

CHAPTER 7/ CONCLUSION



C O N C L U S I O N

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CONCLUSION

Goal Fulfillment Through the Self-Reflective Process

The goals developed by RSC for the Self-Study formed the acronym **DRIVE** which is appropriate as the outcomes achieved resulted from the driving force behind the efforts applied during the past two years.

- **Demonstrate stronger linkages** and an understanding of **inter-connectedness** between the self-study process, institutional assessment activities, planning, and strategic actions that advance the college's mission.
- **Refine the framework for a self-reflective culture of continuous improvement** that will position the College to manage effectively capacity, social responsibility, and transformation into a rapidly changing and globally diverse environment over the next decade and beyond.
- **Integrate** into the campus community a better understanding of the students we serve and of the institutional changes that foster excellence in students' learning and development as effective citizens.
- **Validate** that RSC fulfills all criteria for continuing accreditation.
- **Enhance communication**, which becomes central to College governance, organizational effectiveness, and mission achievement.

The entire Self-Study was approached as an on-going process with an undetermined finish line rather than an event culminating in the on-site visit of the HLC team. Accreditation should be an on-going self-reflective process that is designed to provide continual improvements. During past accreditation processes at RSC, information was often gathered for the resource room and then disassembled after the visit. Through the *Rhodesside Assistance Interventions*, a need was identified for a permanent resource room that would continue to serve the institution for all accreditation studies, institutional and programmatic.

As a result of these identified interventions, linkages between the self-study process, assessment activities, planning, and the strategic actions became more apparent. For example:

- The need for analyzed data gathered through the assessment process is essential for providing evidence of fulfillment of accreditation requirements.
- The budget process, provides evidence of assessment-driven need; therefore, accurate collection, analysis, and maintenance of assessment data are essential in planning for the future.
- Several of the identified actions resulting from the Self-study *Rhodesside Assistance* process can be tied directly to RSC's 2006-2009 Strategic Plan.

A better understanding of these linkages will position the College to manage capacity, social responsibility, and transformation into a rapidly changing and globally diverse environment.

During the course of the self-study, Town Meetings were held to share the initial findings with the entire College community. Intended as a “sharing” session, the participants were asked to provide feedback that would assist the Criterion Teams in identifying any issues that may have been overlooked. Many findings emerged from these meetings that provided insight to the committees. Perhaps one of the most valuable was the realization that on-going integration of training for assessment, general education, and other similar topics needed to be provided on a more in-depth basis for both old and new employees. Training needs to include not only full time faculty and staff but also part time faculty and staff as well as administrators. In addition, integration of the concept of professional development must include all personnel. Expansion of professional development will permit all personnel to have a better understanding of the needs of the students that the College serves.

Another significant area that the College has identified was a need for improved communication. The shift toward a model of Shared Governance is intended to enhance communication, which is central to College governance, organizational effectiveness, and mission achievement.

The Self-study Report provides validation through data and commentary that the College meets and in many cases exceeds the requirements for accreditation. In meeting the requirements, the College also recognizes that continual improvements are essential to maintain such evidence. Therefore, RSC identified both areas of excellence offered to its constituents, and areas that are in need of improvement as identified during the Self-study.

Request for Continued Accreditation

The Self-study Report and the evidence accumulated in its support demonstrate RSCs achievement of each of the HLC’s Criteria (and core components thereof) for continuing accreditation. The faculty, staff and administration of RSC believe that this reflective self-study process has provided a necessary and fruitful vehicle to ensure the thinking and rethinking that exemplifies a quality institution of higher learning. An atmosphere of pride and a commitment to improve through reflection, assessment, and analysis of data, and deliberate actions in response to any identified shortcomings pervades the College, and it is believed that the depth of that pride and commitment is amply evidenced throughout this document.

RSC works diligently to operate with integrity and to fulfill its mission of service and learning through higher learning. It takes pride in the accomplishments of its employees, students and graduates and believes that the programs of learning and the support services intended to support them fulfill its commitment to change their lives, build their futures, and improve their communities. The College fulfills its mission-driven commitment to the communities it serves and believes that the evidence shows that those communities recognize and value that commitment.

Therefore, RSC respectfully requests continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, for a period of ten years.

