

# AQIP Systems Portfolio

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## *Category Four - Planning and Leading*



## Category Four Overview

As stated in the 2011 Systems Portfolio, planning and leading processes are headed by the Midstate College Board of Directors, core administrative team, AQIP Core, and department directors. Alignment of the Mission, Code of Ethics, Vision, and Strategic Plan is facilitated through the Institution's formal planning processes. The Mission and Code of Ethics provide the framework for employee position responsibilities as well as behavioral expectations that align with the overall Vision of the College. The Board of Directors and President maintain overall responsibility for all legal, accreditation, ethical, and social responsibilities; moreover, the administrative team members also serve as part of the AQIP Core, and functional responsibilities are carried out through the direction of this team.

The Midstate College Board of Directors initially defined the Mission of the College in 1982. The Board of Directors approved the last revisions to the Mission, with review and input from staff and faculty, in 2003. As stated in the 2011 Systems Portfolio, the College has a process to revise its Mission when significant strategic changes occur, such as moving to the status of a baccalaureate degree-granting institution, which occurred in 2003. The College has recently submitted a Notice of Intent to the Illinois Board of Higher Education as part of a plan to request approval to offer a master's degree in the future. This change has prompted another formal review of our Mission as outlined in our process for updating and revising the College's Mission, which will occur through a future action project.

In 2003, a formal Vision was established and published with collaborative efforts from all staff, faculty, and the Midstate College Board of Directors. In the November 2007 Systems Portfolio, the College showed how the Mission and Vision are linked. Additionally, the Vision, Mission, and strategic plan have been internally published together since the 2009-2010 academic year when the Vision was completely revised with all stakeholders' input. Since then, the Vision was slightly revised in April 2015 in correlation with updates to the strategic plan.

At all Institutional levels there is a commitment to our Mission, Code of Ethics, and Vision, which is the key to aligning our leadership and decision-making with the requirements and expectations of the Midstate College Board of Directors, staff, faculty, students, and community.

Planning and leading is an area of strength for Midstate College, and our processes, results, and improvements are in a state of aligned maturity. The long-standing, rich history and thorough integration of the Mission and Vision throughout the College are a display of our aligned maturity. While there is room for improvement to become integrated, the College is proud that processes and results for planning and leading address key goals and strategies with an emphasis on strengthening the relation to our institutional goals.

In the next few years, the College has plans to institute an action project to help move the maturity level to integrated. The efforts of this action project will result in transparency of our processes as well as efficiencies and innovations within our results and improvements.

## Subcategory One: Mission and Vision

### 4P1: Processes

#### *Developing, deploying, and reviewing the institution’s mission, vision and values:*

Processes are in place to ensure that regular feedback is received from key internal stakeholders regarding the Mission, Institutional Objectives, Code of Ethics, and Vision. All faculty and staff complete the Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey (Employee Satisfaction Survey) on a five-year cycle. The survey asks targeted questions about the Mission and Vision (focus) of the College. School-wide in-services have regular activities to review and discuss the Mission as part of strategic planning. Graduate Exit Survey questions request feedback from students on how well we are meeting the College’s Mission, Institutional Objectives, Code of Ethics, and individual program objectives. Academic Assessment planning and reporting cycle reviews the Mission matrix and how it links to program objectives. The Board of Directors reviews the Mission, Institutional Objectives, and Code of Ethics whenever the strategic plan is reviewed. (1.A.2)

As stated in the previous systems portfolio and commented about in the Category Four Overview, the College includes all key stakeholders in the approval and revision of the Mission. The processes used to revise the College Mission are also used to revise the Vision, Institutional Objectives, Code of Ethics, and Philosophy. The process involves assembling a cross-functional committee comprised of top administration, a member of the Board of Directors, academic leaders (Deans, Program Directors, Institutional Research, and Executive Director of Marketing and Enrollment), Student Affairs Director, student representative, and advisory board members. (1.D.3) This committee meets to develop and revise new Mission, Institutional Objectives, Code of Ethics, and/or Philosophy. The revised version is evaluated as part of the strategic planning process and is brought to the Board of Directors for input. The input from the Board of Directors is brought back to the cross-functional committee for further revisions. The new draft is shared with all internal and external stakeholders such as faculty, staff, and advisory board members for input and feedback that is collected through qualitative and quantitative methods. Feedback is provided to the cross-functional committee who processes the results and brings the final version back to the Board of Directors for approval. (1.A.1) After informing all accrediting bodies of the new Mission and receiving their approval, the College publishes the new Mission in the Catalog, website, newsletters, and updates the displayed versions throughout campus. (1.B.1) [See Figure 4P1.1]

Figure 4P1.1: Process for revision of the Mission, Institutional Objectives, Code of Ethics, and Philosophy



**Ensuring institutional actions reflect a commitment to our values and allocating resources to advance the institution’s mission and vision, while upholding the institution’s values:**

The Institution’s purpose according to the College’s Mission is to provide educational opportunities. (1.D.2) All of our functional units and administrative services support our Mission as shown: “...efforts to provide educational opportunities, student development of skills and preparation for social and technological change, and aiding students in obtaining professional and education goals” (See 2016 - 2017 Catalog, p. 10, [online.midstate.edu/Downloads/Publications/Catalog.pdf](http://online.midstate.edu/Downloads/Publications/Catalog.pdf)). (1.A, 1.A.2 , 1.B.2, 1.B.3, 1.D.1)

The College’s Code of Ethics is the foundation of its values. The Strategic Plan and Vision are the action vehicles that occur within the College to fulfill its values. The Strategic Plan, budgeting process, and Vision are driven by the Mission which drives the purpose of Midstate College. (1.D.1, 1.A.3) The Strategic Plan, budgeting process, and Vision also dictate the Institution’s capacity to serve its external stakeholders, such as key community and consortium agreement partners. (1.D, 1.D.3)

