

Delta College

**Organizational Assessment
Report**

December 2005

Table of Contents

<u>Item</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Introduction	3
Key Themes	3
AQIP Principles of High Performance Organizations	
Focus	5
Involvement	7
Leadership	
Customer Focus	
Continuous Improvement	
Employee Engagement	
Innovation	
Quality	
Teamwork	
Transparency	
Trust	
Values	

Delta College

Organizational Assessment Report

Results provided in this report have been developed after completion of a three-day on-site assessment of Delta College. The assessment was based on the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Principles of High Performance Organizations, which are published by the The Higher Learning Commission, a component of the North Central Association. AQIP supports continuous performance improvement in higher education and provides an alternative process for colleges and universities to maintain their regional accreditation. The report provides key strength and key opportunity comments relative to the AQIP principles as well as a summary of higher level strengths and opportunities observed in the form of Key Themes. In addition, each principle is rated using the following scale:

- ***Role Model*** – indicates Delta College demonstrates highly effective practices in most areas addressed and higher education leadership in some
- ***Strong*** – indicates Delta College demonstrates effective practices in most areas addressed and highly effective practices or higher education leadership in some
- ***Adequate*** – indicates Delta College demonstrates effective practices in most areas addressed with some areas in need of improvement
- ***Needs Improvement*** – indicates Delta College needs improvement in most areas addressed although some effective practices may be in place

Key Themes

Strengths

- Delta College exhibits a strong focus on students and that view is pervasive among all faculty and staff members. Employees cite the care and concern for students as far and away the most significant strength for the organization. Faculty efforts are directed at student learning and success, a number of special services are provided to support the learning process, and support staff members recognize that their efforts contribute to student achievement.
- The leadership team is committed to achieve performance excellence and has set the right tone in a number of areas. The organizational structure is conducive to efficient and effective operations, extraordinary involvement contributes to participation and interest on the part of the faculty and staff, and a strong effort is underway to improve.
- The faculty and staff demonstrate an outstanding dedication to the college, collaborate with one another beyond the norm, and work together in a highly effective manner. There is a prevailing view that the people of the organization

represent a significant strength. Clearly, the employees are highly satisfied as evidenced by high retention and long tenure.

- Delta has created an environment conducive to learning and high performance work. The building and grounds are extremely attractive, a high percentage of classrooms have high technology capability, work stations are effectively organized, and student and employee services are uncommon. This provides the college a significant opportunity to achieve great success in the future.
- The Delta Shared Governance Model provides for a great deal of faculty and staff involvement in the decision-making process and fosters a sense of ownership among the employees. This creates dedication and a positive view of the college, which motivates people toward high performance.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Delta College does not place an emphasis on establishment of high performance expectations. The vision statement does not reflect a high level long-term objective, the values do not drive the behaviors of the faculty and staff, and there are few, if any, goals that push the organization towards higher performance. Without an emphasis on high performance expectations, Delta could well be inhibited from improving at a significant rate and may not keep pace with changing student, stakeholder, customer and market expectations.
- Although Delta has placed a recent emphasis on strategic planning, the existing plan is not comprehensive and the proposed planning process for the future does not include all of the elements necessary to ensure that the resulting strategic plan embraces the overall college mission. As a result, the plan may not effectively set the direction for the future. Further, the planning process does not require measures and goals, which prevents the inclusion of high performance expectations in the long-term strategy. Consequently, Delta lacks a focus on the future.
- Despite the fact that the Assessment Initiative has been in place for some time, there remains a lack of focus on measurement and assessment throughout the college. With the exception of assessment at the course level in the Academic Divisions, and a process focus in a few departments, there is no understanding of the value of measurement, how to establish measures, how to collect and analyze data, and how to use the information to make decisions. Therefore, Delta is limited in its ability to manage by fact and set targets for future performance.
- Delta has not become a process focused organization and, as a result, lacks strong organizational learning initiatives. There is a lack of understanding how to design, manage, and improve processes, so faculty and staff do not assess process performance and identify improvement opportunities regularly. Further, leadership does not review organization level performance on a regular basis,

thereby preventing high level assessment and identification of improvement priorities based on fact.

- Faculty and staff place a heavy reliance on complaints and other lagging indicators of performance to determine the effectiveness of the work they do. As a result, they are constantly in a reactive mode trying to solve problems after they occur rather than trying to prevent them from occurring in the first place. This places Delta at risk of failing to meet student, stakeholder and customer requirements and not realizing it until after satisfaction has been negatively impacted. This, in turn, could reduce retention and enrollment. A proactive approach would afford Delta considerably more information earlier in the service delivery process and enhance the opportunity to provide consistent, high quality services.

Focus

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*strong*”.

