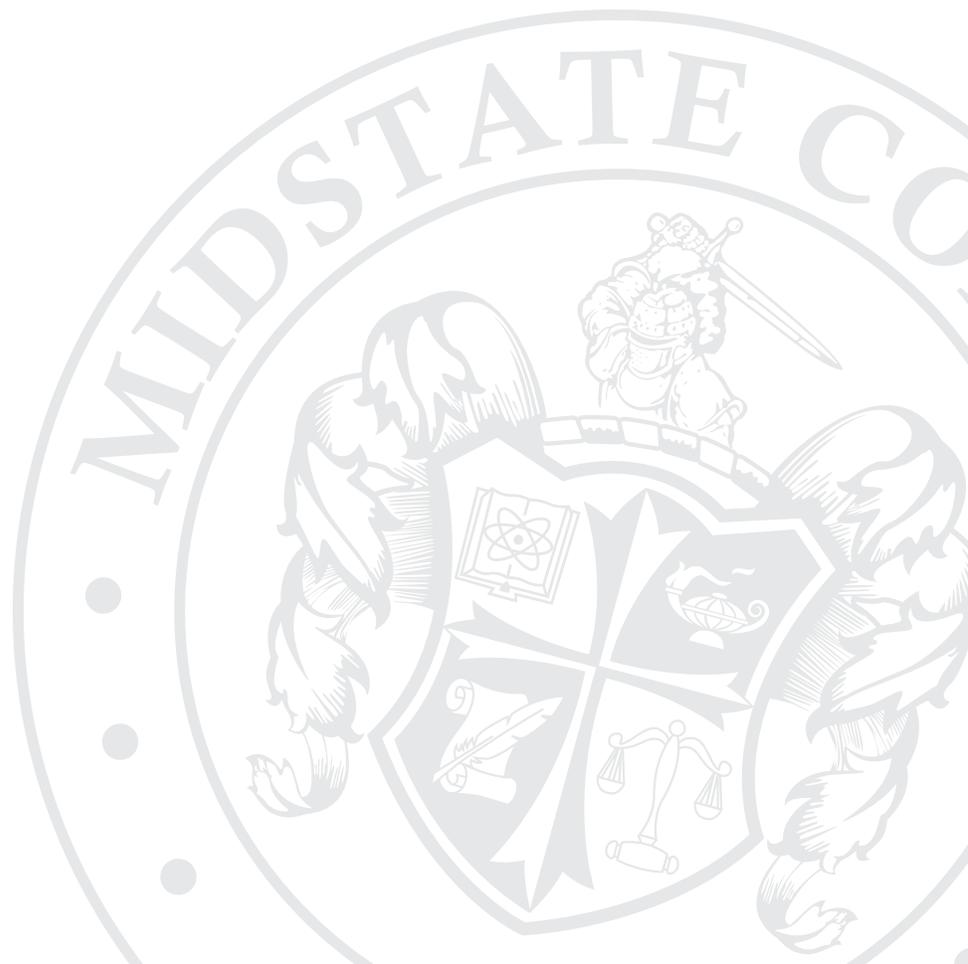


AQIP Systems Portfolio

Category Nine – Building Collaborative Relationships



Processes (P)

9P1: Educational and organizational relationships

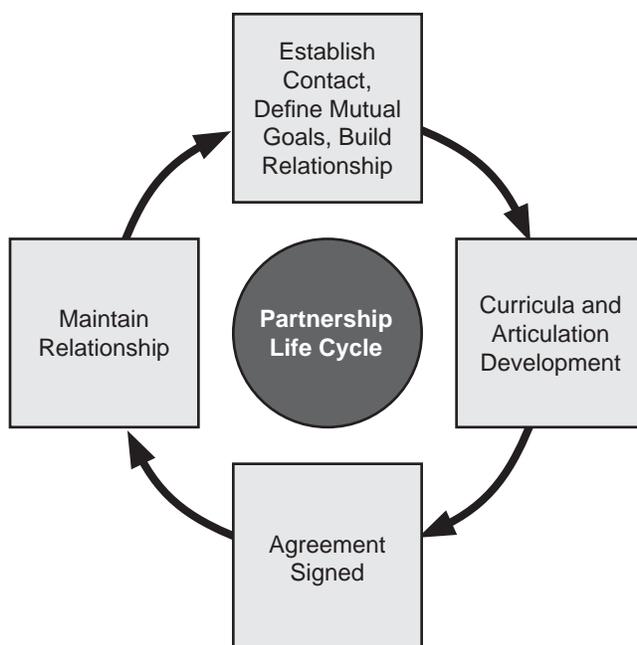
The college prioritizes our relationships with educational institutions and other organizations by using a SWOT analysis, as part of our annual strategic planning in-service, to help define strengths and areas of improvement. The strategic plan outlines key strategic partnership and collaboration goals every three years. Additionally, we systematically review IPEDS enrollment reports and new student transfer requests to determine which organizations and educational institutions are feeding students to the college. This information is instrumental in helping guide the college's priorities and efforts. As mentioned on our 2007 Systems Portfolio, we created an action project entitled *Developing Educational Initiatives in Collaboration with Other Institutions*, which focused not only on building new relationships with educational institutions, but finding the best way to continuously evaluate these relationships. We retired the project in 2009 after establishing the new processes and models described below.