The College’s strategic initiatives, found within the strategic plan, are linked to the Mission and Vision which drives fiscal decision making. [See Figure 4P1.2] The strategic plan and fiscal management is guided by weekly meetings held by the Executive Finance Committee. All major budgeting and resource requests are approved by the Executive Finance Committee who ensures they align with the College’s strategic plan and, in turn, with the Mission and Vision. (1.A.3) Additionally, the President’s Cabinet provides input and feedback to ensure that the purpose and intent of the College are driven by the Mission and Vision, rather than solely by the budget. (1.A, 1.D.2)

Figure 4P1.2: Mission, Vision, and Strategic Initiatives Matrix

	Strategic Initiatives						
	New Programs	New Accreditations	Academic Improvement	Student Success and Retention	Alternative Revenue	Enhance Online Presence	Effective Operations
<b>Elements of the Mission</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Education opportunity for skills and knowledge for lifetime social and technological change	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Skills needed for a productive society	✓			✓		✓	✓
Promote the individuals worth, values, and high ethical standards	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Quality education meeting student needs and assisting them in pursuing goals	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>Elements of the Vision</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Quality education	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Caring atmosphere			✓	✓			✓
Credible accreditation	✓	✓	✓				✓
eLearning	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Student services	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Partnerships			✓	✓	✓		
Enrollment growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Online services				✓		✓	✓
Strong campus base		✓		✓			✓
Campus growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expanded programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Communicating the mission, vision, and values:**

There are multiple processes in place to ensure the College is communicating the Mission, Code of Ethics, and Vision to stakeholders. Midstate College’s Mission and Code of Ethics statements are printed in our Catalog and displayed prominently in public areas, including the walls of the College’s classrooms and offices. Additionally, students, staff, and visitors may review these documents on our website located at <http://midstate.edu/Overview/mission.php> and know by their accessibility that the College deems these documents to represent the foundation of Midstate College. Additionally, employees, students, and visitors can view the Vision, Philosophy, and Strategic Plan on the College’s website. (1.B, 1.B.1)

As part of the annual Catalog review cycle, the Mission, Institutional Objectives, Philosophy, and Code of Ethics are reviewed by all departmental directors and top administration. (1.B.2)

**Ensuring that academic programs and services are consistent with the institution’s mission:**

The Academic Assessment Committee ensures that Midstate College’s academic programs are linked to the Mission and Institutional Objectives. Program Directors work to update their matrix annually, which outlines how their program objectives align with the Institutional Objectives and the Mission. The Dean of Academics audits all program information annually to ensure compliance. (1.B.2, 1.B.3)

**4R1: Results**

We survey the staff and faculty following all in-service meetings that include strategic planning and AQIP to understand the level in which staff and faculty feel their contribution will be utilized for future action projects. [See Figure 4R1.1] We are in tune with industry and culture changes that may have affected the percentage change in 2013. At the same time, we are pleased to report that well over half of our staff and faculty consistently feel their contribution will be utilized.

*Figure 4R1.1: Strategic Planning and AQIP In-Service Survey Results*

Survey Item	2011	2012	2013	2016
My contribution will be utilized in strategic planning or for future action projects.	76.3%	87.1%	68.0%	76.5%

The College uses the Employee Satisfaction Survey to determine employee perception of the College’s Mission, Vision (purpose), and Code of Ethics (values). The evidence shows that the College does an outstanding job aligning our goals with our Mission, purpose, and values, as well as relaying this information to staff and faculty, as we score statistically significantly higher in all categories when compared to our peers. [See Figure 4R1.2]

*Figure 4R1.2: Employee Satisfaction Survey Results Related to Mission, Purpose, and Values*

Campus Culture and Policies	Midstate College	Comparison Group	Differential
	SAT Mean	SAT Mean	
The mission, purpose, and values of this institution are well understood by most employees	4.06	3.50	+0.56
Most employees are generally supportive of the mission, purpose, and values of this institution	4.12	3.54	+0.58
The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values	4.28	3.51	+0.77

*Ratings regarding understanding employee satisfaction are on a 5.0 scale.*

The College uses the Graduate Exit survey results to determine its graduates' perception of how well the College achieves its Mission and purpose (through Institutional Objectives). [See Figure 4R1.3] Midstate graduates consistently and strongly believe we are successfully accomplishing our Mission and Institutional Objectives in relation to our students.

Figure 4R1.3: Graduate Exit Survey Results (2011-2016) for Mission and Institutional Objectives

Survey Item	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
The College Mission	3.71	3.81	3.69	3.79	3.70
Obj 1: To provide a varied selection of academic curricula in business and specialized areas enriched with instruction in general education.	3.64	3.74	3.65	3.74	3.68
Obj 2: To provide the students with a background of job skills which will enhance their employability.	3.62	3.79	3.65	3.78	3.64
Obj 3: To provide students with basic skills which contribute to success in their careers and in their private lives.	3.75	3.80	3.72	3.87	3.64
Obj 4: To lead the student in the self-discovery process of clarifying and raising the individual's goals and achievements commensurate with the student's potential.	3.69	3.71	3.66	3.77	3.58
Obj 5: To provide a framework and atmosphere of learning which will enhance the student's capability to demonstrate ethical and moral values in professional, personal, and business situations.	3.71	3.76	3.70	3.81	3.63
Obj 6: To strive for and maintain excellence in business, specialized, and general education by systematically reviewing classroom facilities, equipment, curricula, faculty, and staff.	3.64	3.71	3.64	3.73	3.63
Obj 7: To make available to our students activities and experiences which foster personal growth and leadership qualities that will assist students in their social, vocational, and academic pursuits.	3.61	3.71	3.58	3.74	3.58
Obj 8: To provide placement assistance for graduates and students through individual counseling.	3.52	3.57	3.48	3.61	3.45
Obj 9: To maintain a process of communication with the community of employers to assure relevant curricula to meet the developing needs of the economic community.	3.55	3.57	3.47	3.62	3.53

Ratings regarding Graduate Exit Survey are on a 4.0 scale.