Strengths

- A strong focus on students is evident throughout the college. Faculty and staff members alike view student success as their most important objective, and there is widespread belief that Delta’s most significant strength is the care and concern for students that is demonstrated on a continuous basis. It is very clear that faculty and staff at every level and in all parts of the organization are totally focused on students.
- Delta College segments its market area based upon geographical considerations contained in its chartering legislation and the opportunity to grow admissions and provide needed services to nearby communities. While designated to provide education services to Bay, Saginaw and Midland Counties, Delta has expanded its education services to portions of additional counties in order to enhance its impact, and the Communications Technology and Corporate Services Departments have broadened their market even further to widen their impact and achieve greater success. In addition, Delta segments its students based on the type of education program they participate in, General Education or Occupational Education.
- Most departments and disciplines demonstrate a good understanding of student, stakeholder or customer needs and requirements. Faculty and staff use this understanding to develop their programs and services, and continually seek ways to improve those services. For example, student competency requirements have been well defined and deployed throughout the college in the form of Outcomes and Objectives. These requirements form the basis for course and program design and for course level assessment methods that are used by the faculty. This helps ensure that the delivery of education across the institution will consistently be focused on student achievement of requirements that are critical to their success.

- Numerous methods are in place to build relationships with students and prospective students to attract and retain them. Of particular note, Delta has deployed a number of special services that are extraordinary in nature. For example, Learning Support Services includes a first class reference library, a learning center that provides tutoring services to students on a walk-in basis at no cost, and an academic testing center that allows faculty to maximize classroom learning.
- Institutional Research surveys graduates within one year after graduation to determine their satisfaction with their college experience at Delta. In addition, student surveys are conducted once or twice each year to obtain feedback on specific issues that are requested by various departments and divisions. Institutional Research solicits input from across the college to develop these surveys and provides results to specific departments and divisions who choose to participate.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Although the faculty and staff demonstrate a strong focus on students, there is no indication that there are methods in place to gather student, stakeholder or customer data on a regular basis to allow for a review and update of requirements. Data are not collected, aggregated and analyzed for this purpose and there is widespread reliance on complaints to identify student, stakeholder or customer issues. As a result, a reactive mindset has developed that inhibits efforts to proactively identify changing needs and requirements. Consequently, Delta may not be able to adjust its programs and services in a manner that is sufficiently timely to maintain high student, stakeholder and customer satisfaction and retention.
- While student academic competency requirements have been identified and fully deployed across all academic disciplines, student service delivery requirements have not been similarly identified and deployed. For example, treating students with respect, fairness and honesty, performing our tasks with competency, communicating clearly and courteously, and listening actively, among others. As a result, faculty and staff may not design courses, programs and services to adequately meet all student requirements necessary to produce high student satisfaction.
- Student, stakeholder and customer contact standards have not been developed and deployed to employees to define how faculty and staff should treat people during interactions. As a result, faculty and staff may not have a consistent understanding of Delta's expectations during the delivery of education and support services. Consequently, faculty and staff may vary widely in their approach and inhibit the ability of the organization to provide services in a consistent, high quality manner.

- Although faculty and staff are heavily reliant on complaints to understand student, stakeholder and customer concerns, a well defined complaint management process has not been developed and deployed. Such a process would establish consistent standards for responding to complaints, guidelines for resolution of complaints, and procedures for collecting, aggregating and analyzing complaint data to identify when more widespread issues are developing. As a result, Delta is limited in its ability recover from complaints and to use complaint data to identify changing needs and requirements.
- Although graduate surveys are conducted annually, and twice yearly student surveys are used, student, stakeholder and customer satisfaction is not comprehensively determined. Further, the data that are collected from the graduate surveys are not analyzed sufficiently to provide meaningful information to administrators, and the data obtained from the student surveys are too narrowly focused to provide for an indication of overall satisfaction relative to key requirements. Therefore, Delta is unable to determine if satisfaction is improving over time and what student perceptions are regarding how well their requirements are being met.

Involvement

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*role model*”.

Strengths

- Leadership has placed a significant emphasis on the involvement and empowerment of the faculty and staff. This emphasis is expressed in both the Delta Guiding Principles and the Delta Values, and is reinforced by leadership on a continuous basis. For example, leadership permits decision-making at the point of greatest impact throughout the college. Faculty and staff indicate that they have significant involvement in the decision-making process for the college, and are empowered to make decisions relative to their own processes and in team settings. This has produced a feeling of ownership of and concern for the college that permeates the faculty and staff and positively impacts their performance.
- Shared Governance is a Delta Value and the Shared Governance model adopted by Delta contributes to the significant involvement and participation of faculty and staff members. The Senate and the Senate process ensure that important issues are coordinated and discussed on a widespread basis permitting many groups and individuals to participate. Of particular note, administrative and professional staff members are represented on the Senate allowing for this employee category to have a strong voice in decision-making along with the faculty.
- Committees have been formed to represent each category of employee and provide a forum to voice concerns and discuss and resolve issues. The Faculty Executive Committee, Faculty Forum, Executive Committee for Administrative

and Professional Staff (ECAPS), and the Support Staff Committee all function in this manner. This aids in the communications process and enhances the ability of the organization to obtain faculty and staff input.

