses and online learning offerings provide us with the three most important aspects of business: location, location, location.
- Technology infrastructures (computer, distance education) allow us to continue to develop strategies and programming to breakdown distance and time barriers of our rural environment to support the advising and student services needs of our students.
- Our college leadership at all levels (administrative/supervisory, faculty, support staffs) have embraced AQIP philosophy and principles as a viable means to continuous quality improvement of our college.

Three Critical Vulnerabilities.

- Students may take classes at any of the five campuses, and many enroll in classes at multiple campuses to minimize commuting. Faculty may advise students on campuses where they do not teach; therefore, advisor-student relationships are logistically challenging as is faculty-student interaction.
- Providing computer and Internet access for students, faculty and staff at all five locations requires a sophisticated technology system. Students and employees may access their computer files and email at all five campuses. In the past five years, the number of computers within our college has grown from 400 to more than 1000. Maintaining hardware and software to accommodate the dynamic nature of technology and student/employee needs challenges our technology resources (fiscal, human, hardware). A recent hardware failure “took out” our email capabilities and immobilized college communications for nearly one week. Technology infrastructure is vulnerable to other hardware failures unless a strategic plan for systematic upgrade, maintenance and capacity expansion – with fiscal and personnel resources adequate to support it – is implemented in the near future.
- In the continued environment of declining state appropriations for higher education, leveraging other resources to maintain and expand facilities, provide adequate faculty and staff to serve student academic and support needs, and develop programs to meet the changing nature of the workplace has become increasingly more critical.

Name of Institution's *Future*

1. Three chronic frustrations

- Five campuses pose logistical problems for effective communication and collaboration among departments and programs.
- Iowa Lakes has experienced a sustained period of growth (enrollment, programs, facilities); faculty and staff perception is often that the college leadership is reactive rather than proactive in planning and responding to this growth.
- Diversity of ability among freshman class cohorts is growing parallel to enrollment increases; faculty and staff resources are being stretched to meet the instructional, advising and counseling needs of the growing student body.

2. Three elements of your shared vision

- Collegewide communications: Consistent message to internal and external publics.
- Process-mapping & brainstorming strategies used to support the most effective and efficient collegewide operations.
- Maximize resource allocation to support quality program, technology infrastructure and emerging needs.

3. Three most critical Principles of High Performance Organizations

- **Learning:** All employee classifications identified advising as the highest priority in terms of quality improvement.
- **Involvement:** Communication and partnership with administrators were identified among the top five “gaps” that should be a priority for our college.
- **Leadership:** Iowa Lakes has a good balance of experienced and emerging leaders at all levels and within all employee classifications that are willing and eager to assume new roles and actively participate in shaping Iowa Lakes’ future.

4. Three to four tentative Action Project ideas; titles (up to 10 words) and descriptions.

- *Advising for Student Success*
- *Technology – Maximizing Capacity and Efficiency of Instructional & Information Management Activities*
- *Professional Development for All Staff to Support Instruction & Information Management*
- *Becoming a More Fully-Developed Learning/Learner-Centered Organization*

These four activities have interrelated elements. While each may stand on its own as a viable project, together they represent a comprehensive plan for addressing *What Matters Most* to Iowa Lakes employees.

Action Project Worksheet Iowa Lakes Community College, Iowa	<i>Challenging</i>	X	<i>Easy</i>
	<i>Complex</i>	X	<i>Simple</i>
	<i>High Payoff</i>	X	<i>Low Payoff</i>
Action Project idea #1: Advising for Student Success			
AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates: #1 – Helping Students Learn			
Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish. It is proposed that the advising/registration processes be studied and enhanced to include a comprehensive approach to ensuring that students entering Iowa Lakes Community College receive meaningful, individual assistance in achieving their educational goals. A comprehensive approach to advising processes may include a study of current literature regarding advising staffing structures, developing procedures to allow each new student to form a tentative plan of study for their entire time at Iowa Lakes Community College during the initial orientation or registration period, and on-going advising structures to support individual student needs.			
Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate? In terms of faculty and staff concerns, improving advising processes to better serve student needs have generated discussion – and committee action – during the past two years. Concerns regarding advising processes came to the foreground as a collegewide concern during fall 2003 employee forums held by the Enrollment Management Committee, and further discussion took place at our all college in-service in January 2004. Constellation Survey results identified Advising as the number 1 “ <i>Area ILCC employees Agree Are High Priority But NOT Done Well.</i> ” Six of the 38 Provocative Possibility proposals generated during Conversation Day concerned advising, and were proposed by employees from across all classifications. Finally, advising again was identified as the #1 issue collegewide in post-Conversation Day discussions and voting. Students have also indicated support for enhancing advising processes. During spring 2005 students identified enhanced advising as their second most important priority, immediately behind technology.			
Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How? This project will ensure proper student placement into courses and/or programs, as well as continued support throughout their enrollment at Iowa Lakes. Through assessment and quality advising students will be guided into courses/programs compatible with their abilities and interest, ultimately leading to increased personal and academic growth and college retention . Enhancing these processes will help maintain college integrity with a focus on educational excellence and student academic achievement.			
How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees needs? Which, specifically? Discussion with employees during the January 2004 Enrollment Management in-service activities revealed that students perceive <u>all Iowa Lakes employees, regardless of classification</u> , as a resource for registration and advising purposes. Non-faculty staff want to serve students, but are not always knowledgeable as to where to direct their advising questions. In addition, Iowa Lakes faculty includes a significant number of new professionals without the breadth of experience of their colleagues. Finally, rapid growth in student enrollment and programs offered, as well as a new student records/management information system has led seasoned advisors – as well as new ones – to question the efficacy of current processes. Study, potential process modifications, and collegewide communication/training in how best to serve students through advising will reduce faculty and staff frustration and allow them to better serve the needs of our students.			
How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution’s culture? Enhanced processes will reduce faculty and staff frustration and result in a more positive environment, giving our students a better chance to succeed in a specific field.			
What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now? Several college committees are currently looking at specific aspects of enhanced advising, but this project will result in a system approach that includes all college stakeholders.			