#### 4I1: Improvements

The last time the Vision, originally drafted for the 2012-2017 timeframe, was revised was in April 2015 in correlation with updates to the strategic plan. The new version of the Vision is below:

*The five-year vision of Midstate College is that of an institution recognized for its commitment to quality education and outstanding personal attention to students. Midstate College will continue to be recognized as an institution that has been dedicated to providing an exceptionally caring atmosphere to students, faculty, and staff for over 124 years.*

*Midstate College will maintain a commitment to continuous quality improvement in academic programs, student services, and institutional effectiveness. Midstate values its relationships with its accrediting and approval agencies. The College will strive to meet or exceed the standards set forth by those regional and curricular accrediting agencies and seek new program accreditations as necessary.*

*Midstate College has invested substantial time and resources into the development of a comprehensive online learning system over the past eight years. The College will maintain high standards in the*

*ongoing development of eLearning and student services that fully support the attainment of students' learning potential in a manner commensurate with need. Midstate recognizes the need to explore options and continue investing in the development of highly accessible student services that meet the evolving needs of non-traditional students.*

*Midstate College will seek and develop partnerships with area businesses, community agencies, and other educational institutions of higher learning. Midstate College will work with businesses to provide increased internship opportunities to students, educational programs that meet the needs of area employers, and relationships with professionals to continue alignment of academic programs and student learning outcomes with the needs of the workforce. Additionally, Midstate will offer specialized training and other services to the community to provide alternative revenue for the institution.*

*By 2017, Midstate College will serve approximately 1,000 students. The majority of the student body will continue to be adult learners, although the College will attract some younger students coming straight out of high school. More students will be involved in taking at least some of their courses online due to their need for flexible scheduling and increased online offerings.*

*The number of students taking all courses online will increase. The College will continue to develop and offer more online programs. Technological course enhancements will be developed for all courses, not just online courses. The College will continue to view online programs as an integral part of the whole college, not a separate campus or entity. Day and night campus-based classes will provide a solid foundation for all academic programs, with a strong continued institutional commitment to provide a unique, caring atmosphere online and on campus. Online programs will seek to serve a concentrated geographic area around the central campus, with only highly specialized programs marketed on a national level.*

*Midstate College will be best known for its caring atmosphere, quality academic programs, and well prepared graduates. It is essential that the College maintain the commitment to offering personal attention and a caring atmosphere, regardless of the size of the College or the delivery format of educational programs. The College will strengthen the quality of academic programs, and continue to link student outcomes to the changing needs of the business world.*

*In five to ten years, Midstate College will offer more online degree programs, more bachelor degree programs, and at least one master's degree program.*

The College has improved our overall internal marketing strategy, which is now aligned to our Mission, Vision (purpose), and Code of Ethics (values). This operational change resulted in significant improvements to the content, the process, and the delivery of the quarterly Employee Newsletter and the bi-weekly e-Newsletter sent to students, staff, and faculty.

As a result of the strategic initiative to move to the master's educational level, the College will be declaring an action project in November 2016 focused on refining and editing our processes for updating the Mission, Institutional Objectives, Philosophy, and Code of Ethics. As part of the action project, we plan to go through the cycle of revising the Mission, Institutional Objectives, Philosophy, and Code of Ethics. In addition, this action project will ensure that the Mission, Institutional Objectives, Philosophy, and Code of Ethics continue to be measurable. (1.A.1)

## Subcategory Two: Strategic Planning

### 4P2: Processes

Inclusive strategic planning serves as the primary guiding process for the Institution and all planning processes are developed in alignment with the College Mission. Since 2006, the College has extended the collaborative strategic planning efforts to include the campus as a whole. At that time the College adopted a formal strategic planning cycle that incorporated input and feedback from everyone at the Institution. [See Figure 4P2.1] The creation of our strategic plan follows this general process: (5.A.3, 5.C)

Figure 4P2.1: Strategic Planning Cycle

 <p>Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President’s Cabinet</li> <li>• All staff</li> <li>• All faculty</li> <li>• Board of Directors</li> </ul>
 <p>Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-Service Calendar</li> <li>• President’s Cabinet meeting schedule</li> <li>• AQIP Core meeting schedule</li> <li>• Administrative meeting schedule</li> </ul>
 <p>Documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AQIP Systems Portfolio</li> <li>• Action Projects</li> <li>• Feedback from Advisory Board and Key Partners (Minutes)</li> <li>• Departmental goals</li> <li>• Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (targets, definitions, etc.)</li> <li>• SMART goals worksheet</li> <li>• Strategic Planning Framework worksheet</li> <li>• Consumer feedback (surveys, student focus forums, etc.)</li> </ul>
 <p>Position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situational analysis</li> <li>• Identify top areas in need of improvement</li> <li>• Identify strategic areas for growth</li> <li>• Environmental scanning (enrollment trends, etc.)</li> <li>• Receive input from internal and external constituencies</li> <li>• Complete SWOT analyses by department</li> </ul>
 <p>Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process Midstate College Mission, Vision, Institutional Objectives, Code of Ethics</li> <li>• Align strategic priorities with Mission, Vision, Institutional Objectives, Code of Ethics</li> <li>• Map departmental and operational goals to core components of AQIP</li> <li>• Discuss unique identifiers to separate us from competition</li> <li>• Develop short- and long-term strategic initiatives separated by academics, quality improvement, student success, fiscal health, marketing, and operations.</li> <li>• Process departmental SWOT to set priorities operationally within departments</li> <li>• Complete SMART goal worksheet to set short to mid-term goals</li> <li>• Refine performance indicators to track progress (KPIs, APIs, etc.)</li> <li>• Align goals and resources needed for improvement with annual budget</li> </ul>



- Review and approval from Board of Directors
- Roll out final strategic plan to internal and external key stakeholders
- Progress reviews subsequent in-services and administrative meetings
- Adapt quarterly or as necessary
- Update annually

As a continuation of processes outlined in the previous portfolio submission, recurring strategic planning in-services are held to develop five-year Strategic Initiatives. During these events, all members of our staff and faculty come together to evaluate our five-year strategic goals in the context of our Mission, Vision, and Code of Ethics (values). Additionally, each functional area examines its departmental goals for the following year using the Strategic Planning Framework to demonstrate how they will be aligned with the strategic initiatives, Vision, AQIP categories, Mission, and budget. [See Figure 4P2.2] All other activities follow suit with regularly scheduled meetings for planning and follow-up.

