

Category #8:
Planning Continuous Improvement

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8C1 Institutional vision

The vision statement for the College is “By 2010, those served by the College of DuPage will be the nation’s best-educated citizens”. The College was in the process of creating new vision and mission statements when the Board of Trustees reassigned the President and hired an interim President. Senior leadership decided to put the mission and vision process on hold until the new President is in place.

8C2 Short-and-long-term strategies and alignment with mission and vision

The College considers its long-term planning to cover a period of approximately four years, and its short-term planning to cover a span of one to three years. As shown in Figure 8.1, the College’s institutional goals provide focus as long-term strategies for the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan.

Figure 8.1 Institutional Goals

Academic Quality Improvement Projects (AQ)	
AQ01	Improve Students’ Skills in Developmental Reading, Writing and Mathematics
AQ02	Improve Student Advising
AQ03	Improve Effectiveness of Partnerships with Area High Schools
AQ04	Improve satisfaction levels of employees by creating a culture where everyone accepts their responsibilities for decision making and obtaining appropriate information to perform their duties.
AQ05	Improve the academic readiness of students.
AQ06	Improve student engagement with faculty, staff, peers, and the resources of the broader college community.
AQ07	Develop continuing partnerships with external institutions and organizations for the benefit of District 502.
Illinois Commitments (IL)	
IL01	Higher education will help Illinois business and industry sustain strong economic growth.
IL02	Higher education will join elementary and secondary education to improve teaching and learning at all levels.
IL03	No Illinois citizen will be denied an opportunity for a college education because of financial need.
IL04	Illinois will increase the number and diversity of citizens completing training and education programs.
IL05	Illinois colleges and universities will hold students to even higher expectations for learning and will be accountable for the quality of academic programs and the assessment of learning.
IL06	Illinois colleges and universities will continually improve productivity, cost-effectiveness and accountability.
Institutional Strategic Plan (IS)	
IS01	Hire, develop and advance those who are committed to our educational mission to promote the highest levels of educational attainment throughout the community we serve.
IS02	Introduce new and modify existing programs, services, and systems as the continuous assessment of community learning needs and outcomes direct us.
IS03	Promote and support collaborative experimentation within the college and through partnerships to maintain our strong reputation and secure our financial future.
IS04	Stress learning attainment in our enrollment development efforts, attracting and retaining those we can serve best and collaborating with other education providers when partnerships better serve our community.
IS05	Analyze and improve essential internal processes in a manner consistent with the principles of quality improvement.
IS06.01	More effectively engage students in their education to enhance student success
IS06.02	Increase the engagement of college personnel in the improvement of essential processes affecting the quality of services and academic programs.
IS06.03	Develop continuing partnerships with external institutions and organizations for the benefit of District 502.

The short-term strategies are captured in Figure 8.2, the six 2008-2012 Strategic Objectives (SO). Alignment with mission and vision is ensured by

the annual revisiting of the mission, vision, institutional goals, and strategic objectives by the Leadership Council.

