

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PLAN

2021-2026



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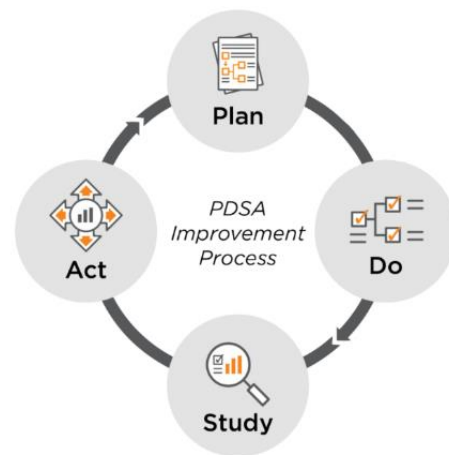
Institutional Effectiveness Planning

River Parishes Community College (RPCC) conducts a comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan that is ongoing, comprehensive, integrated, systematic, research-based, interrelated and focused on improvement of institutional quality. The purposes of RPCC’s Institutional Effectiveness Plan is to improve all programs and services and ensure that planning and evaluation processes are continuous.

All units of the College participate in ongoing annual planning and evaluation activities integral to institutional-level planning and evaluation. The Institutional Effectiveness Plan and all related activities are coordinated and supervised by the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. RPCC possesses a sustained, documented history of institutional planning and evaluation of the institutional mission, goals, and outcomes that demonstrates improvement in accomplishing the Institutional mission.

RPCC Institutional Effectiveness Model:

The RPCC Institutional Effectiveness Model is a four-phase, ongoing process designed to ensure that the College's mission and goals are being achieved. The process inherent in this model is based on the Deming Cycle – Plan, Do, Act, Study, Act (PDSA)– a cyclical process that shows how RPCC implements continuous planning and evaluation for seeking improvement in its programs and services.



- **Plan:** Identify a feature in need of and develop the means for improvement
- **Do:** Implement the plan
- **Study:** Evaluate the impact according to specific criteria
- **Act:** Adjust strategies to better meet criteria

College Mission, Vision, and Values:

The RPCC mission, vision, and core values serve as the driver of the College’s Institutional Effectiveness Planning:

- **Mission Statement:** River Parishes Community College is an open admission institution that partners with the communities and businesses of the river parishes region of Louisiana to provide workforce training, certificates, diplomas, and Associate Degrees.
- **Vision:** As a premier comprehensive community college, River Parishes Community College is a valued community partner, catalyst for economic growth, and a source of opportunities for our diverse student body to achieve their unique goals.
- **Core Values:** River Parishes Community College values (RPCC CARES) define the principles and standards that are most important to RPCC employees:
 - **Collaboration:** We bring together our students, faculty, staff, community leaders, and business & industry partners, and leverage those relationships to build and improve our educational offerings to ensure that our for-credit and workforce training offerings meet the needs of our diverse communities, students, and industries

- **Accountability:** We hold ourselves accountable to our students, our business & industry partners, our community leaders, and, most importantly, ourselves, to continually improve and innovate at every level to ensure that our educational offerings are current and pertinent to the student's and/or client's goals.
- **Respect & Inclusion:** We believe that each individual adds value to our college, and we are better positioned to serve our students and communities because of our team's diverse experiences, educational backgrounds, skills, ideas, races, ethnicities, and perspectives. We are respectful of all and actively promote a culture that is inclusive to the full spectrum of humanity.
- **Excellence:** We focus on adding value to achieve intentional results through seeking continual improvement in processes, development of our faculty, staff, and leaders, and operating in a manner that is transparent and rewards integrity and innovation.
- **Sustainability:** We are committed stewards of the human, fiscal, intellectual, and physical resources entrusted to us as we pursue innovations which foster sustainability of our resources, allowing for growth and diversification of the college.

Strategic Planning

The RPCC Strategic Planning process is a key facilitator towards realization of the mission and continuous improvement efforts of the College. Strategic Planning is the core of the RPCC's Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

College Strategic Plan

The 2021-2026 RPCC Strategic Plan is based on input gathered from faculty, students, and staff. A Strategic Planning Steering Committee was established to use the input to develop a Strategic Plan that includes goals and recommended measures.

The following goals were established within the strategic plan:

- Goal 1: Impact student achievement
- Goal 2: Be a valued community partner and serve as a catalyst for economic growth.
- Goal 3: Establish Sustainable Growth
- Goal 4: Execute Operational Excellence
- Goal 5: Optimize Assets

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are established within the strategic plan to assess goal achievement. At the end of the College Strategic Planning period, a formal summative analysis will be developed by the College Leadership Committee. This analysis will summarize efforts made during the period and will determine the final outcome for each objective. This analysis will be utilized to help guide the creation of the next College Strategic Plan.