Figure 4P2.2: Strategic Planning Framework

**AQIP Category:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mission:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institutional Objective:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Strategic Goal/Opportunity:** \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives	Tasks/ Activities	Timeline	Lead Individual	Measure/ Document	Training Needed	Resources Needed	Priority Level	Progress Level

**Engaging internal and external stakeholders in strategic planning:**

Strong stakeholder input is reflected in our processes for strategic planning. All employees at the College are given the opportunity to become deeply engaged in the strategic planning process. In Figure 4P2.1, the Strategic Planning Cycle shows how we collect and use both internal and external stakeholder feedback in the strategic planning process. The final Strategic Initiatives reflect both the operational themes set by employees (environmental scanning, etc.) as well as the overarching Mission of the College, as governed by the Board of Directors, tying in a strong connection to our Institutional Objectives. (5.C.3)

The Board of Directors provides input as well as the final approval for the strategic plan; the administrative and in-service meetings, including administration, faculty, staff, and students, provide the major venue for motivating and following-up on the progress and achievement of strategic goals, objectives, and action items. (2.C.1) The AQIP Core assists in evaluating essential assessments and targets for improvements to feed strategic decisions through the quality improvement initiative. (5.B.3)

Lastly, the Strategic Plan is posted on the Midstate College website for student and external stakeholders. This step in the process opens lines of communication regarding our strategic initiatives.

***Aligning operations with the institution's Mission, Vision, values and aligning efforts across departments, divisions, and colleges for optimum effectiveness and efficiency:***

As a part of the strategy development, the departmental goals are processed through the Strategic Planning Framework to be connected to the strategic initiatives, Vision, AQIP categories, Mission, and budget. Through in-service subcommittee work, staff, faculty, and students map departmental goals to the AQIP Categories and align each of them with the College's Mission. (5.C.2) Final results are submitted, reviewed, edited, and returned by Administration. Additionally, Administration gives feedback in the form of strategic priorities as a directive to staff and faculty regarding an action plan for the goals set. (5.B.3)

***Capitalizing on opportunities and institutional strengths and countering the impact of institutional weaknesses and potential threats:***

To gain a solid understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the College, the President facilitates a high-level institutional SWOT analysis as a part of the strategic planning process. Further, each functional area completes a SWOT analysis of their operational department. Those analyses are combined with the results of various surveys, and then used to set priorities operationally within their departments. Many of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats themed throughout different departments segue into open communication and rigorous discussion which results in a better understanding of both internal and external factors that impact the Institution at all levels. Specifically in regard to the function of enrollment within the strategic plan, the College adheres to processes that include an analysis of market trend data, benchmarking and competitor market saturation, past recruitment performance to drive future projections, and emerging factors within the industry that may impact the performance of the Institution's enrollment. (5.C.4, 5.C.5) Following SWOT analyses, the departments set short- to mid-term SMART goals and submit them to Administration for review. When appropriate, there are performance indicators set to track progress. Additionally, "owners" are given report out responsibilities within each department to enhance accountability and adherence to tasks and timeliness.

***Creating and implementing strategies and action plans that maximize current resources and meet future needs:***

The inclusion of employees and students in the creation of the strategic plan ensures that the strategies that exist are designed to meet future needs. In the last step of developing the strategic plan, we align the departmental goals and needs for improvement with the annual budget. This step in the process aids in creating strategies that maximize current resources and meets future needs, as well as instituting an appropriate balance between the two when a gap arises. (5.C.1, 5.C.4) The Executive Finance Committee, led by the President, makes the final decision on what to fund based on budget projections for the coming year.

**4R2: Results**

As stated above, in-service meetings, which include follow-up surveys to gauge efficacy of time invested as well as SWOT analyses and the development of SMART goals within departments, are the tools that drive outcomes in strategic planning.

Administration tracks progress and outcomes for Strategic Initiatives and engages staff, faculty, and students through in-service meetings to ensure open communication exists. We are currently in the last year of the cycle and have already begun initial planning for future years. We are pleased that employees of the College are satisfied with the status of the plan to date. The figure below shows that the College's employees are also significantly more satisfied with their involvement in developing future plans and feel the College develops plans more purposely and carefully than our peer institutions. [See Figure 4R2.1]

Figure 4R2.1: Employee Satisfaction Survey Results Related to Institutional Planning

Campus Culture and Policies	Midstate College	Comparison Group	Differential
	SAT Mean	SAT Mean	
This institution involves its employees in planning for the future	4.12	3.07	+1.05
This institution plans carefully	3.80	3.09	+0.71

Ratings regarding understanding employee satisfaction are on a 5.0 scale.

We are pleased to report that well over half of our staff and faculty consistently feel their contribution will be utilized. [See Figure 4R1.1]

#### 4I2: Improvements

We recognize that the strategic planning process is all encompassing and allows for continuous improvement. Our strategic planning cycle is effective and continues to be an area of strength for the College. We've taken the work that we've done with the plan in the past four years and integrated it with our departmental goal setting, which is a significant improvement from historical strategic planning processes. Through effective governance, our strategic planning process will continue to improve. Engagement with overall strategy from the Board of Director's level is being encouraged now more than ever.