Figure 8.2 2008-2012 Strategic Objectives

SO 1: Improve systems, processes, and procedures to use resources more effectively.			
KPI	Sub-Objective	Measure	Target
1.1 Scheduling efficiency	Improve utilization of resources through scheduling efficiencies and by cross training personnel in division offices to have scheduling capabilities of classrooms.	Space Utilization Reports (Astra #10 and #12) on ratio of spaces filled to seats available. Include all delivery methods.	
1.2 Class cancellation rate	Reduce the number of cancellations each term by exploring innovative strategies to improve the process.	Astra reports on class enrollment and date of cancellation data via.	Decrease the number of cancellations by 5%
1.3 Number of students dropped for non-payment	Decrease the percentage of students who are dropped for non-payment each term.	Finance office report on percentage of students dropped for non-payment each term.	
1.4 Amount of time required for financial aid approval	Reduce the amount of time required for financial aid approval after application is completed.	Financial aid office report on amount of time required for action after application is completed.	Student applications will be processed, on average, within 6 weeks after a student's file is complete.
SO 2: Identify and meet the needs of under-prepared students before and after college entrance.			
KPI	Sub-Objective	Measure	Target
2.1 Student reading skills	Improve the reading skills of students in developmental reading courses.	Compass/Asset & Gates-MacGinitie tests given pre- and post-course	Increase by 2%
2.2 Student writing skills	Improve the writing skills of students in developmental writing courses.	Compass/Asset and maybe WPE as pre-test and English Entrance Essay as post-test	Increase by 2%
2.3 Student math skills	Improve the math skills of students in developmental math courses.	Pre/post test model.	Achieve a 75% success rate.
2.4 Developmental math student success rate.	Increase the rate of success of developmental math students in college-level math courses.	Course success rate of C or better from R&P.	Increase by 2%
2.5 Developmental Success Rates	Increase the level of success as measured by grades (A, B, C).	Enrollee Success NCCBP Credit, Developmental Course Success Rates	Increase each area by 1% (Math from 30% to 31%; Writing from 59% to 60%; and Reading from 67% to 68%)
2.6 Developmental Success Rates in college-level courses.	Increase the level of success as measured by grades (A, B, C).	NCCBP Credit, Developmental Student Success rates in college-level courses	Increase each area by 1% (Math from 72% to 73% and Writing from 80% to 81%)
SO 3: Improve student success and degree/certificate completion for all student cohorts.			
KPI	Sub-Objective	Measure	Target
3.1 Degree/Certificate Completion	Increase the number of full time, first-time students completing degrees or certificates within 3 and 5 years.	NCCBP: Proportions of students that complete degree or certificate	Increase by 0.25%
3.2 AAS Degree/Certificate Completion	Increase the number of AAS degrees & certificates completed within 3 and 5 years.	Local data	Increase by 0.25%
3.3 AA or AS completion or transfer	Increase the number of full time, first-time students completing AA or AS degree or IAI transfer within 3 and 5 years.	Local data	Increase by 0.25%
3.4 Student Success	Increase college-level course success rates (C or better).	NCCBP: Credit college-level course success rate	Increase next-term from 65% to 66%
3.5 Core academic area success	Increase enrollee success in core (English Comp 1 & 2, Algebra, and Speech) academic area.	NCCBP: Enrollee success in core academic skill areas	1% increase in each core area
SO 4: Improve academic effectiveness as measured by attainment of learning outcomes in courses, in all current delivery modes – traditional, CIL, Online, Hybrid, and Fast Track.			
KPI	Sub-Objective	Measure	Target
4.1 Develop a baseline of current student academic	Establish baseline grade data by delivery mode (future action is to	Absolute number in each grade category (A, B, C, D, F,	Complete data collection and annotation.