- Faculty and staff demonstrate a strong collaborative spirit. This is particularly true among faculty within a discipline, but also is observed throughout the organization. Faculty and staff members are encouraged to collaborate and share information, have numerous methods in place to carry out these types of activities, and do so on a frequent basis. Horizontal communications is very strong throughout the college.

Opportunities for Improvement

- While faculty and staff are deeply involved in the decision-making processes of the organization, it is not apparent that Delta makes training available to facilitate effective deployment of its empowerment approach. Consequently, some members of the faculty and staff may not be sufficiently enabled to participate to the degree desired by the organization or by them.
- Although involvement is a strong point for Delta, not all staff members are permitted to participate to the same degree. For example, support staff members are not permitted to participate in the Senate process, although they have requested representation. As a result, there is a perception that the Shared Governance model is limited and the support staff is underrepresented in the organization.
- While the value of the Shared Governance approach is well appreciated and is clearly demonstrated, the process tends to slow down the decision-making process. There are a number of examples of decisions taking more than a year to gain approval. Consequently, Delta may be limited in its ability to become an agile organization and quickly respond to the changing needs of its markets and its students, stakeholders and customers.

Leadership

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*adequate*”.

Strengths

- Delta’s leadership team has established an organizational structure that provides for effective communication, review of issues, and decision-making. The Executive Council, President’s Council, Dean’s Council, and the Senate structure all contribute to a free flow of ideas and opportunity for all constituencies to be heard. Further, the Shared Governance approach implemented by the leadership team serves the organization well and ensures strong involvement of a wide cross-section of the faculty and staff. In addition, faculty and staff are empowered to

make decisions at the point of greatest impact, which further advances the objective of faculty and staff participation in the decision-making process.

- The Board of Trustees exercises proper oversight of the college through monthly meetings and retreats held periodically throughout the year. The monthly meetings provide a forum for discussion of current issues, while the retreats provide for a more in-depth review of college operations.
- Delta College has established a formal Mission Statement, a Vision for the college, a set of Guiding Principles and a Values Statement. These have been communicated to all faculty and staff on cards that are posted in many areas. The values provide faculty and staff an understanding of expected behaviors, including academic excellence and quality programs and services, and the Guiding Principles identify those factors that the college is committed to, including continuous improvement, professional development and involvement.
- Leadership places a significant emphasis on communications and has developed multiple methods to ensure that faculty and staff members receive information frequently and in a timely fashion. Similarly, a variety of methods are available to faculty and staff to communicate concerns and share their views with leadership. There is widespread belief that communications in both directions is more than adequate and meets the needs of the faculty and staff.
- Senior leaders, with the exception of the President, are evaluated using the Performance Management System (PMS) in the same manner as other staff. The President is evaluated by the Board of Trustees on a regular basis. The PMS evaluations produce a Performance Improvement Plan that is used by senior leaders to further develop their leadership skills.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Although Delta has developed the mission, vision, values and guiding principles it is not apparent that these statements have been effectively deployed such that they provide meaningful guidance and direction for the faculty and staff. For example, the Performance Management System is not aligned with the college values and there is no method to ensure understanding and execution of the behaviors that the values are expected to produce. During discussions with the faculty and staff it was apparent that people are not focused on the values and they are applied inconsistently throughout the college.
- The leadership team has not produced meaningful performance expectations to drive high performance throughout the college. For example, the vision statement does not establish a significantly improved state for Delta to strive for, and there are few goals that identify specific performance levels to achieve. Without meaningful performance expectations in the form of a lofty vision and higher

goals, the college may not generate the initiatives and plans needed to continuously improve and achieve the higher levels of performance desired.

- It is not apparent that leadership has developed long-term direction for the college. While three strategic initiatives are in place, these have not been updated in a number of years and they do not represent an overall strategy to guide the entire organization toward realization of its vision. Further, there are no measures and goals associated with the strategic initiatives, thereby precluding the ability to determine if progress is being made. Strategic planning has not been accomplished on a regular basis, therefore, long-term direction is difficult to establish.
- Although there have been discussions pertaining to creation of an approach for succession planning, actions have not been taken to design and implement such a process. The recent loss of a senior leader points up the need for effective succession planning to ensure that Delta has the ability to quickly replace an individual when an unanticipated loss occurs, including the President. This process should include creation of a pool of viable candidates for leadership positions and methods to develop these individuals so they are prepared to assume higher levels of responsibility as the need arises.
- It is not apparent that leadership participates in a well developed faculty and staff rewards and recognition program to encourage high performance and reinforce Delta's values and strategic direction. Although an annual Awards Banquet is held and provides some individuals and teams recognition, more can be done to demonstrate appreciation to the faculty and staff and to reinforce behaviors that are desired based on the guiding principles, values and strategic direction. Discussions with the faculty and staff did not indicate that there is high satisfaction in this area.