Educational Relationships

Under the supervision of the President, the Community Outreach Coordinator works collaboratively with Administration, Admissions, the Director of Marketing, Program Directors, and the Transfer Coordinator to set targets and establish relationships with educational institutions which help supply students to the college.

The Developing Educational Initiatives action project identified that the majority of our students are non-traditional students, with prior college experience, wanting to transfer credit to the college. As a result of this project, the Transfer Coordinator has been publishing an annual report since 2007 detailing information about our transfer students. This report shows from which institutions students transfer more frequently and is shared with both the Community Outreach Coordinator and our cross-functional collaborative relationship committee to help make decisions about which institutions to target for our next degree completion agreements and consortium partnerships. The college uses the Midstate partnership life cycle model [See Figure 9.1 below] as a framework to help build and assess its relationships with other institutions. Each year the college identifies how many partnerships to pursue and which partnerships to renew as part of the strategic plan and surveys our existing partners to determine which agreements need to be updated.

Figure 9.1 – Partnership Lifecycle



Since 1998, Midstate College has been an active member of the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). Through this partnership we are able to facilitate transfer of incoming and outgoing student course credits. We have focused primarily on pursuing approvals for general education courses, but recently other subject areas have opened for additional approval.

The Community Outreach Coordinator participates in college nights/fairs with all partnership institutions located in Illinois. She works hard to promote Midstate and share information about the ease of transfer to our institution. The number of college nights/fairs in which the college has participated doubled since 2008-2009.

Since 2007 greater priority has been placed on recruiting local high school students. This initiative aligns with our 10-year vision which

states, "...the college will attract some younger students coming straight out of high school." In pursuit of this vision, the Community Outreach Coordinator spent the last two years targeting middle and high schools within a 30-mile radius. She gives presentations about the college experience, participates in college nights, and acts as the sole presenter for financial aid night events at 11-area high schools. Each year a counselors' luncheon is held at the Midstate College campus to connect area high school counselors with college administrators, program directors, instructors, and staff.

Organizational Relationships

The Community Outreach Coordinator works closely with the President, as well as our Marketing and Admissions departments to determine which organizations to target. The annual outreach report acts as a foundation for setting new milestones for the following year. She communicates with administration on a weekly basis to prioritize outreach efforts.

The Community Outreach Coordinator also visits the human resource offices of local businesses and meets with the office managers of area employers to discuss employer-paid tuition benefits for their employees. The college also collaborates with non-profit service organizations throughout the community to help low-income individuals and families obtain access to training opportunities and post-secondary education.

9P2: Creating, prioritizing, and building relationships

The college understands that it is vital to establish and maintain communication with the community of employers to ensure the continued relevance of our curricula and their ability to meet the evolving workforce needs of the area. We systematically review graduate employment placement reports, feedback from academic program advisory boards, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), workforce development, and chamber of commerce reports, and local businesses with job opportunities. This information helps us prioritize a number of critical relationships including service learning opportunities, externship sites, additions to our academic advisory boards, and companies to invite to our career fair.