The College has made significant progress on many of the strategic initiatives included in the 2012-2017 plan. Completed initiatives include: approved BA in Law and Social Justice, added one distinctive program annually, developed KPIs, created a process for faculty rank, established an academic senate, revised academic records enabling us to offer robust student services online, implemented an improved Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program, launched a mobile website, increased marketing initiatives for online programs, revised evaluation and reward system, and strengthened financial management of the College.

### Subcategory Three: Leadership

#### 4P3: Processes

##### ***Board-institution relationships, board oversight, and delegating management responsibilities:***

The Board of Directors (Board) drives the recruitment, selection, and replacement of the President. For key administrative positions, individuals with specified credentials and/or experience are sought, identified as candidates, and, upon careful consideration and review, approved by the President. [See 3P1] Key administrators attend and participate in all Midstate College Board of Directors meetings and provide input on major decisions and are, therefore, knowledgeable of factors affecting important Board decisions.

Outside of regular Board meetings, the President and Senior Advisor communicate regularly with Board members to keep them abreast of current events and to solicit input. (5.B.1) Midstate College follows the "Assumed Practices" of the Higher Learning Commission for the makeup of our Board of Directors. The College ensures that there are "public" members and Midstate College alumni who serve on the Board. (2.C, 2.C.3, 5.B)

All major decisions affecting the College are reviewed and must be approved by our Board of Directors. (2.C.4) The Board and President maintain overall responsibility for key legal, accreditation, ethical, and social responsibilities. The Board ensures transparent management and communication regarding overall operations by meeting up to four times per year. Additionally, the Board expects that top administration will adhere to sound fiscal management principles by approving the annual budget. The Board authorizes all major initiatives including: the annual budget, tuition increases, the Institution's Mission and Vision, key partnership opportunities, major academic initiatives, strategic plan, key performance indicators and targets, and other major items which impact the future viability of Midstate College. (5.B.1)

Students have the opportunity to serve on departmental academic advisory boards, to complete course evaluations and the annual Student Opinion Survey (SOS), and to attend student focus forums. The College's open door policy permits students to voice any concerns directly to the President, Board of Directors, or any other top administrator at any time. (5.B.2)

#### ***Providing effective leadership to all institutional stakeholders:***

The President, Senior Advisor, and Board of Directors set the Institution's priorities through encouraging strategic planning initiatives, adopting the Mission, and approving the Vision. (2.C.1) Presentations are made at each meeting by internal constituents that represent major departments. Board members are encouraged to ask questions, engage in an open dialogue, and provide feedback to ensure that operational decisions align with the Mission and Vision. Additionally, the Board approves all major external partnerships. (2.C.2)

The President provides effective leadership through the AQIP Core Committee and Presidential Cabinet. Additionally, top administration has a very inclusive leadership style. In departmental meetings, top administration engages present employees to ensure all opinions, concerns, and ideas are acknowledged and considered as part of the final decision making process. The College's open door policy permits all internal and external stakeholders to voice any concerns directly to the President or any other top administrator at any time. (2.C.2)

#### ***Engaging internal and external constituencies and delegating academic matters:***

Midstate College Board of Director's meetings include constituents comprised of the Midstate administrative team. To assure open dialog and a unified leadership component, which provides up-to-date and important information to the Board, reports and discussion by the Dean of Academics, Dean of Students, Executive Director of Marketing and Enrollment, Director of Financial Assistance, Controller, and Financial Consultant, along with the President's Report, help to guide the Board members as they direct the future of Midstate College. (5.B.3)

When needed, Board meetings are concluded with an Executive Session which includes the President and Board members so that they can engage in a confidential and open dialogue during which a substantial amount of support and advice is given to the President. These closed sessions have been an extremely important component of the Board meetings and are useful in the effective operation of the College. (2.C.3)

Board members periodically meet one-on-one with the President and Chairman in informal settings to offer guidance, consultation on confidential subject matters, and helpful ideas. This is a reflection of the commitment our Board members have toward Midstate College and the students it serves through education. Letters are sent when additional communication is needed. (5.B.3)

The Dean of Academics reports directly to the President and provides updates on key activities and initiatives at Board meetings. The Dean of Academics provides leadership and direction for Program

Directors (faculty designation) who, in turn, manage their departments, which includes managing the full- and part-time staff and faculty who implement operations. [See Figure 4P3.1] (2.C.4)

Figure 4P3.1: Management of Academics



***Collaborating across all units to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards and open communications:***

Annually, there are multiple opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to interact with each other, to contribute ideas, and to work collaboratively. (5.B.3) The following cross-institutional committee meetings are held regularly to make this happen: Assessment Committee, Curriculum Committee, AQIP Core Committee, Administrative Committee, Program Directors, Faculty, Retention and Enrollment, and Strategic Planning in-services. The committee meetings listed above meets multiple times throughout each term. Top administration

participate in all these meetings and attend regularly. The President's Cabinet conducts the Strategic Planning in-services. The AQIP Core Committee directs the College's Quality Improvement program, including action project selections derived from stakeholder feedback. The Administrative Committee sets policies and procedures and communicates them to all departments. The Retention and Enrollment meetings include a large cross-functional team that meets weekly throughout the term. Along with student retention, time is spent discussing academic challenges or ideas related to forms, academic portal (the Gateway), reporting processes, and policies. College-wide strategic planning in-services contain open chat sessions and collaborative group work sessions. All meetings, in-services, and committee sessions are documented with minutes that are available to all full- and part-time faculty and staff. (5.B.3)

There are several annual processes that require all departmental input to ensure academic policies and procedures are up-to-date, accurate, and complete. (2.C.4) Examples of these process cycles include updating the handbooks and the Catalog. The student handbooks and Catalog policies and procedures are part of an annual review that starts in the fall and continues through the end of spring. All academic requirements, policies, and processes are reviewed by faculty leaders and departments to ensure they are up-to-date and accurate. Each milestone is reviewed in quarterly faculty meetings each term until the final changes are approved. Progress and updates are made on an internal public drive and can be reviewed anytime during the cycle by staff and faculty. (5.B.3)

***Developing leaders at all levels within the institution:***

Leadership growth in the organization is based upon liberal continuing education policies, in-house training programs, leading by example, and promotion from within the organization. Participation by employees in accreditation activities contributes to leadership development within the organization.