Learning

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*needs improvement*”.

Strengths

- The Center for Organizational Success has recently been established to strengthen Delta's culture of learning. The Center includes a Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence, an Instructional Design Team, an Employee Computer Training Center, and a Technology Idea Center. The key objectives of the Center are to provide personal, professional and organizational development opportunities, and to support faculty and staff as well as work teams. The Center affords the college a great opportunity to enhance its overall training and development approach and further its professional development objectives.
- A well defined approach for the design of courses and academic programs, and for the approval of new courses and academic programs, is in place. Faculty and

Academic Divisions follow the process systematically to ensure that all requirements are met and decisions can be made based on fact. In addition, methods to assess student achievement at the course level have been developed and implemented by the faculty as part of course design. These methods consist of both formative and summative assessments and provide faculty a basis for understanding the learning progress made by students in various courses.

- Faculty and staff have used process mapping, process evaluation and benchmarking as methods to improve programs, services and processes. For example, Human Resources has accomplished a thorough analysis of a wide variety of its processes and developed numerous improvements that enhance the services it provides to the faculty and staff. In addition, there is evidence that improvement teams have been formed on occasion to analyze and solve problems that have developed, and Delta personnel indicate a desire to continuously improve their work.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Delta has not developed and deployed a process management model to guide faculty and staff in the design, management and improvement of its processes. Such a model would provide faculty and staff consistent and detailed guidance in the design of service delivery processes, in the monitoring of process performance, and in the approach to take to identify process improvements. If such a process were in place, Delta could train the faculty and staff on the tools to use to carry out the steps in the process, thereby enabling them to effectively manage their processes on a daily basis. If processes are managed effectively, the opportunity to generate continuous quality improvement is considerably greater and this could accelerate achievement of Delta's Guiding Principle of continuously improving all programs and services.
- Although Delta has defined its approach to design courses and academic programs, design of other processes, programs and services is inconsistent and frequently not comprehensive. Without a sound method to design its processes, programs and services, Delta risks implementing initiatives without an understanding of all factors that impact their opportunity for success such as identification of customer and operational needs, establishment of key requirements, and selection of measures and goals to permit monitoring of performance and tracking against an established standard. Consequently, Delta may not uncover problems or inefficiencies associated with its processes, programs or services until it receives complaints from customers. As a result, Delta may find itself continually reacting to problems rather than preventing them through effective design and implementation.
- Although some areas, such as the Office of Information Technology, demonstrate an understanding of effective process monitoring, most departments and divisions have not developed a process focus and do not regularly monitor process

performance. For example, with the exception of course assessments in the academic divisions and OIT, almost no process level measures or indicators have been identified and almost no data are being collected to understand process performance across the institution. Without the ability to monitor process performance, Delta must rely on feedback from students, stakeholders and customers to know if processes are not performing sufficiently well to meet requirements. This limits Delta's ability to become a learning organization that proactively strives to understand how to best meet student, stakeholder and customer needs and address issues pertaining to education and support service delivery. Further, this indicates that Delta has not effectively achieved its Guiding Principle of measuring the quality of all its programs and services, nor has it achieved its longstanding Assessment Strategic Initiative.

- While faculty focus on student learning and achievement at the course level, assessment methods to identify student learning and achievement at the program level have yet to be developed. Efforts are underway to work this difficult challenge and, if successful, might well provide Delta an innovation that could give it a significant advantage in the higher education community.
- While Delta conducts some surveys to obtain feedback from students and a few departments occasionally seek input from customers, the vast majority of process owners do not solicit feedback from students, stakeholders and customers on a regular basis. As a result, Delta is limited in its ability to understand the perceptions that recipients of its services have of the quality of those services and how effectively they are being delivered. Consequently, Delta must rely on complaints to determine if issues exist and is constantly in a reactive mode to address those issues. By proactively seeking customer input on a regular basis, Delta could enhance its ability to become a learning organization and begin the shift from a reactive to a proactive organization.
- Although some process mapping has been done to generate process improvements, these initiatives were almost always driven by information technology upgrades to existing processes. Despite pockets of improvement activity in various departments, it is not evident that process owners have been trained and enabled to continuously improve their processes through a regular assessment of process performance. If evaluation and improvement of processes does not occur on a regular basis, Delta will be limited in its ability to achieve its continuous improvement Guiding Principle and may not understand the changes needed to keep up with changing customer and market requirements.

People

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*strong*”.