Our Career Services Center acts as a conduit between employers and the college's students and alumni seeking employment. Staff from this department collect information from local businesses with job opportunities and then cross-references it with the files of graduates and students looking for employment. Students or alumni skills, abilities, and education are matched to employer needs. The Career Services Center invites employers onto campus to setup personal booths for recruiting. Although the Career Services Center co-sponsored career fairs in the past with Workforce Development, in August 2011, Midstate College held its first independent annual career fair for students and graduates. Midstate recruited 24 high-profile businesses to attend this event. Some of these businesses included: Methodist, Proctor, Pekin, and OSF Hospitals, Best Buy, Sam's Club, Peoria County; City of Peoria, and CityLink. An estimated 150 people attended the job fair.

In 2008, the Community Outreach Coordinator's job description was updated to include even more external relationship building efforts, strengthening interdepartmental interaction and communication, and documenting efforts through an annual outreach report.

9P3: Relationships with student service providers

Midstate College provides most of its student services internally, including on-campus events (Student Affairs), tutoring and student support (Student Success Office), food and drink service (Midstate Café), etc.

Midstate College uses surveys such as the student opinion survey and annual student focus forum to determine what organizational partnerships are needed to meet students' service and resource needs. Administration uses budget and strategic planning and departmental goals to aid in prioritizing student service approvals. Individual departments move forward with relationship building, purchasing services, and resources after receiving written or verbal approvals.

9P4: Relationships with materials and service providers

Midstate's status as a family-owned, for-profit institution permits flexibility in selecting suppliers and vendors. The controller maintains copies of all vendor contracts, and the President makes all final approvals for contracts through a purchase order system. Large service or materials contracts are integrated into the strategic plan. Midstate College department directors assist in negotiating, establishing and maintaining external vendor partnerships. Departmental budgeting considerations, contract bidding quotes, constituency satisfaction and key operational requirements help drive what materials are purchased and services are maintained and/or acquired.

9P5: Fostering other relationships

Midstate puts a priority on relationships which directly serve our objectives and mission. Our institutional objectives outline how the college will maintain open dialogue with community employers to ensure relevant curriculum for fulfilling employment needs, preparing students for careers, and providing real-life learning experiences. The college gives budgeting priority to support the following: advisory board memberships, staff and faculty memberships, institutional educational association memberships, and program accreditations.

A description of consortia relationships and other educational partnerships and how they are managed is outlined with the description of the Partnership Life Cycle in [See 9P1]. Program accrediting body descriptions are outlined in Category One [See 1P3].

At the individual level, college administration encourages staff and faculty to participate in regional, national, and international conferences, partnership activities, and maintain relevant memberships. Supervisors encourage their employees to join associations or maintain memberships with organizations that support their employment and departmental goals or resource requirements. The college conducts an annual Membership and Partnership Survey for all faculty, staff, and administrators to gather data on their current professional memberships and to identify any new partnerships. This information is published in the annual outreach report and made available to all staff and faculty on an internal share drive.

Figure 9.2 – Sample of Key Professional Relationships

Relationship Title	Examples	Description of Relationship
President and Chief Executive Officer	Illinois Board of Higher Education, Proprietary School Advisory Committee	Active committee member
Community Outreach Coordinator	Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (ILASFAA)	Past President
	Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce Ambassador
	Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) / State of Illinois' Monetary Award Program (MAP) Formula Committee (ILASFAA)	Appointed member
	ILASFAA Veterans Affairs Committee. The committee's primary goal is to provide best practices for schools when coordinating veterans services, be an advocate for school certifying officials, and help schools determine how best to serve their veteran populations.	One of nine individuals representing college campuses from throughout the State of Illinois
Director of Assessment	The Higher Learning Commission	HLC Peer Reviewer
	Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS)	Committee Member/Governing board alternate
	Chicago Area Assessment Group	Committee member

Relationship Title	Examples	Description of Relationship
Controller	The Higher Learning Commission: Financial Indicator Advisory Committee	Advisory Committee member
Program Director of Allied Health	Red Cross	Disaster Board member
Program Director of General Studies	IA Humanities and Fine Arts panel for IAI	Panel Faculty

The corporate responsibility table [See Figure 9.3] shows some of our other partnerships with businesses and organizations throughout our community. These service opportunities align with our fifth institutional objective, which involves learning that enhances a student's capacity to demonstrate ethical and moral values in professional, personal, and business situations.