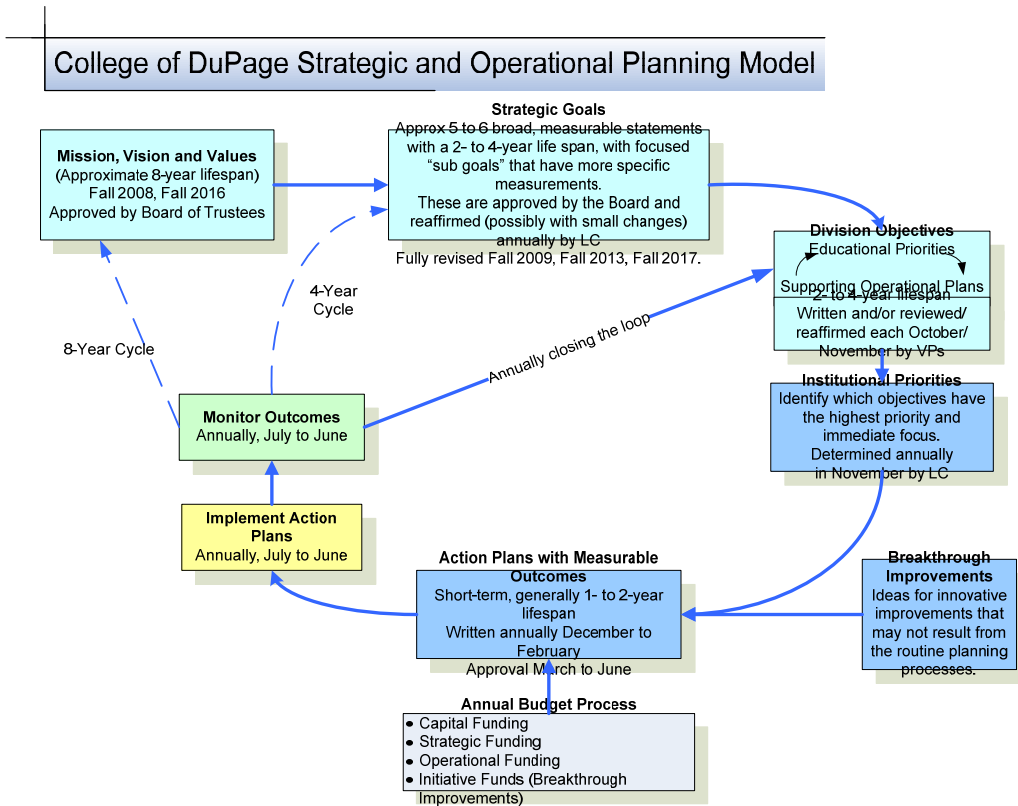
performance by <u>established</u> delivery mode category as determined by grade data	compare changes in grade results based on strategies implemented in each delivery mode	W) by delivery mode. Data collected from FY 2002 through FY 2008	
4.2 Compare delivery mode syllabi	Improve compatibility of Active Course files with syllabi across all delivery modes: traditional, CIL, online, Hybrid, Fast track	Percent in compliance.	100% compliance by FY2010.
4.3 Compare General Education learning outcomes by delivery mode based on Program Review and other measures	Improve General Education learning outcomes in all delivery modes	Use Program Review and/or General Education Assessment developed in the General Education Assessment QIP Team (QIP 7) to compare results or compare grades across the same General Education courses in each delivery mode	Recommend using General Education Assessment target resulting from work on General Education QIP Team (QIP 7) results and recommendations.
SO 5: Improve the alignment of programs and services with students, business, and community needs.			
KPI	Sub-Objective	Measure	Target
5.1 Alumni/Graduate Satisfaction	Maintain the level of satisfaction of our graduates.	R&P Grad. Satisfaction Survey	98% of respondents satisfied or very satisfied.
5.2 Market Penetration	Increase the percentage of market penetration by gender, age, ethnicity, and geographic location.	R&P data.	Increase penetration to 2.94% (from 2.89%)
5.3 Local High School Graduate Enrollment	Increase the percentage of enrollments from each of the district high schools.	Admissions data.	2% increase in the aggregate number from 1.4%
5.4 Program/Discipline-specific Enrollment	Maintain or increase enrollments in targeted programs.	For programs identified by VPAA, number that showed an increase in completers from previous year.	Establish baseline data
5.5 Student Satisfaction	Increase the level of satisfaction of our students.	Noel Levitz & ACT Survey of Student Opinion: Overall Impression of Quality of Education.	N-L:5.41 (same as national average—currently 5.04) ACT:4.15 (currently 4.09 and national average is 4.08)
5.6 Student Engagement	Increase the level of engagement of our students.	CCSSE.	Increase by one unit the standard score on each of the five benchmarks (Active Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, Stu-Fac Interaction, and Support for Learners)
5.7 Certification/Licensure	Increase or maintain the pass rates of all of our certification and licensure exams.	Pass rates for individual programs.	Meet or exceed last year's pass rates
SO 6: Develop students' capacity to think critically, manage information, and learn independently.			
KPI	Sub-Objective	Measure	Target
6.1 Critical Thinking Skills and Competencies	Improve students' ability to clarify, analyze, evaluate, and extend arguments.	CAAP Critical Thinking Test or ETS	Collect the data and compare to national norm
6.2 Information Literacy	Improve students' information literacy skills including the use of digital technology, communications tools, and networks to solve information problems in order to function in society.	iSkills Information and Communication Technology Assessment or SAILS	Collect the data and compare to national norm
6.3 Critical Thinking Attitudes	Assess critical thinking attitudes.	California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory (CCTDI)	Establish baseline data

8P1 Planning process

The College’s planning process is captured in Figure 8.3. The process is overseen by the constituency-based Leadership Council (LC) which ensures that all institutional stakeholders are included in planning decisions. The planning process is based on the Plan-

Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology to identify opportunities for improvement, collect and analyze data, implement improvements, and evaluate effectiveness. The planning process encompasses one-year, four-year, and eight-year PDCA cycles.

Figure 8.3 Institutional Planning Process



The planning process begins with a series of institutional planning workshops overseen by the Leadership Council, composed of members of the President’s Cabinet along with the executive leadership of each of the five constituency groups: administrators, full-time faculty, classified staff, part-time faculty, and students. The outcomes of the workshops are updated mission and vision statements and a set of institutional goals. Mission and vision statements undergo a thorough review every eight years, and institutional goals are intended to cover a four-year span. The planning process was scheduled to begin in Fall 2008, but the change at the President’s level necessitated a delay in the cycle. Once the new President takes office, the College expects to resume the process in an expeditious manner.

