AQIP Systems Portfolio Category Three – Understanding Students'

and Other Stakeholders' Needs



Processes (P)

3P1: Identifying changing student needs

Quantitative methods:

 Enrollment and Lead Reports identify surges or declines in the interest of specific programs or courses, and are used in addressing marketing and course scheduling needs. The reports are reviewed by the admissions department on a weekly basis and by administrators on a monthly basis.

- Student Opinion Survey evaluates student satisfaction in all areas of the college, and is reviewed annually by all departments and members of administration. Positive and negative comments and trends are tracked and analyzed to determine possible and appropriate courses of action.
- Course Evaluations are used as an instrument for students to evaluate course content and quality and effectiveness of instruction. These are reviewed in a process described in 1P11.
- Graduate Exit Survey is distributed to students in their last term prior to graduation and reviewed quarterly
 by the college's administration. It provides feedback on the students' overall experience at the college,
 giving an indirect form of assessment for programs and services offered at the college.

Qualitative methods:

- Open-door policy applies to everyone at the college, and describes our commitment to be available to
 meet with students one-on-one to address questions and concerns. The policy allows us to hear student
 issues or comments in an informal setting and provides a rapid response if necessary [See 5P7].
- Student Focus Forum described in 1P15, this event provides feedback which is incorporated into the all
 of our institutional planning processes.
- Student Grievance Process described in 3P6, provides a formal procedure for students to express any
 concern and ensures timely resolution of problems. Formal grievances are documented, tracked, and
 acted on promptly.

3P2: Building student relationships

The college prides itself on its ability to build and maintain relationships with our students. The life cycle of a Midstate College student is as follows:

Prospective Students

Prospective students meet with an admissions representative, either virtually or face-to-face, who introduces the student to the culture of the college. Our admissions representatives are our first point of contact with students, and make a concerted effort to establish a personal relationship on behalf of the college.

Current Students

New students attend a college orientation where they are given a tour of the campus, meet with their program director and key personnel, and are acclimated into campus culture. Once they have matriculated, we maintain the relationship established during the admissions process with a dedication to individual attention demonstrated by our small class sizes (average class size of 17 based on the Fall 2011 IPEDS data), a unique registration process where students are encouraged to meet with their program director to ensure appropriate course placement, and the efforts of the student success office described in 1P8. In addition to a high level of personalized academic support, many other departments have unique methods of maintaining relations with our students. Our computing services department repairs student computers at no cost (unless new parts must be purchased); our career services department provides lifetime job placement for all students; and our student affairs department hosts various events designed to make students feel welcome and part of the college. We also have a variety of student clubs and organizations that provide an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to interact with one another.

Graduates

All graduates are offered free membership in the Midstate College Alumni Association. This association currently has approximately 900 members and holds several events throughout the year.

3P3: Identifying key stakeholder needs

Program Advisory Boards

The college identifies the changing needs of area businesses and employers through program advisory boards. Each academic program has its own advisory board consisting of the program's director; professionally credentialed, local business representatives; department faculty; alumni; current students; and members of the college's administration. The advisory boards meet twice a year to help the college stay abreast of current trends within the field and assure that our students are meeting the employment needs of area businesses. Information obtained from these meetings is reviewed immediately by program directors and college administrators to ensure timely implementation of feedback.

Employers, Organizations, and Schools

The Community Outreach Coordinator maintains relationships with area businesses, organizations, and schools in a process described in Category 9.

Employees

Employees complete an annual communication survey that helps evaluate their level of satisfaction with communication methods and strategies. We have also recently begun participation in a Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey.

Board of Directors

Midstate College's Board of Directors meets up to four times per year to discuss current college activities. The President and Senior Advisor communicate regularly with board members to keep them abreast of current events and solicit input.

Accreditation and Approval Agencies and Regulatory Compliance

The college identifies the needs of accrediting and approval agencies via constant monitoring of accreditation and certification standards at both the program and institutional level. We also remain vigilant in our attention to the changing mandates of all pertinent regulatory agencies. The college places a high strategic priority on ensuring that we meet all of these standards.

Alumni Association

The Alumni Association is an active organization closely connected to the college. Meetings and social events are held numerous times throughout the year. Both the Association's Board of Directors and surveys are used to determine the needs of our alumni and what action we can take to meet them [See Category 2].

Educational Partners

The process for maintaining relationships with our educational partners, including how we address their needs, is described in Category 9.