Strengths

- Delta’s work design is functionally oriented, but includes team activity in the delivery of education services and the use of teams to work cross functional issues and implement the Shared Governance model. In addition, there is a significant emphasis on cross-training and some departments such as Student & Educational Services and Learning Support Services have already implemented or plan to implement cross-training in their areas. These initiatives promote communication, collaboration and flexibility within and across departments throughout the college.
- A well developed Performance Management System (PMS) has been deployed for all staff throughout the college. The system includes detailed job descriptions and classifications generated as a result of the use a Position Information Questionnaire, standard performance requirements for all staff, explanation of those requirements by supervisors, mid-year and end of year reviews, and development of a Performance Improvement Plan for staff members. The PMS is used to identify improvement and developmental opportunities for staff members, to assess staff performance, and to determine compensation increases from one year to the next. This approach provides Delta the opportunity to reinforce and reward high performance relative to job requirements and the organizational values, and to align each staff member with the organizational and department level strategy and annual plan.
- Delta has developed an effective hiring, recruiting and retention process that has resulted in the hiring of needed expertise, individuals who are compatible with the organizational culture, and high short and long term retention. The departments are well integrated into the hiring process and play a significant role in the selection of candidates for hire. In addition, a number of methods have been developed to retain staff members that are extraordinary, including a strong focus on professional development, involvement, and education opportunities. As a result Delta’s retention exceeds 90% in all position classifications.
- The college has established Diversity as one of its Strategic Initiatives and has numerous approaches in place to address this issue across the institution. For example, an objective has been established to align the diversity of the faculty and staff with that of the student population. Consequently, a number of specific actions have been implemented to increase the pool of minority candidates for consideration in the hiring process.
- Delta places an extremely strong focus on professional development for all classifications of employees and numerous methods have been implemented to

put this emphasis into practice. Professional development is a Delta Guiding Principle and is realized through a Professional Development Allowance for faculty and support staff, tuition-free class eligibility for all faculty and staff, sabbatical leaves and grants for faculty, an Employee Assistance Program – Lifeworks, an Employee Computer Training Center, iStream – League for Innovation in the Community College, among others. This emphasis has produced high levels of satisfaction relative to training and development opportunities and contributes to high retention.

- The Human Resources staff has evaluated and improved many of its processes and has created a customer service oriented departmental site on the Delta intranet that provides faculty and staff access to virtually all HR information, forms and training modules. The site has produced greater efficiencies in administering HR processes and has significantly improved HR's ability to provide a high level of customer service to Delta employees.

Opportunities for Improvement

- While the Performance Management System has been deployed for all staff to assess performance relative to job requirements, the system is not aligned with the Delta Values or the strategic initiatives. As a result, the contribution of the system is not being maximized since it does not serve to align individual performance with organizational values and strategy. Further, the PMS is perceived as primarily a compensation determination tool rather than an individual development tool, and since the Performance Improvement Plan is only required for substandard ratings, the process does not produce individual development plans for all staff. As a result, the PMS does not contribute to the professional development objectives of the organization to the extent that it might.
- It is not evident that a significant focus is being placed on faculty rewards and recognition. Although an annual banquet is held to recognize faculty and staff for individual and team efforts, recognition initiatives are limited. As a result, faculty and staff may feel underappreciated and Delta could miss opportunities to reinforce behaviors that contribute to achievement of high performance and attainment of organizational objectives.
- While a strong professional development program is in place, a succession planning process has not been developed for senior leaders or other key positions within the organization. As a result, it may be more difficult to find qualified replacements for departing personnel and opportunities to promote from within may be limited.
- Although training opportunities are provided for all faculty and staff throughout the year and HR maintains numerous training modules for self-development, an approach to identifying training needs to support overall organization

requirements is lacking. For example, there is no indication that training requirements to support the strategic plan or other organization-wide initiatives are determined on a regular basis. Consequently, faculty and staff may not be adequately prepared to implement plan requirements and achieve long-term objectives.

- Methods to determine the effectiveness of training and professional development initiatives are limited. For example, there is no way to determine if the Professional Development Allowance provided to faculty and support actually produces improved performance. Further, while some end of class surveys are conducted for training offerings and they provide feedback on employee perceptions of the class, no effort is made to determine if learning actually occurs and if that learning produces improved performance on the job.
- Efforts to determine faculty and staff satisfaction and key motivating factors are not well developed. Surveys are not conducted on a regular basis, work system performance measures are limited, and data to determine what factors are most important in driving faculty and staff members to be highly motivated are not produced. As a result, Delta relies on anecdotal evidence and complaints to determine satisfaction, which inhibits early identification of emerging issues and produces a reactive approach to dealing with those issues. Additionally, without an understanding of key motivating factors the college may miss significant opportunities to determine areas of focus where the greatest leverage can be garnered.

Collaboration

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*role model*”.