The next step in the planning process is the development of Strategic Objectives (labeled Strategic Goals on Figure 8.3). These objectives represent the educational priorities of the institution and the supporting operational plans to help achieve them. The Strategic Objectives are written by the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Finance, and Information Technology. In the most recent cycle, the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs objectives were written through a collaborative process involving administrators and the Faculty Senate. The objectives for Finance and Information Technology were developed in order to support the collaborative Academic Affairs/Student Affairs objectives.

Once the Strategic Objectives are determined for the upcoming year, Action Plans are written by administrators and faculty to achieve the targets specified in those objectives. Action Plans are written by February and approved by May. Once approved, Action Plans are implemented from July to the following June.

The outcomes of each Action Plan are reviewed by Cabinet in July /August of the following year. In the fall, these outcomes also are examined in context with the institutional goals. As a result, the institutional goals are reaffirmed and/or revised if needed, the strategic objectives are updated/revised/retired as necessary, and the annual cycle begins again. The annual cycle is modified every four years with the rewriting of the institutional goals, and every eight years with the rewriting of the mission and vision statements.

8P2 Selecting short- and long-term strategies

The long-term strategies are institutional goals, selected in an institution-wide strategic planning process every four years. The process for selecting the long-term strategies begins with an environmental scan that captures a comprehensive survey of COD's environment in the following areas: workforce and employment trends; DuPage County demographic trends; financial position and funding stream impact; national reports on education, student enrollment and retention trends; and student and staff expectations and satisfaction trends. After reviewing the information, the planning group (described in Section 8P1) uses a collaborative process involving CI tools to arrive at the five or six most pressing long-term strategies to accomplish the mission and vision. Conflicting expectations of key stakeholder groups is managed by having stakeholders present at and involved in the development of the long-term strategies and by using CI techniques such as multi-voting and small-group brainstorming.

Short-term strategies are determined by the Cabinet areas. In the last cycle, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs worked collaboratively, involving both administrators and faculty in the identification of six strategic objectives (see Figure 8.2). The process began with an environmental scan and review of the last version of the 20 strategic objectives for the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions. A pre-planning group of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs administrators held two working sessions over the summer. Participants were provided copies of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*; the *Student Portrait for Fall Semester 2005*;

the *Institutional Portrait for 2005-2006*; the Five Year Financial Analysis for 2007-11; a document entitled *The Demographics and Academics of College Going in Illinois*; a document entitled *The State of Working Illinois 2005*; the Noel Levitz *Student Satisfaction Inventory Survey Report 2004*; the *Illinois Commitment—A Policy Framework for Illinois Higher Education*; and the College's 2004 *AQIP Systems Portfolio*. Teams of three-to-four administrators studied each of the documents and reported out their findings and observations. From there, a structured brainstorming activity was used to reduce the 20 strategic objectives to a more workable number, and to reword the goals to make them truly strategic, rather than operational. In the fall, the Faculty Senate joined the administrator group in order to conduct a series of meetings, spanning both fall and spring semesters, that resulted in validating the existing objectives, as well as developing metrics for the assessment and analysis of progress on the objectives. This collaborative process ensured that key stakeholders were present and that the planning process was communicated effectively. In addition, key stakeholder groups have input through representation on the Leadership Council. The representatives are charged with the communication of issues and concerns regarding the development and identification of the planning process.

8P3 Developing key action plans

Once strategic objectives are identified, key action plans are developed. Staff and faculty are encouraged to submit action plan proposals related to progress on the strategic objectives via the Online Planning Database (OPD), a tool created by the College to collect planning information. The OPD is a repository for information regarding vision/mission/goals/objectives/action plans and enables College leadership to track how all areas of the College contribute to the accomplishment of the College's vision, mission, goals, and objectives. College personnel can access the database year-round in order to enter, review, and update planning information.

The annual planning period is when resources needed to accomplish action plans will be approved, budgeted, and assigned to specific funding sources. If an action plan requires resources from other areas of the College, personnel from those areas enter cost information directly into the action plan. The action plan approval process starts with the immediate supervisor and ends with Cabinet approval. Pre-defined reports in the database make it simple to produce a variety of reports used in tracking; such

reports can be generated upon request. Once approved, action plans become the major focus of work activities for the year.

An example of an action plan will illuminate the way in which the ODB manages this process. From the fiscal year FY08, one of the action plans was *AP08-01522: Improve Student Access to Computers in the Library*. The action plan was originated by the Dean of Learning Resources in February of 2007 and entered into the ODB with the following description:

Increase number of laptop computers that circulate to students and faculty by 10 to assure that more students can work on computers in the Library. The Library is one of the few facilities on campus that provides space conducive to quiet study, and increasingly, student assignments require the use of computers.