3P4: Building stakeholder relationships

The college maintains relationships with its key stakeholders through the lines of communication and other methods described in 3P1-3P3. The development of new relationships is handled by the individuals or departments most directly responsible interfacing with each group as outlined in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder Groups	Relationship Managers
Students	Chief Academic Dean, Admissions, Program Directors, Faculty, Student Success
Employees	Human Resources, Department Directors, Administrators
Employers	Community Outreach, Career Services, Advisory Boards
Alumni	Student Affairs
Community	Community Outreach, Administrators, Advisory Boards
Educational Institutions	Collaborative Relationship Committee, Chief Academic Dean, Administrators, Program Directors
Board of Directors	President, Chairman of the Board
Accrediting Bodies and Approval Agencies	Program Directors, Chief Academic Dean, President

College personnel are also active members in numerous community and professional organizations, and all employees are encouraged to attend workshops, conferences, and seminars hosted by associations and organizations in order to keep current on trends and regulations [See Category 9].

The college uses a variety of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to communicate with our current stakeholders and forge relationships with new ones. Our social media plan works to promote awareness of campus events, enrollment promotions, community engagement efforts, and brand reinforcement.

3P5: Determining new groups

Midstate College uses a variety of resources in order to determine educational offerings and services to new student and stakeholder groups. Strategic planning in-services are held annually providing feedback from departments across the institution. Community outreach meets with a broad range of community leaders, businesses, high schools, and other entities to provide feedback from the community. Tools such as the employer and externship site surveys additionally provide feedback regarding current trends. Program Advisory Boards consisting of the program director, faculty, community leaders, employers, students, and graduates, provide invaluable sources of information and recommendations for the improvement of the training and programs the college offers.

3P6: Handling complaints

The student grievance policy, published on pages 46-47 of the College Catalog, expressly states, "Students expressing a grievance about the application of college policy, academic or non-academic, should attempt to seek informal resolution of the matter with the faculty or staff member involved, following that with the immediate supervisor of the faculty/staff member if necessary. If such informal procedures do not effect an equitable resolution of the matter, the student may submit a formal grievance form, located on the college's website or in the front office. A formal grievance will be submitted to the Director of Student Affairs, who will contact the staff/ faculty member directly involved and attempt to reach a resolution. If a suitable remedy for the grievance cannot be reached, a subcommittee will be formed to arrive at a successful resolution. Once the written complaint has been received, the student will be immediately contacted by the Director of Student Affairs and will receive a follow-up contact within one week. The Director of Student Affairs will keep a log of all formal complaints."

Students may appeal a grade by completing an application for grade appeal form available from the Student Records Office. All appeals must be in writing and received within a six-week period following the end of the term. A committee of administrators and faculty will then review the appeal. The decision of the committee is final.

A student who has been suspended may appeal the Academic Committee for conditional reinstatement if there exists truly exceptional circumstances under which the student was suspended. Students who have been academically suspended may apply for readmission after one quarter or petition the Chief Academic Dean to continue their academic program.

Any external stakeholder is welcomed to provide feedback or complaints regarding the institution. The college distributes surveys and feedback forms to partnering institutions and other agencies to gauge necessary improvements and build upon strengths. The college's open-door policy applies to all stakeholders, whether they are students, employees, alumni, employers, board members, neighbors, or any community entity or individual. Through this policy a complaint may be addressed by any member of the staff, directed to administration, or forwarded to the President.

Employees are encouraged to take advantage of the open-door policy to discuss any issue they may incur. The open-door policy provides the opportunity to discuss issues with the individual's supervisor, administration, or the President. The college administration reviews all feedback and makes timely, thoughtful decisions based on policy and fact to determine proper courses of action.

Results (R)

3R1: Determining satisfaction

Midstate College measures student and stakeholder satisfaction in a number of ways. The Student Opinion Survey is distributed annually to measure student satisfaction in a number of areas including admissions, financial aid, academics, scheduling and more. A Student Focus Forum is conducted annually by the President of the college in which opinions and ideas are verbally relayed face-to-face. Students fill out quarterly course evaluations online as a mean of providing feedback about their satisfaction with the course and its instruction. Program directors hold advisory board meetings twice each year to gather feedback and information from current students, alumni and area business leaders. The ALFI survey provides quantitative student satisfaction data, as well as benchmarking information from other institutions. The AQIP Examiner Survey gauges internal employee satisfaction and benchmarks it against other AQIP institutions. The annual employee communication survey provides qualitative as well as quantitative information on internal communication processes. The Community Outreach Coordinator provides a comprehensive annual progress report detailing our outreach efforts.

3R2: Student satisfaction results

The chart below compares data from the last four years of the Student Opinion Survey, during which the average overall student satisfaction rating was 4.36.