Strengths

- Extremely strong collaboration exists within academic disciplines throughout the college. Faculty members within a discipline work well together, cooperate and share information, and often provide education services using a team approach. As a result, the quality of the education delivered is enhanced and opportunities to improve offerings are more easily identified.
- Collaboration across academic divisions is strong as well. The Faculty Forum provides opportunities for faculty members across disciplines to meet and discuss academic issues and methods to improve, the Senate Assembly brings faculty members from all disciplines together for discussion of academic and college level issues, and faculty members communicate across disciplines on a routine basis to share information and collaborate.
- Administrative and Professional Staff participate in the Senate process, thereby allowing them to collaborate with the faculty on all issues of significance to the

college. The Executive Committee for Administrative and Professional Staff (ECAPS) ensures collaboration within this employee classification and there is clear evidence that frequent and effective horizontal communications are occurring.

- The Support Staff Committee provides a forum for collaboration among representatives of the various support staff groups, which cut across all departments and divisions. The committee discusses issues and items of interest that impact this employee classification. In addition, members of the support staff indicate that they frequently communicate with one another and serve on cross functional teams together.
- Senate procedures include a “Make the Rounds” process for coordinating proposals and recommendations that drives strong collaboration among various departments and divisions and classifications of employees. The process ensures that all components of the organization have the opportunity to provide input on all important proposals.
- Delta’s Guiding Principles encourage development of close working relationships with K-12 districts, other colleges and universities, and business and industry to share and respond to each other’s needs. As a result, Delta has established Career Education and Transfer Program Articulations with numerous external institutions in various college programs. In addition, Delta collaborates with feeder schools to aid recruitment efforts.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Although the Senate process provides for strong collaboration, support staff members are not included in the Senate thereby limiting the level of collaboration attained. A proposal to include this employee group is currently under consideration.
- Training and resources to provide faculty and staff enhanced collaboration skills and opportunities are limited. Further, rewards and recognition of individuals and teams for extraordinary collaborative efforts are also limited. Additional support in these areas could produce even stronger collaboration.

Agility

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be *“needs improvement”*.

Strengths

- Delta’s organizational structure and emphasis on empowerment allow for decision-making at the point of greatest impact. This provides the potential for quick response to student, stakeholder and customer concerns.

- Delta’s new environmental scanning process is designed to be on-going throughout the year. This provides the potential for collection of external data on a frequent basis that may indicate changing student, stakeholder, customer or market needs and give the college an opportunity to quickly adjust programs and services accordingly.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Although the Shared Governance model employed by Delta provides many advantages, it produces very slow decision-making under normal circumstances. Even when the “fast track” approach is used to reach a decision, it takes a number of months to reach a conclusion and then there are a number of follow on activities that must take place. Consequently, Delta’s ability to achieve agility in its decision-making is inhibited.
- While Delta’s organizational structure can accommodate performance reviews, these are not included in any of the regular leadership meetings or forums that are scheduled. Regular review of performance data by the leadership team and at the department and division level can provide the necessary knowledge to determine when quick response to trends, opportunities, threats or changing needs is appropriate and allow for identification and prioritization of improvement actions. Development of the measurement system to include a balanced scorecard or dashboard that is reviewed on a frequent basis could prove extremely valuable for the organization.
- Performance data and customer feedback data are not regularly collected throughout Delta thereby depriving departments, divisions and process owners the ability to determine if time critical refinements to programs and services are needed. The reliance on complaints to determine if concerns or process-related problems exist hinders efforts to be an agile organization.

Foresight

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*needs improvement*”.

Strengths

- Delta identified four Strategic Initiatives in 2001 for the 2002-2005 timeframe. These included a Success Initiative, with an objective of improving student retention and success; a Diversity Initiative, with an objective of incorporating diversity into Delta’s key activities; an Access Initiative, with an objective to enhance student access to Delta; and an Assessment Initiative, with an objective of conducting college-wide assessment. These initiatives have recently been extended into the 2005-2006 year and documented in the 2005-2006 Delta College Strategic Plan and Budget.