Figure 9.3 – Corporate Responsibility

Organization	Description of Relationship
Center for the Prevention of Abuse	Volunteering support, Partner in Peace luncheon, Conduct and promote fundraising efforts, and Assisted HART teens with financial aid assistance and career counseling
Peoria Disposal Company	Participate in recycling program
Crittenton Center/Crisis Nursery	Kids Day Sponsor, Donation drives for clothing and baby needs, and Assisting clients with FAFSA completion and career counseling
South Side Mission/ New Promise Center	Shelter visits to discuss career counseling, Campus visits, Provide FWS students for administrative positions, 26 Students/faculty and families assisted with Thanksgiving meal deliveries, Midstate College donated \$1,000 to help sponsor Thanksgiving meals
Boys and Girls Clubs of Peoria	Provide FWS students for summer youth programs and administrative help
CommonPlace	Provide FWS students for Family Literacy Programs and summer youth programs
Peoria Dream Center	Donated money for the purchase for backpacks and school supplies for low income families
Peoria Housing Authority's ARRO Program (Access to Resources and Referrals)	Assist clients with financial aid assistance and career counseling
Easter Seals	Support through fundraising efforts, VIP teams and assisting with the annual telethon

9P6: Ensuring needs are met

Midstate is a small college that encourages employees to maintain personal communication with its community partners. As partnerships are established, email, telephone conversation, and face-to-face interactions are used to nurture and maintain these new relationships. The college uses a variety of surveys to evaluate community employment needs and determine if our graduates are meeting employer expectations.

9P7: Creating internal relationships

The college holds numerous social events to help promote employee camaraderie. These events serve as communication mechanisms which support a cohesive employee/campus community. Communication is maintained through the use of email, email groups, departmental and school-wide newsletters, and messenger technology. The President promotes information exchange between departments at administrative meetings twice each academic term. Institution-wide strategic planning, all-school in-services, cross-disciplinary committees, and the nine-step communication process, serve as testimony to the varying methods the college promotes to enhance communication between departments. Top administration encourages staff and faculty to participate in nonprofit projects, such as fundraising, clothing drives, etc., to promote team building and corporate outreach. The Community Outreach Coordinator acts as a liaison between departments when promoting activities and collecting partnership and collaboration information. Annual outreach reports are generated to report findings and efforts.

Results (R)

9R1: Measures of collaborative relationships

Midstate collects the following results regarding external and internal partnerships and collaboration:

Advisory board status and membership listings (membership listings, annual surveys, updated membership candidates); Veteran Enrollment & events report; Business and organization on-campus visits (listing of employers); Campus activities listing; Career Services collaborations (job opportunities & matches); Central Illinois Workforce Development Board collaborations and partnerships (partnership contract and survey results from requested trainings); Chamber of Commerce activities (listing of attended events); College Nights/Fairs listing (listing of attended events); Community involvement and charities (listing of outreach activities); Employer-paid tuition benefits (listing of number of students); Faculty/Staff Professional Memberships (completed employee partnership/membership survey); Federal Work Study (sites—who and how many); Financial Aid presentations (list of high schools—evaluations); Guest speakers/field trips (listing of events and speakers); High School Counselors' Luncheon (number of attendees); High school visits/classroom presentations (number of visits); Internships/Externships/Professional Practice Experiences (number of student participants); Service learning opportunities (track number); Articulation and Consortium agreements (number of agreements); Articulation and Consortium assessment (feedback results); Incoming student transfer reports of feeder institutions (Annual Transfer Report); IPEDS reports identifying student enrollments (first-time fall enrollments); Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) course approvals (number of courses approved & pending approvals); Graduate Placement Reports (Placement numbers); Employer Surveys of Midstate Graduates (Surveys for Program Accreditations); Local Employer Survey (Targeted Human Resource Survey - 3-year cycle); Program Accreditation Bodies (Feedback reports)

9R2: Performance results

Figure 9.4 outlines examples of a few key performance results for some of our internal and external collaborative relationships.

Figure 9.4 – Key Performance Results

Descriptor	Purpose	Results
Program Accreditation Bodies	Increase academic quality; prompt communication and feedback from area employers, program alumni, and existing students;	[See 1P3]. Example: three academic programs are accredited through nationally recognized accrediting bodies; one degree program is in final stages of approval; one degree program is in candidacy status.
Local Employer Survey	Targeted Human Resource Survey (3-year cycle);	In 2009 survey results provided Feedback on the ranked importance of job applicant skills.
High School visits	Building awareness of education choices among local traditional student populations	In 2010, 23 site visits and classroom presentations completed.
Annual Transfer Report	Tracks transfer requests from feeder institutions	The top course transfer requests for 2010 originated from the following feeder institutions: Illinois Central College, Spoon River College, Bradley University, Black Hawk College, and Heartland Community College.
IAI Course Approvals	Aiding students and graduates with incoming and outgoing credits transfers	1998 - 7 total courses approved 2011 - 44 total course approval; one course pending approval.
Education associations, Professional memberships; External agency	Support of industry knowledge-building, civic, business and professional memberships	Survey results show approximately 13% membership growth each year since tracking began in 2007-2008.
Businesses/Organizations on-campus visits	Recruitment; student discount programs, etc.	Visits increased by 71% from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010.