A proposed action plan must be linked to a strategic objective within the ODB. In this case, the proposed action plan was linked to the following two strategic objectives:

SO 1	Improve systems, processes and procedures to use resources more effectively.	2007
SO 3	Improve student success and degree/certificate completion for all student cohorts.	2007

The next step in the process is securing resources via a Resource Request. Such a request generates a Resource Review by the administrative area which would provide the resource. In the case of *AP08-01522*, the request was to have the project funded from the institution's Improvement Funding (IF) line, a special budget line dedicated to improvement projects:

Hardware/software	Add 10 new laptop computers to meet the increased demand of students doing academic work in the library.	IF Plan
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Accordingly, the Vice President of Academic Affairs approved the request; the Cabinet approved *AP08-01522*, and in July, *AP08-01522* became active. It was completed later that year, and the database recorded its completion. The final sequence of events captured in the database is shown below in the snapshot captured from the OPD:

Submission Date	Submitter	Update
9/7/2007 2:25:34 PM	SEAN SAMPEY	Replacing SUTTONE with STOCKL
7/12/2007 11:40:55 AM	CHRISTOPHER L. PICARD	Action Plan has been approved by Cabinet and is now active for FY 2008.
7/12/2007 11:40:02 AM	CHRISTOPHER L. PICARD	AP approved in Supervisory Review.
7/12/2007 8:07:14 AM	SEAN SAMPEY	Replacing FRADKIN with SUTTONE
7/9/2007 3:11:34 PM	BERNARD FRADKIN	AP approved in Supervisory Review.
4/12/2007 2:16:31 PM	JOSEPH C. MIRAGLIOTTA	Resource Review completed and Action Plan promoted to Final Review.
3/22/2007 10:47:12 AM	CHRISTOPHER L. PICARD	AP approved in Supervisory Review.
2/26/2007 11:10:43 AM	BERNARD FRADKIN	AP approved in Supervisory Review.
2/22/2007 11:54:26 AM	ELLEN D. SUTTON	AP submitted for Supervisory Review
2/22/2007 11:50:14 AM	ELLEN D. SUTTON	AP created.

8P4 Coordinating and aligning planning processes

The Leadership Council (the constituency-based group that shares information and issues at an institutional level) has the primary responsibility for overseeing the institutional planning process. In Fall 2005, the College formed the Quality Improvement Council (QIC), comprised of the members of the Leadership Council plus members of the Institutional Effectiveness Council. The QIC ensures that planning processes and action plans are aligned at each of the institutional levels through monitoring the activity of the Leadership Council's planning efforts.

In addition to the structural oversight provided by the QIC, administrators at the division and department level are responsible for ensuring that objectives in their areas contribute to the accomplishment of the institutional goals. Alignment of strategies and action plans is a necessary component for all proposed action plans, as shown in the planning database example.

8P5 Selecting measures and setting performance projections

The Academic Affairs/ Student Affairs plan includes six strategic objectives, with sub-objectives for each strategic objective (Figure 8.2). The sub-objectives each include measures and performance projections, determined by identification of the current level of performance and the selection of a reasonable, achievable target to focus improvement efforts. Although time consuming, the collaborative approach ensured that both faculty and administrators were in agreement as to the objectives and improvement targets. The process used to determine the metrics was based on nationally-normed benchmark data. For instance, NCCBP data was used to set a target for KPI (Key Performance Indicator) 3.1, Degree/Certificate Completion.

8P6 Accounting for resource needs

Funding and allocation of resources used to accomplish the strategic objectives grow out of division objectives and related action plans. Action plans specify what will be done to accomplish a division objective. In order to be approved, a proposed action plan also must indicate what funds and other resources (including staffing) are needed. The Cabinet prioritizes and approves these requests.

The Five-Year Financial Plan includes Improvement Funding, within the Operating Funds, equal to one percent of the total Operating Fund budget. One fourth of this 1% of total Operating Fund budget is identified as permanent funding that is allocated to improvement projects. Thereby, funding requests also may come from Continuous Improvement (CI) teams that have developed action plans to address process issues. While funds are set aside within the Operating Fund budget for CI projects, Cabinet approval is required for appropriation of such funding requests.