- Delta has developed a new approach to strategic planning and has documented a process to produce a new set of Strategic Initiatives along with cross-functional initiatives, division and department level initiatives, and individual initiatives. The process includes a renewal of the mission and vision statements along with a requirement for a review of progress on the initiatives throughout the life of the plan. In addition, the process calls for budgets to be developed to support the plan.
- Three leadership groups have been formed to lead the strategic planning initiative. The President’s Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is charged with overall leadership of the process and is comprised of Delta’s leadership team. The Appreciative Inquiry Lead Planning Group (AILPG) is responsible to plan the summits, and the Environmental Scan Team (EST) will identify critical information about external factors likely to impact the college over the next 3-5 years.
- The planning process includes two activities designed to help the planning team understand a number of key factors that could impact development of the Strategic Initiatives (SIs). The first is a year-round environmental scanning process. The EST has been formed to conduct the environmental scan and is in the process of gathering data relative to external factors that impact the college over the long term. The second is an internal assessment based on the AQIP Principles of High Performance Organizations and is designed to identify Delta’s key internal strengths and opportunities for improvement. Results of both of these activities will be used by the planning team in the development of the SIs.
- Delta plans to conduct a summit to develop the SIs using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach. The AILPG has been formed to develop the necessary expertise to apply this approach and a consultant has been engaged to facilitate the summit.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Delta’s current strategic plan is limited in scope in that it does not embrace the overall mission of the college. Rather than creating focus across all college activities, the SIs limit that focus to four specific areas. Consequently, faculty and staff view the SIs as “extra work” and do not manage to the plan on a day-to-day basis. Further, the SIs do not produce alignment within the organization due to their limited scope as a number of departments and activities are not addressed with the framework of the SIs.
- Action plans to identify how the SIs will be accomplished are not evident, nor are measures and goals to establish performance expectations and allow for determination of progress to the plan. Without inclusion of these critical plan elements, it is not clear how Delta will ensure that the requirements of the SIs will be identified and carried out, and how the effectiveness of the plan will be determined. For example, the Assessment SI calls for Delta to “conduct college-wide assessments”, but the action plans to support that objective are not identified

in the plan, there is no indication as to how that objective will be measured and monitored, there are no goals indicating when the objective should be achieved or what level of performance is expected, and it is not apparent that many divisions or departments have actually developed assessment methods despite the long period of time this SI has been in place.

- Delta's new planning process does not call for identification of high level focus areas that would embrace the mission and drive development of a strategy and plan to address all mission elements and organizational components. The process limits the "strategy" to a set of initiatives that may not provide the basis for alignment and integration of all college divisions and departments in support of overall organizational objectives. As a result, Delta risks a lack of strategic direction and broad support for accomplishment of the SIs.
- The planning process lacks a requirement for development of college level action plans, measures and goals. As a result, methods to accomplish the SIs, methods to track progress against the SIs, and performance expectations may not be identified.
- It is not clear how the planning summit will be conducted and how the AI concept will be applied to address the key external and internal factors that have been produced, and to create the Strategic Initiatives. Without a defined approach to conduct the summit, its objectives may not be achieved.
- It is not apparent how the cross-functional initiatives, division and department initiatives, and the individual initiatives will be developed and implemented. Without a process to accomplish these activities they may not be carried out consistently across the college. If the plan is to be deployed effectively, a process should be developed for all organizational components to follow, and a measurement system should be produced that creates college-wide focus in areas critical to overall organizational success.
- While the strategic planning process requires reviews of progress on initiatives, it is not clear how those reviews will be conducted and what measures or indicators will be used to determine what progress is being made. Further, it is not clear what the outcomes of these reviews will be. Without the use of measures or indicators, Delta will be inhibited from determining exactly what progress is being made, which then will limit its ability to identify improvement actions and prioritize those actions to effectively keep the plan on track.

Information

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*adequate*”.

Strengths

- Assessment of student learning and achievement at the course level occurs systematically across the college as faculty design assessment methods into their education delivery processes to determine how well students learn the course material. Assessment is based on a standard set of education outcomes and objectives, which include the core competencies of Reading; Writing; Speaking; Critical Thinking; Scientific Method; Access, Analyze, and Use Information; Quantitative Literacy; Wellness; Interact Productively with Others; Listening; Civic Engagement; Global Citizenship; and Diversity. Faculty identify specific outcomes and objectives for each course and designate whether they are practiced (P) by students in the course but are not outcomes, or demonstrated (D) as an outcome and embedded in the course as assessable.
- A number of other outcome measures are identified throughout the college and data collection methods have been developed to support those measures. These include graduate satisfaction, enrollment, faculty and staff retention, and financial performance to budget.
- A few departments have developed process level measures and track performance in these areas over time. For example, the Office of Information Technology, Facilities Management and Corporate Services demonstrate emphasis in this area.
- Delta has deployed a highly effective information technology system that provides faculty and staff access to the information needed to accomplish their work. The intranet and electronic communications capability are extensive and serve the organization well, and the level of technology available to faculty and staff to support teaching and learning is extraordinary. Further, both the audio visual support team and help desk personnel provide exceptional support to faculty and staff to ensure that the information technology operates at peak performance.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Delta has not developed a comprehensive set of organization level measures to track performance in areas critical to its success. As a result, the leadership team is limited in its ability to objectively identify how the college is performing relative to strategic objectives, annual goals, past performance, competitors or other comparative organizations. For those measures that have been established (graduate satisfaction, enrollment, etc.) the data are not fully analyzed nor reviewed on a regular basis by the leadership team. Therefore, Delta may not be able to consistently make decisions based on fact and is inhibited from setting targets to drive higher level performance.