The College has a history of employee longevity and encourages employees to develop leadership skills through mentoring, training, and experience. [See 3P1, 3P3] The College uses interim positions to help internal staff and faculty members grow into leadership roles. Through a faculty-driven action project, the College established an Academic Senate which oversees and manages academic rank. Participation in academic rank promotes professional growth for all faculty. As part of the employee development efforts,

new non-academic managers are asked to attend leadership training programs at a partnering institution if they have more than one employee that is being managed; if they are primarily managing resources, then they are provided with opportunities to improve knowledge in content areas. Program Directors attend and participate in several meetings each academic term conducted by the Deans. The meetings provide a forum for leadership guidance, discussion of relevant challenges, a place to address faculty and student concerns, and a means for updating of term schedules.

**Ensuring the institution’s ability to act in accordance with its mission and vision:**

The Board of Directors includes the owners of the College as well as individuals representing public and corporate interest. All major decisions affecting the College serve to demonstrate our commitment to serve the best interests of our students, in essence: our Mission and Vision. All Board meetings include members of the College administration who provide specific and important information that could impact operational decisions. It is this transparency, openness in dialog, and inclusive leadership that serves our constituencies. (2.C.2)

**4R3: Results**

The College uses the Employee Satisfaction Survey to determine employee perception of the College’s planning, decision-making, leadership, and communication. As a whole, Midstate College is much closer to the “ideal” rating of three for this survey across the majority of categories when compared to our peers, with exceptional relative success in involving students and alumni. The College has also achieved a near perfect level of involvement in planning and decision making with staff and trustees (Board of Directors). [See Figure 4R3.1] We also exceed our peers in satisfaction with administration by a minimum of half a point (on a five point scale) across all associated items on the survey, with outstandingly high scores in administration’s communication. [See Figure 4R3.2]

Figure 4R3.1: Employee Satisfaction Survey Results Related to Involvement in Planning & Decision-making

Rate: Involvement	Midstate College		Comparison Group	
	Mean	Distance from Ideal (Score of 3)	Mean	Distance from Ideal (Score of 3)
How involved are: Faculty	2.81	0.19	2.70	0.30
How involved are: Staff	2.98	0.02	2.28	0.28
How involved are: Deans or directors of administrative units	3.14	0.14	3.12	0.12
How involved are: Deans or chairs of academic units	3.09	0.09	3.09	0.09
How involved are: Senior administrators (VP, Provost level or above)	3.39	0.39	3.51	0.51
How involved are: Students	2.79	0.21	2.32	0.68
How involved are: Trustees	2.99	0.01	3.25	0.25
How involved are: Alumni	2.88	0.12	2.34	0.66

1 = not enough involvement, 3 = just the right involvement, 5 = too much involvement.

Figure 4R3.2: Employee Satisfaction Survey Results Related to Administration Communication

Campus Culture and Policies	Midstate College	Comparison Group	Differential
	SAT Mean	SAT Mean	
The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose	4.01	3.36	+0.65
There are effective lines of communication between departments	3.43	2.74	+0.69
Administrators share information regularly with faculty and staff	3.76	3.08	+0.68
There is good communication between the faculty and the administration at this institution	3.82	3.08	+0.74
There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution	3.76	3.06	+0.70

Ratings regarding understanding employee satisfaction are on a 5.0 scale.

### 4I3: Improvements

Board governance, oversight, and responsibilities are well-established due to the long-standing history and Board make up. This strength in governance allows for effective leadership within the College’s administration and for resources to identify and nurture upcoming leadership in the Institution. [See Figures 4R3.1, 4R3.2]

Since the previous systems portfolio, multiple improvements have been made in order to further enrich leadership throughout the College. One of the most impactful improvements made in regards to leadership involved splitting the Chief Academic Dean position into two specifically focused positions: Dean of Academics and Dean of Students. This split enables the Dean of Academics to focus on academic quality improvement and accreditation in conjunction with promoting development of faculty and staff. The Dean of Students is enabled to focus on being an advocate for students while also nurturing development for staff that provide student support services. Another leadership improvement involves the promotion of the Director of Marketing to Executive Director of Marketing and Enrollment. At the time that the 2011 Systems Portfolio was submitted, the financial assistance, admissions, and marketing departments operated separately. Through this improved leadership and management, the individual department silos were broken down and operations were streamlined.

Starting in 2011 the President convened regular, re-occurring meetings with various key department heads in order to further foster leadership development. For example, the Dean of Academics and the Dean of Students began meeting with the President on a bi-weekly basis in 2012 to focus on the cultivation of leadership and operations. The President also drove an initiative for the Dean of Academics to hold multiple meetings per term with Program Directors.

The Faculty Growth and Development Action Project, which began in 2012 and retired in 2013, produced the faculty rank initiative which encourages proactive engagement in voluntary leadership opportunities in education. [See 3P3]

## Subcategory Four: Integrity

### 4P4: Processes

#### *Developing and communicating standards:*

Top administration in conjunction with the Board of Directors set the Institution's integrity standards. The Code of Ethics follows the same cycle of review and revision as the Institution's Mission. The College's Code of Ethics outlines the Institution's values of integrity, innovation, continuous improvement, customer focus, and diversity. In 2013 the Misrepresentation Policy was established in compliance with the federal regulations (Sub F of Part 668). This policy was created in an effort to promote an environment of integrity as stated in the College's Code of Ethics. According to the Misrepresentation Policy, Midstate College employees will not make misleading statements that convey that any program or degree offered by the College will benefit an individual in admission to another institution, salary or benefit increase, employment, employment promotion, etc. The policy also ensures that employees will share accurate and precise information to all media. This information is updated annually as part of the Catalog update cycle. Additionally, all admission and degree completion information, along with costs, is clearly stated in the Midstate College Catalog. The College's Academic Integrity Policy outlines expectations of mutual trust between students, faculty, and administrators as well as the expected high level of academic honesty expected from students. The following are included in the actions Midstate College considers behaviors contrary to the academic integrity policy: plagiarism, cheating, deception, sabotage, computer misuse, and copyright infringement. (2.B)