Figure 3.2 - Overall Student Satisfaction

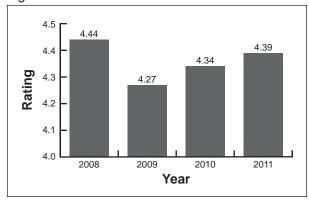
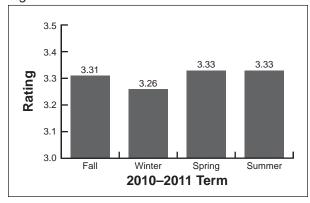


Figure 3.3 – Course Evaluation Statistics



In the 2010-2011 Graduate Exit Survey, 92.1% (129 of 140) of students graduating stated that they would recommend Midstate College to other people. The survey showed that 91.4% (128 of 140) of students had a positive or better attitude toward the college. An additional 89.2% (125 of 140) of students had a positive or better attitude towards their respective programs. These findings support a high level of graduate satisfaction.

The 2009 Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) revealed that while having room for improvement, the college consistently scored higher than benchmark institutions in all categories. The college scored .66 points (6.24 vs. 5.58) above other four-year institutions on the item, "This institution provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan." The college scored .78 points (6.38 vs. 5.60) higher than other institutions on the item, "This institution makes many support services available at convenient times and places."

Additionally, the college considers student referrals as a measure of student satisfaction. In 2009-2010, the college received 435 student referrals in comparison to 323 student referrals received in 2007-2008. This 35% increase indicates that students are highly satisfied and willing to recommend Midstate College to others.

3R3: Student relationship results

A number of the questions on our student course evaluations speak directly to the quality of relationships between our faculty and students.

Figure	3.4 –	Student	Course	Evaluation	results
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Question	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
13. Actively participated in classroom discussion and exhibited enthusiasm for the course content and instruction.	3.22	3.29	3.29
14. Provided a relaxed, supportive yet disciplined classroom atmosphere.	3.25	3.31	3.31
15. Responded to student questions fully and satisfactorily in a timely manner.	3.22	3.27	3.29
16. Was available to assist students (face-to-face, phone, online, etc.).	3.20	3.26	3.29
17. Was available during posted office hours.	3.18	3.26	3.30

3R4: Stakeholder satisfaction results

The 2010 Employee Communication Survey, in comparison to the prior year's results, show an 11% increase in the overall satisfaction of employees with current communication processes within Midstate College. The results reflect a 9% increase in the number of employees who feel administration keeps staff and faculty fully informed. Lastly, 86% (a 5% increase from the prior year) of employees feel they can "usually believe the information they receive through current channels" or better. This data suggests that employees, as stakeholders of Midstate College, are satisfied with current internal communication processes.

The 2009-2010 Community Relations and Outreach Progress Report indicates that the survey distributed to families attending financial aid presentations in 2009 and 2010 yielded qualitative and quantitative data. The information regarding satisfaction levels of attendees was as follows: 46% (61 of 132) of the participants "could not have completed the FAFSA form accurately without the help provided by this presentation." An additional 99.2% of the participants claim that the presentations were a valuable use of their time, and 100% of the participants indicated they would recommend the presentation to others.

3R5: Stakeholder relationship results

The college's employees are a very important stakeholder. An Employee Communication Survey is given to all employees annually for ongoing improvements in our communication process. There are many important questions involved in the survey in which the results are calculated as percentages. Some of the most important questions are as follows:

Figure 3.5 – Employee Communication Survey results

Overall, how satisfied are you with the current communication processes within Midstate College?

Rating	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Difference 2009/2010
Very satisfied	16%	25%	34%	21%	19%	30%	11%
Satisfied	65%	64%	60%	67%	70%	58%	-12%
Dissatisfied	16%	10%	6%	9%	8%	6%	-2%
Very dissatisfied	2%	0%	0%	3%	3%	2%	-1%

As illustrated in 3P4 there are several methods of building relationships with key stakeholders. These methods provide a qualitative means of feedback which are reviewed and discussed with key personnel. Action is taken based on the wants and needs of stakeholders and dictated by application of policy and procedure in line with academic and accreditation guidelines.

3R6: Comparisons

The 2009 Adult Learner Inventory is provided by Noel-Levitz in partnership with CAEL. The figure below depicts data indicative of Midstate College's understanding of students' needs compared to 26 other four-year institutions nationwide. Compared to other participating institutions, data representing positive mean difference supports effective performance of the college's processes for understanding students' needs.