- Most departments and divisions are not focused on measurement of process performance or collection of feedback from customers of the processes. Without these types of data, Delta is limited in its ability to proactively identify actions to take to meet student, stakeholder and customer needs. Further, without an understanding of process performance, Delta cannot effectively set targets to drive higher level process performance in key areas.
- Processes and methods for the collection of comparative data have not been developed. Although a few benchmarking initiatives are evident, underlying processes to support a systematic comparative data approach are lacking. These processes could include an approach to identify what comparative data needs exist, how to choose comparative data sources, what data collection methods to use, how to analyze the data collected, and how to use the data that are collected. Without regular collection of comparative data, Delta may be limited in its ability to understand competitor performance and direction, to improve its processes, to identify action plans needed to achieve higher performance, and to set targets.
- Data analysis skills and capabilities are not prevalent throughout the college, and it is not apparent that faculty and staff have been trained in data collection and analysis methods. Therefore, little data analysis is occurring relative to organizational and process level performance. Of particular note, data analysis to support leadership reviews is not conducted on a regular basis, and while the new environmental scan process may include enhanced data analysis to support strategy development, that type of analysis has only been conducted sporadically in the past.
- Although there is significant collaboration and information sharing across the college, a well defined approach to knowledge management has not been developed. Such a process would identify what knowledge has value and is important to the college, those individuals and groups who possess valuable knowledge, and methods to collect, transfer and store that knowledge so Delta does not lose it. This is particularly important with regard to changeover of personnel, development of new and improved teaching methods, and development of innovations and best practices.

Integrity

Delta College efforts in this area are judged to be “*strong*”.

Strengths

- Delta places a strong emphasis on ethical behavior and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Integrity is a Delta value and a Code of Conduct for all employees has been developed. The code is documented and readily accessible to all faculty and staff and is discussed during new employee orientation. A student code of conduct is under development.

- The General Counsel is responsible to monitor compliance and ethical behavior. Faculty and staff are encouraged to report inappropriate behavior and indicate that they understand their responsibility in that regard.
- Delta's Guiding Principles encourage building relationships with community groups and employee involvement with the community, and community leadership and service is a Delta value. Consequently, Delta's leadership team, faculty and staff play a significant role in community events and activities.
- The "Possible Dream" Program provides funding for high school students in need of financial support to participate in Delta activities designed to create interest in higher education among those who may be disadvantaged. Those funds are generated through a fundraiser called the "Chocolate Affair", which is organized and run by Delta employees. This program shows prospective students the value of continuing their education and builds on the Delta philosophy that changing lives is a basic responsibility.
- The community has recently voted to continue funding Delta through a mill levy, which indicates strong support for the college. This action is indicative of a positive community view of the college and the value that it brings to the community.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Although Delta employees feel a responsibility to report inappropriate behavior, there is no defined procedure for making such a report. Employees determine on their own who to report to and there is little opportunity to make an anonymous report, if desired. For example, a hot line to allow anonymous reporting of ethics-related issues is not available.
- It is not apparent that a defined approach to dealing with ethical violations has been established. For example, a stated policy explaining actions that will be taken for various types of violations. Such an approach would make it clear to employees the consequences of any ethical misbehavior and ensure consistency in dealing with violators.
- While Delta demonstrates a desire for and many examples of community support, there is no process in place to determine the key needs of the community and what Delta's response to those needs should be. Consequently, overall community support efforts may not be focused and benefits may not be maximized.

Special Interest Items

Four special interest items were addressed during the assessment based on the request of the leadership team. These include; how employees feel about the communications flow; how new faculty feel about their ability to adjust to the Delta mission and culture; employee perception of the Senate process; and faculty and staff perception of professional development opportunities. In each item, responses were generally very positive as indicated below.

- Faculty and staff feel that the communications flow from top to bottom, from bottom to top, and horizontally across the college are excellent. It is rare to find such a positive view of communications by the workforce.
- New faculty and staff are very positive about the Delta mission and culture. Only a very few report any adjustment issues, and those all were very minor. Virtually all feel that the Delta culture is extraordinary and are most excited and pleased to be a part of it.
- The perception of the Senate and the Senate process is mostly positive, but there are pockets of concern. The two most significant are the lack of participation of the support staff and the length of time it takes to make decisions. While these concerns exist, the overwhelming view of the Senate and the Senate process is that it adds great value to the college and permits the right amount of involvement in the decision-making process. Clearly, this approach is serving Delta well.
- The view of professional development opportunities on the part of faculty and staff is generally good. Faculty members feel that they have many opportunities, but lack the time to take advantage of all that they would like to. They appreciate the professional development allowance, but view it as less than needed to make a significant difference. Overall satisfaction is high. Administrative and professional staff members feel they are slighted in that they do not have an allowance, but recognize that their development opportunities are available through budget allocations. They too see many options and are generally satisfied. Support staff members feel privileged to have an allowance and see the many opportunities available to them as extraordinary and are very satisfied. All view tuition-free education opportunities as a tremendous benefit.