The Code of Ethics is printed in the Catalog and displayed prominently in public areas, including on the walls of our classrooms. The College's Academic Integrity Policy is noted on page 41 in the 2016-2017 Catalog. (1.B.1) Additionally, students, staff, and visitors may review the Code of Ethics on our website located at <http://midstate.edu/Overview/mission.php>. The Misrepresentation Policy is located in the Consumer Information & Campus Security Handbook and is also located on the website. The Misrepresentation Policy and College Integrity Policy are reviewed annually as part of the annual Catalog and handbook review cycle and updated as needed.

#### *Training employees and modeling for ethical and legal behavior:*

Academic integrity and ethics are part of orientation training for all new faculty members. An Orientation Checklist is used to ensure this training occurs. Additionally, all new employees sign off for reviewing the Code of Ethics as well as the Misrepresentation Policy. [See 3P1] Employee counseling is initiated and documented whenever employee behavior varies from the professional standard set by legal obligations and/or the College's Code of Ethics, up to and possibly including employee termination.

Administration is committed to leading by example as they themselves follow the Institution's published Code of Ethics. In an effort to encourage transparency, the College maintains an Open Door, Supportive Environment Policy which provides an atmosphere that facilitates and enhances the social and academic development of students. Whether students are having difficulty passing tests, problems with specific course work, or difficulty identifying study strategies, the College provides positive support, problem-solving suggestions, and encouragement to assist them in finding the right strategy to help them grow in skills to master their academic life. The family environment encouraged by the College makes for a comfortable, enriched setting in which to seek assistance when needed and provides an open invitation to share successes as they occur.

***Ensuring the ethical practice of all employees and operating all functions with integrity:***

The College ensures ethical practice through the following internal controls:

- *Financial Functions:* Midstate College has policies and procedures in place to ensure that financial activities are performed accurately, reliably, and in accord with government standards. The Financial Assistance, Student Accounts, and Finance departments work closely together, and policies are in place to ensure that the proper separation of duties is adhered to in relation to transactions and activities involving Title IV funds.

The College employs a third-party financial consultant to assist with the performance of mitigating controls. Due to the small staff size of the Finance and Student Accounts departments, it is not possible to rely solely on separation of duties for internal controls. The College utilizes mitigating controls in order to satisfy internal control requirements. Access to the financial accounting software is restricted. In addition, access rights within the software are assigned to a user based on job duties. The Student Information System (SIS) also has security rights assigned to individual users to limit access to student's financial transactions. The Executive Finance Committee reviews the financial statements on a monthly basis. Additionally, the financial consultant presents the most recent financial statements to the Board of Directors at all board meetings.

Midstate's financial statements are audited by an independent auditing firm on an annual basis. Audits are conducted in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. (2.A)

- *Personnel Functions:* Midstate College takes great care in ensuring confidential information is protected for all applicants, employees, and past employees. The use of employment practices that can be proven as not only legal but also ethical and effective is a priority. The only personnel with the ability to see confidential information found within secured databases are the President of the College and employees of the Human Resources department. All cabinets containing employee files and information are kept locked at all times and are only opened for immediate use. These same cabinets are also kept in an office that is locked when vacant.

The President has sole responsibility for administering written policies. The President handles any situation not clearly stated in written policies on a case-by-case basis. The Board is informed of significant outcomes. Having been oriented to personnel policies; employees at Midstate College are expected to be familiar with them and should consult with the President if questions arise before taking any action in order to ensure the interpretation is correct. All employees have access to the most current policies.

Integrity is an important aspect of the College and the Human Resource department, and, as a result, processes have been put into place to create an atmosphere where integrity is intertwined with personnel functions. Examples of these processes include employment, payroll, performance progress, grievances, and compliance with Title II, IV, and IX.

- *Employment:* Midstate College does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, political, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, or disabled veterans. Midstate College is an Equal Opportunity Employer. For every opening we consider a fair amount of candidates in order to ensure the best and most qualified person is hired. Interviews include a variety of behavioral and ethical based questions as well as standard interview questions. Midstate strives to hire qualified applicants with the same values and caring attitude that the College shows toward its students. A panel interview made up of appropriate

personnel convenes, and interviews are conducted in order to garner additional perspective into the applicant's credentials, abilities, and commitment to student learning and success. (3.C.6)

- *Payroll*: Midstate College tracks employee work hours, vacation, and sick pay. The Human Resource department reviews time entered on a weekly basis. The payroll process is divided among multiple departments, to include an outside payroll agency which ensures all payroll transmissions are developed, approved, and dispersed with integrity.
- *Performance Progress*: All new employees meet with their department head at 60- and 90-days to complete a performance progress form. During the first 60 and 90 days of employment, the department head will carefully monitor performance and provide regular verbal feedback to the new employee. If requirements are not met, the new employee is forewarned in writing during or in addition to the 60- or 90-day performance progress review and is also given reasonable time to remediate explicitly defined deficiencies. If satisfactory improvement does not result, the employee may be terminated without further notice during or at the end of the 90-day probationary period.
- *Grievances*: If an employee perceives an attitude, action, or incidence, whether it be intended or not, as unfair or unjust, his/her department head should be notified. The President becomes involved if the department head and the employee are unable to reach a suitable resolution. Grievances are documented.
- *Compliance with Title II, IV, and IX*: The Consumer Information and Campus Security Handbook is a comprehensive guide of the College's policies and procedures regarding consumer information and campus security. The College prepares, publishes, and distributes the Handbook to all current students, employees, applicants for enrollment, and applicants for employment. Distribution and availability is as follows:
  - ◇ A Handbook is published annually and distributed to all current students and employees in the Fall term;
  - ◇ An informational flyer is distributed to all prospective students in their admissions interview as well as all applicants for employment when their application is submitted to Human Resources;
  - ◇ Information is available in the display racks throughout the campus, on the College's website, and through the Student Affairs department.
- *Academic Functions*: The Academics department has various processes in place to ensure that faculty follows ethical academic practices. The first process starts with hiring procedures and includes documentation and forms that are designed to encourage ethical behavior. The faculty job description and faculty commitment form outline teaching practices that include the use of techniques to reduce cheating, to ensure academic rigor, to limit plagiarism, and to ensure student identity. New faculty sign a work-for-hire agreement form that outlines copyright and delivery of work. [See 1P6] The College has an additional process in place to make sure that all syllabi follow a formalized template. Before a new term begins, Program Directors review all syllabi and provide feedback on course content, including how course objectives are mapped to assignments.