8P7 Ensuring faculty, staff and administrative development

Requests for anticipated staff development and training can be specified in action plans. Since action plans are approved by the Cabinet, the planning process ensures that resources are set aside for needed development. Needs for faculty and staff training and development also are identified at annual performance evaluations.

The College offers a wide-range of professional development training, including Continuous

Improvement training, through its Teaching and Learning Center. Additionally, the College provides a tuition waiver for employees who wish to take classes at the College, and employees can apply tuition reimbursement funds for individual, work-related learning programs. Employee plans include the opportunity to enhance personal salaries through professional development; professional development opportunities are negotiated in constituency group contracts.

8P8 Measuring and analyzing planning effectiveness

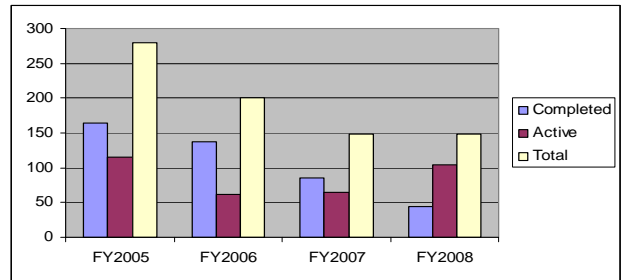
To track employee satisfaction with the planning process, the College uses data obtained from periodic administrations of the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) “climate” survey. PACE includes questions regarding employees’ satisfaction with, and understanding of, the planning process.

8R1 Results for planning strategies and action plans

Completion of Action Plans

The OPD permits College personnel to track progress on all action plans. Figure 8.3 shows the number of action plans that have been completed or are still active since the database became operational.

Figure 8.3: Action Plans in the ODB



As revealed in Figure 8.3, the College has accomplished a significant number of action plans in the last four years. The decline in total action plans from FY2005 to FY2008 is due to continuous quality improvement—utilizing a more selective approach to the types of action plans that are input into the ODB.

The following improvements and accomplishments are examples of the results of action plans and Quality Improvement Projects (QIPs) in the last three years:

- Implementation of Datatel Colleague student system (underway)

- Implementation of Automated Prerequisite Checking
- New programs in Paralegal, Cosmetology.

8R2 Performance projecting

The projections of performance are shown in Section 8C2, Figure 8.2.

8R3 Comparisons of performance projections

The College participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, the National Community College Benchmarking Project, Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, and ACT’s Student Opinion Survey, among other benchmark measures. In addition, the College compares its performance to other Illinois community colleges. By using these benchmark institutional data, COD ensures that its projections are at or above the mean of other institutions.

8R4 Results for planning system effectiveness

The PACE Survey is administered every three years. Beginning in 1999, two questions were added to obtain feedback from employees on their overall satisfaction with the College planning process; a third question was added in 2006. The results for the questions, shown in Figure 8.4, indicate a significant level of dissatisfaction, and a negative trend in dissatisfaction from 1999 to 2006. The negative trend indicates an area of opportunity for improvement.

Figure 8.4: Satisfaction with Planning Process

Overall satisfaction with the College planning process: 1 = Very Dissatisfied; 2 = Dissatisfied; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Satisfied; 5 = Very Satisfied	Survey Year		
	1999	2003	2006
	Mean Score		
The extent to which the College involves employees in planning for the future	---	---	2.56
The extent to which information about the College planning process is communicated to me	3.27	3.17	2.79
The extent to which I am satisfied with the effectiveness of the College planning process	3.09	2.97	2.43

8I1 Improvement of current processes and systems

Based on an assessment of the previous lack of a systematic approach to improving processes and systems for planning continuous improvement, along with comments in the 2005 *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*, the College of DuPage significantly modified its Council structure into the current model whereby Quality Improvement Council = Leadership Council + Institutional Effectiveness Council. This new governance structure is charged with the implementation of a systematic approach to improving planning processes and systems. The institutional planning process, shown earlier in Figure 8.3, is a result of the work of the Institutional Effectiveness Council. The planning process reflects a collaborative process that is designed to include the input of all key stakeholders.

8I2 Targets, improvement priorities, communications

In the past, targets for improvement were developed in an *ad hoc* approach. With a systematic approach to planning now in place, as the strategic objectives are developed, the College sets targets based on current and past performance, and state or national benchmark information; metrics are added to allow for the tracking of progress toward the targets.

The College uses a variety of approaches to communicate current results and improvement priorities, including brochures, e-mails, the IEC webpage, information forums, and college-wide/divisional/departmental meetings.