Figure 3.6 – Adult Learner Inventory (ALI)

	Midstate College	National ALI Four-Year Institutio	
Item	Satis / SD	Satis / SD	Mean Difference
I receive adequate information about financial assistance available to me.	6.17 / 1.24	5.19 / 1.77	0.98
Billing for tuition and fees is tailored to meet my specific needs.	6.13 / 1.20	5.35 / 1.68	0.78
This institution periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences.	5.84 / 1.33	5.05 / 1.62	0.79
I am able to choose course delivery that fits my life circumstances.	6.37 / 1.08	5.49 / 1.57	0.88
This institution evaluates students' academic skills for placement in reading, writing, and math.	6.37 / 0.96	5.44 / 1.48	0.93
When I miss a deadline or fall behind in my studies, someone from the institution contacts me.	5.63 / 1.72	4.68 / 1.90	0.95

Ratings regarding understanding students' needs are on a 7.0 scale

The AQIP Examiner Survey provides longitudinal data for internal as well as external processes. Midstate College has participated in the Examiner Survey twice, has scored higher than benchmark institutions both times and has improved upon its initial 2004 scores, which is evident in the 2010 survey results. The 2010 data shows a lower rate of standard deviation than the 2004 data. This change supports better cohesion of Midstate College employees' opinions.

Figure 3.7 – AQIP Examiner Feedback Report: April 30, 2004

The AQIP Criterion 3: Understanding Students' and other Stakeholders' Needs

	Midstate	College	Other Organizations	
Process	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
identifying which groups to serve.	3.89	1.06	3.35	1.04
listening to the specific needs and requirements of those groups we serve.	3.86	1.1	3.13	1.1
identifying and responding to the changing needs of those groups we serve.	3.92	0.98	3.03	1.08
systematically collecting and analyzing the complaints we receive in order to improve.	3.86	1.1	2.75	1.17
measuring the satisfaction of those we serve.	4.09	0.96	2.95	1.13

5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process

Figure 3.8 – AQIP Examiner Feedback Report: May 3, 2010

	Midstate College		Other Organizations	
Process	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
identifying which groups to serve.	4.07	0.89	3.36	1.06
listening to the specific needs and requirements of those groups we serve.	4.22	0.86	3.17	1.11
identifying and responding to the changing needs of those groups we serve.	4.12	0.88	3.13	1.09
systematically collecting and analyzing the complaints we receive in order to improve.	4.04	0.92	2.85	1.22
measuring the satisfaction of those we serve.	4.15	0.86	3.03	1.15

5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process

Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) Results: Midstate College vs. Mean Performance of All Four-Year Institutions – The 26 institutions that participated in the Adult Learner Focus Inventory additionally participated in ISAS. The college performs well in all categories but was rated particularly high in Outreach, Life/Career Planning, Finance, and Assessment. From this data, the college realizes opportunities to strengthen its understanding of its stakeholders' needs.

Figure 3.9 – Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) Results

ALFI Principle	Midstate College	Other Four-Year Institutions
Outreach	41.2	39.8
Life/Career Planning	49.2	41.5
Finance	65.9	50.0
Assessment	42.5	34.9
Teaching/Learning Process	37.6	36.5
Support	33.3	38.8
Technology	47.0	49.5
Partnership	24.5	29.0
Transitions	39.5	43.8

Improvement (I)

3I1: Improvements

Since our last systems portfolio in 2007, the college has made great strides in improving our ability to communicate with students and other stakeholders. Our last systems appraisal feedback report indicated a need to formalize our student grievance process, and we have done so. Additionally, we have implemented or improved a number of surveys and other communication channels designed to help us gather the data we need to ensure we are meeting our stakeholders' needs.

As mentioned in 1P15, we have created a more inclusive student focus forum that allows us to gather feedback from a much larger segment of our student population. In 2009, we began participating in the ALFI survey and plan to continue distributing this survey on a three-year cycle. These two improvements, along with our formalized grievance process, have dramatically improved our students' ability to communicate their needs to all levels of our administration, faculty, and staff. As students are our primary institutional stakeholders, we feel these are significant improvements to the items listed in this category. Additionally, the creation of a dedicated community outreach position has improved communication between the college, area employers, and members of the community.

We feel that our processes in this category are sufficiently systematic and comprehensive. We maintain open lines of communication between ourselves and our stakeholders, and specific individuals at the institution are responsible for sustaining these relationships [see Figure 1.1]. The feedback received from these communication tools is evaluated regularly, and these evaluations lead to timely action as necessary.

312: Culture and infrastructure

The Midstate College administration is proactively involved in the daily activities of the college and its internal and external stakeholders. Administration reviews the results of surveys, forum comments and dialog, inservice evaluations, etc. and maintains a pulse on activities, concerns, and pending issues. The open-door policy is emphasized to all internal and external stakeholders. Moreover, the small campus is conducive to regular, integral interaction (face-to-face, electronic, written, and verbal) between all stakeholders. All of these factors promote exchange of philosophies, ideas, and issues and facilitate recognition of opportunities for improvement in an atmosphere conducive to change.