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Action Project idea #2: Technology – Maximizing Capacity and Efficiency of Instructional and Information Management

AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates: #5 – Leading & Communicating

Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish.

Implement a process for ongoing needs identification and strategic planning to support the dynamic student and faculty/staff technology-related needs. This process will include proactive environmental scanning of emerging needs, adequate resource allocation to support the technology plan, consistent communication throughout the college regarding changes that affect technology functions, development of a process for assigning priorities to technology support requests by employees and appropriate use policies, and appropriate training for faculty and staff in current and emerging technology applications. Phase I (FY06): Infrastructure Upgrade; Phase II (FY07): Telephone; Phase III (FY08) Wireless technology; video communication of IP.

Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate?

Collegewide concern for technology, especially relating to faculty and staff operations, rose to the foreground during fall 2003 employee forums held by the Enrollment Management Committee, and further discussion took place at our all college in-service in January 2004. Constellation Survey results identified equipment and technology usage among the top 10 strengths; however, Conversation Day discussions raised concerns about our ability to maintain a continued reputation for outstanding technology access and use, especially in regard to instructional and management information operations. A compression planning group in spring 2004 identified 23 technology-related challenges for Iowa Lakes faculty and staff, and seven anticipated changes in students' technology-related expectations during the next three fiscal years. During the current academic year, a cross-functional committee has been meeting to develop a technology strategic plan for the college.

Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How?

In the current environment of limited resources and escalating public expectations for higher education, strategic planning and resource allocation is essential to maintain state-of-the-art instructional labs and classrooms facilities which meet learner educational and training/re-training needs. Today's student does not know what it is like to learn, work and play without the advantage of computers and other technology. By ensuring that Iowa Lakes has adequate and current technology infrastructure we will be able to offer future students the learning environment that they have come to expect.

How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees needs? Which, specifically?

In 1997, Iowa Lakes established processes for systematic and continuous upgrade of student computer labs and instructional classrooms/labs, but no such plan or process has been established to do the same for technology infrastructure or faculty/staff offices. Establishing a continuous strategic planning and resource allocation plan that encompasses both learner and employee needs will enhance productivity, operational efficiency, and learner/employee satisfaction.

How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution's culture?

Currently a number of collegewide committees are supporting various facets of technology needs-identification, resource allocation and planning. Establishing a strategic planning/resource allocation process will connect the efforts of these various committees, decreasing duplication of effort and increasing efficiency. By adjusting our focus on maintaining up-to-date with technology infrastructure and applications, we will be able to offer our students, staff and faculty a better environment to work and learn while ensuring our future students have a learning environment that takes full advantage of technology potential.

What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now?

This project was rated in the top ten priorities by all employee classifications in voting following Conversation Day discussions.