Descriptor	Purpose	Results
Educational Partners	Easier student transferability to Midstate College from feeder institutions	Maintain four articulation agreements (Spoon River College, Illinois Central College, Huntington College, and Black Hawk); one informal agreement (College of Court Reporting), one consortium agreement (Heartland College); two educational partners (MacCormac College and Illinois Valley Community College) in beginning stages of articulation. (Met strategic educational goals since their establishment in 2007).
Internships/Externships/Professional Practice Experiences	Real-life employment experiences for students	Students enrolled in internship/externship/PPE courses: 2007-2008 59 Students 2008-2009 61 Students 2009-2010 65 Students
Advisory Boards	Share industry knowledge as it relates to academic degree programs	Since 2007, memberships have increased by 45%.
Federal Work Study Sites	Provide students with the ability to earn financial funding through a part-time work program	In 2009-2010, ten students participated at the following organizations/agencies: Common Place 3 students The Peoria Boys and Girls Clubs 2 students Peoria Housing Authority 1 student South Side Mission 3 students Dress for Success 1 student
Employer Surveys of Midstate Graduates	Surveys for Program Accreditations	2011 Employer Survey results for Paralegal Services Department Graduates - employers reported that 87% indicated that Midstate's graduates were "Very well prepared."
Service Learning Site	Meaningful community service connected to a specific course	2010-2011 one student participated in our first Service Learning Opportunity at Southside Mission.

9R3: Comparisons

The AQIP Examiner results for 2010 show a marked improvement from the results compiled in 2004. Staff and faculty demonstrated that they feel Midstate College has improved its collaborative efforts, relationship-building processes and overall performance results in this area. [See 9.1]. When our data are compared to other institutions we rank above the mean average. [See Figures 9.5 and 9.6] below:

Figure 9.5 – Comparison of 2010 Examiner Mean Scores by AQIP Categories

The AQIP Categories	Midstate College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Building Collaborative Relationships	4.14	0.83	3.29	1.17

5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process

Figure 9.6 – Comparison of 2004 Examiner Mean Scores by AQIP Categories

The AQIP Categories	Midstate College	
	Mean	S.D.
Building Collaborative Relationships	3.64	1.11

5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process

See Figure 6.9 for more information regarding student satisfaction in the ALFI Principle categories of Outreach and Life/Career Planning. Midstate College rated above the mean in comparison to other four-year institutions in both of these categories.

Improvement (I)

9I1: Improvements

The past two action projects targeting areas in this category resulted in the creation of the outreach coordinator position and newly established processes including a model to manage and initiate new educational collaboration relationships. The 2004 Examiner results were lower than desired and prompted action projects to address the deficiencies in this area. Future action projects will be data driven by the most recent results and focus on objectives that challenge further collaborative growth and development.

In 2007-2008 top administration revised the annual outreach report to include all collaboration and relationship building efforts. The outreach coordinator's position was expanded to help monitor and report on all internal and external partnership activities. Although quantity (categories expanded from 6 to 22) is not synonymous with quality, the additional length, focus, content and data included in the 2010-2011 report are testimony to improvement efforts.

Due to a low rate of return of online articulation and consortium surveys in 2010, administration requested in 2011 that the Community Outreach Coordinator personally contact all the partners using phone and face-to-face sessions to assess current partnership agreements. The Community Outreach Coordinator was able to reach 100% of partners and update the same information requested electronically. As a result of the success rate of this new assessment approach, it has been integrated into the partnership life cycle.

9I2: Culture and infrastructure support

Our Midstate quality improvement program, combined with strategic planning and annual SWOT analysis, drives process improvement and the development of new targets. Administration uses the outreach report statistics, analysis, and descriptions to recommend additional improvements.