The Registrar maintains an up-to-date knowledge base regarding The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) through various means, including newsletters and trainings offered by The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). The Registrar uses new knowledge gained to build and deliver relevant, mandatory FERPA training for all faculty and staff annually. (2.A) As part of orientation, all new employees, including work study students, are provided a copy of our FERPA policy and are required to sign a statement of FERPA understanding and confidentiality agreement. Student Records Assistants, along with other key personnel, undergo

more rigorous FERPA training geared specifically toward departmental needs. Access to Personally Identifiable Information (PII) within education records is granted on a need-to-know basis. Measures are in place to ensure employees have access to only the records relevant to their job duties.

Students are notified of their rights under FERPA at enrollment and then annually. Processes to verify identity and obtain signatures approving release of PII are in place to ensure students' educational records are protected. Requests for PII, FERPA PII blocks, and specific permission to discuss educational records are tracked in our SIS. At the present time, no active students have a block on their PII; 18 percent have provided written permission to release their records to a third-party.

FERPA violations are taken seriously. The Registrar investigates any violation, no matter how minor, and takes appropriate steps to ensure any employee directly involved is retrained.

- *Auxiliary Functions:* Midstate College takes pride in providing our own Bookstore and Café in the R. Dale Bunch Student Center. The Student Center also houses the Barbara Fields Memorial Library. Thus, this space provides a convenient single location for non-class related activities, social opportunities, and a quiet place to study while on campus.

The Bookstore uses a third party, online system from MBS Direct that provides current market pricing to sell used books to students and buy them back after the term ends. This helps provide a lower initial cost to students and an opportunity to use the credit from their books toward their next term's course materials.

In order to provide our students with the opportunity to purchase course supplies elsewhere, our SIS links the current version of each course with the corresponding course on our website. This information includes: book title, ISBN, author, publisher, edition, new and used pricing, and a link to the Library of Congress web description, if applicable. If the students choose to purchase course supplies from the Bookstore, they are able to charge their supplies to their student account and use financial assistance funds to pay for them. (2.A)

The Bookstore completes a physical inventory at the end of every month as part of the annual financial audit process. The inventory count and pricing are reviewed by the external auditors to ensure accuracy and proper valuation.

The Café is open to students, college personnel, and the community at-large. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served Monday through Thursday with a variety of menu options. The Café offers daily specials, and menu items are reasonably priced.

### ***Making information readily and clearly available to all constituents:***

The College has multiple avenues whereby information is made available to constituents. The College maintains information regarding its Board, faculty, and employees on the Institution's website. This information is kept up-to-date by the Human Resource department. The College maintains all information on its website and Catalog regarding accreditation relationships. All accreditation feedback is shared internally through meetings and newsletters and is stored on an electronic drive available to all full- and part-time employees. Academic program information, including cost, is maintained on the website and in the College Catalog. Academic assessment plans and reports, as well as academic program review information, are available to staff and faculty. (2.B)

**4R4: Results**

We administer the Employee Satisfaction Survey to measure employee observations of our culture and policies as well as their level of satisfaction with services provided. Student complaints and grievances serve as another vehicle for communicating how well we meet expectations and standards in regards to College policies and the way we interact with students in accord with our ethical and legal standards. [See 2P4, 2R4]

The Employee Satisfaction Survey results show that employees are overall significantly more satisfied with the work environment and culture at Midstate College than employees at our peer institutions. The scores also reflect one of our greatest strengths as an Institution, which is the pride employees take in their work. [See Figure 4R4.1]

*Figure 4R4.1: Employee Satisfaction Survey Results Related to Institutional Pride and Respect*

	Midstate College	Comparison Group	
Work Environment / Campus Culture and Policies	SAT Mean	SAT Mean	Differential
<b>Section 4: Work Environment</b>			
I am comfortable answering student questions about institutional policies and procedures	3.93	3.56	+0.37
I am proud to work at this institution	4.55	4.04	+0.51
<b>Section 1: Campus Culture and Policies</b>			
There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution	3.79	3.09	+0.70
The reputation of this institution continues to improve	4.06	3.41	+0.65
This institution is well-respected in the community	4.07	3.44	+0.63

*Ratings regarding understanding employee satisfaction are on a 5.0 scale.*

**4I4: Improvements**

The Controller is currently working on a manual to compile all the policies and procedures for the Student Accounts department into one working document. It will include both operational and procedural guidelines. Upon completion of the student accounts document, a similar document will be produced for the Finance department.

The College recognizes that best practices are formed and maintained by repetitively reviewing College policies and proper ethical behavior, having administration consistently model appropriate ethical and legal behavior, and supporting a culture of continuous improvement. In that regard, the Human Resource department will play an integral part in training employees on a regular basis to not only remind employees of proper ethical and legal behavior but also inform employees of any updates or changes.