Action Project Worksheet Iowa Lakes Community College, Iowa	Challenging	X	Easy
	Complex	X	Simple
	High Payoff	X	Low Payoff
Action Project idea #3: Professional Development for All Staff to Support Instruction & Information Management			
AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates: #4 - Valuing People			
Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish. Iowa Lakes will implement a professional development process for all employee classifications that will provide training and guidance in the areas most requested by our employees. Improving communication and developing a system for training and retraining for all employees will lead to greater cohesiveness and job satisfaction. A strong emphasis should be placed on the role each employee plays in retaining students, mentoring of new faculty and staff, and consistency in discipline competencies. It is also a goal to provide technical and computer support to keep up with industry standards and maximize the potential of current technology.			
Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate? Three of the top 10 provocative possibility proposals were directly related to this topic. Professional development and communication are also brought forward as top priorities by the Professional Standards Committee (QFP), from our professional and hourly classified employees through the Meet and Confer Committee, and recognized as a critical element by administrators and supervisors participating in a series of Technology Compression Planning sessions during spring 2004. Number eight of the top 10 "Gaps" that are "high priority but not done well" on the Constellation Survey, October 2004 was "Iowa Lakes has effective processes to determine the training needs of faculty and staff." Finally Conversation Day generated numerous provocative possibility proposals that included faculty and staff training as an element required for improvement.			
Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How? Students will benefit directly from well trained and informed staff. Excellence in advising will provide the students with leadership and ensure they receive the quality education and guidance they need to succeed, whether finishing their education at Iowa Lakes or transferring to another institution. With faculty and staff who are current and proficient in the latest technology, students will receive the assistance and schooling they need for their future. Through better communication, collegewide, staff will in turn be able to communicate and provide answers and direction to the students and community.			
How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees needs? Which, specifically? A high-quality professional development program will enable employees to receive the information and education they need to better serve our students and community. The mentoring program will provide guidance to our new employees by using seasoned staff to help ease the transition and relieve the frustration of a new position, as well as increase their knowledge of College procedures and teaching strategies. Through technology training, employees will be able to utilize the most current technical tools and information to effectively and efficiently serve our students and our communities. Training focused on enhancing our advising system will ensure faculty and staff have the information and expertise needed to assist our students.			
How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution's culture? We anticipate better communication combined with appropriate professional development and technology training will alleviate stress and frustration for our employees. It is our hope this will help create an environment where every employee realizes they are a very important "cog in the wheel" and create the team atmosphere to help make our institution one that is unsurpassed. As a result, we will more fully realize our collegewide vision: <i>Iowa Lakes Community College will be a premier center of higher education, serving as a gateway to success.</i>			
What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now? The AQIP philosophy has been well received by everyone; employees are enthusiastic about the process. Response to AQIP surveys has been exceptional and it was apparent on Conversation Day that all classifications were equally willing to participate. Through our Professional Standards Committee we have the network to work with faculty to provide the professional development most beneficial to them. Our Meet & Confer Committee and our collegewide Supervisory Team will be instrumental in extending to all employees the planning and training processes established by our Quality Faculty Plan. Iowa Lakes is committed to improving professional development and communication for all employees and is ready to take the steps needed to obtain this goal.			

Action Project Worksheet Iowa Lakes Community College, Iowa	Challenging	X	Easy
	Complex	X	Simple
	High Payoff	X	Low Payoff

Action Project idea #4: *Becoming a More Fully-Developed Learning-Centered Organization*

AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates: #1 – Helping Students Learn; #5 – Leading & Communicating

Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish.

“[Constellation Survey] Respondents from Iowa Lakes very obviously believe that the needs of students matter – a great deal.” Five of the top 10 “what matters most” responses mentioned “students” or “student needs.” Obviously, Iowa Lakes is well on its way to becoming a full-fledged *Learning College*. Employees, across classifications, believe a gap has occurred in the areas of communication and collaborative relationships, in part due to ever increasing enrollment and the need to respond to the growing numbers of students. This project is designed to fill this and other “gaps” and provide all employees the time and resources necessary to focus on “what matters most” to us as a college: students and learning outcomes. This multi-year project will focus on a different element of “gap-filling” each year:

- ✓ Year 1: Focus on (consistent) Communication (across campuses and departments)
- ✓ Year 2: Focus on Planning for the Future:
- ✓ Years 3 – 4: Focus on Shared Decision-Making/Shared Responsibility

As a result of these foci, Iowa Lakes will establish effective communication, decision-making and resource allocation processes that empower faculty and staff, in partnership with administrators, to make decisions that they will be responsible for implementing.

Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate?

In reviewing the “top 10” topics that emerged from post-Conversation Day activities, the Vital Focus Steering Committee realized that the themes mirrored the goals of the Vanguard Learning College project – organizational culture, staff recruitment/development, technology, learning outcomes and under prepared students. This and the other proposed action projects reflect an effort to move Iowa Lakes Community College to the next level. This action project encompasses elements of Organization Culture that Iowa Lakes employees identified through the Constellation Survey and Conversation Day as “gaps” that employees feel are “*high priority but NOT done well.*”

Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How?

Enhancing communication, planning and decision-making processes so that they become more efficient will provide faculty and staff with the time and tools to meet the demands of our sustained enrollment growth and emphasis on maximizing learner outcomes.

How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees needs? Which, specifically?

Faculty and staff talents and expertise will be tapped to more fully engage each in the proactive planning and in implementing collegewide goals, which are elements that they currently feel are in need of improving. Enhancing communication, planning and decision-making processes to encompass both learner and employee needs will increase productivity, operational efficiency, and learner/employee satisfaction.

How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution’s culture?

College culture will focus on communication, collaboration and shared decision-making/goal achievement, reducing intercampus/inter-department rivalries and enhancing the level of value employees feel their contributions to the college make. Increase awareness and understanding of the criteria, philosophy and goals of a fully-developed *Learning College* will strengthen faculty and staff commitment to continuous improvement.

What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now?

Improving communication and planning processes were ranked numbers 3 and 4 behind advising and technology by administrative/supervisory staff collegewide as those topics to include among the *Vital Few* priorities.