Louisiana Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) State Strategic Plan

As a state agency, in compliance with Act 1465 of 1997, RPCC also develops and submits to the Louisiana Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) a five-year state-level strategic plan. Objectives in the OPB Strategic Plan align with RPCC's goals for student achievement and initiatives within the College Strategic Plan. Alignment between the two strategic plans is essential for college goal achievement.

The OPB State Strategic Plan places focus on the following areas of program activity:

- Objective I: Fall Enrollment
- Objective II: Fall to Fall Retention
- Objective III: Fall to Spring Retention
- Objective IV: Graduation Rate
- Objective V: Certificate (CTC) Completions
- Objective VI: Certificate (CTS) Completions
- Objective VII: Diploma Completions
- Objective VIII: Associate Completions
- Objective IX: Undergraduate (adult) Completers
- Objective X: Underrepresented (minority) Completers

Student Achievement

RPCC identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the College mission, students, and educational programs. RPCC identifies student achievement goals (target levels of performance) and thresholds (minimum acceptable performance), publishes outcomes (actual results), and evaluates the extent to which goals are achieved. RPCC uses multiple measures to document student success.

Graduation Rate – Key Student Completion Indicator:

The measure of student achievement chosen by RPCC as the Key Student Completion Indicator is the IPEDS graduation rate. IPEDS calculates the graduation rate for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates within 150% of normal time to program completion and publishes institutional performance on the annual IPEDS Data Feedback Report. The graduation rate is disaggregated by relevant student population characteristics. Institutional strategies to seek improvement in the achievement of at-risk student populations are evaluated related to disaggregation findings.

Thresholds of Acceptability:

For each measure of student achievement, a threshold of acceptability is established. The threshold is considered the lowest acceptable level of student performance and represents the level that prompts action for seeking improvement. Whereas the goals established for each measure are aspirational performance levels, thresholds are levels permissible to remain on target with the goals.

RPCC’s Student Achievement Measures:

The following metrics are adopted in alignment with the 2021-2026 College Strategic Plan

- **Graduation Rate:** A key indicator of student achievement is the student completion of declared programs of study as analyzed by the College graduation rate. For this measure, RPCC utilizes graduation rate data for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates within 150% of normal time to program completion from the IPEDS Feedback report [**Key Student Completion Indicator**].
- **Credential Completion:** A key indicator of student achievement is the completion of exit points offered by the college, including certificates, diplomas and degrees. For this measure, RPCC utilizes the data on the number of sub-baccalaureate degrees and certificates awarded annually, by level, as identified on the IPEDS Feedback report.
- **Retention:** In addition to program completion rates, RPCC recognizes the importance of evaluating student persistence towards completion. For this measure, RPCC utilizes fall-to-fall retention rate data of first-time, full-time degree/certificate seeking students as identified on the IPEDS Feedback report.
- **Student Transfer:** Considering that many students attend RPCC with a goal to transfer to other institutions towards the fulfillment of advanced degrees and programs, the rate at which students successfully make the transition to other educational institutions is important to consider. For this measure, RPCC utilizes transfer-out rate data for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates within 150% of normal time to program completion from the IPEDS Feedback report.

- **Course Completion Ratio:** Another key indicator of student achievement is the rate at which students successfully complete individual courses in their first academic year. As higher first-year credit completion ratios are linked with higher credential completion rates, this metric can help identify student populations needing early intervention. A student's individual credit completion ratio (CCR) is derived by taking the total number of credits a student has earned in his/her first year and dividing the total number of credits attempted in the first year. RPCC utilizes the Credit Completion Ratio Benchmarking tool within the National Student Clearinghouse Postsecondary Data Partnership platform to calculate this measure.

IPEDS Data Feedback Report (National Center for Education Statistics): RPCC utilizes the IPEDS Data Feedback Report, with standardized data across institutions of higher education (including peer-institution performance data), as a primary data source for informing students and other stakeholders of the College's progress toward meeting its goals for student achievement. Several evaluations comparing RPCC to peer colleges have been reviewed through the use of the National Center for Education Statistics' IPEDS Data Feedback Report. RPCC's peer colleges include medium, public, 2-year colleges in the southeastern states, rural locales, and with comparable student enrollment. Included in the comparisons seen on the Feedback Report are students enrolled by race/ethnicity, headcount enrollment, FTE enrollment, degrees and certificates awarded, tuition/fees charged, net-price of attendance, and financial aid granted.

Unit Planning

Providing efficient and effective administrative support services is critical to the achievement of RPCC's mission. To this effect, the Unit Planning model assesses the effectiveness of administrative units in their delivery of support services. Identified administrative support units engage in unit planning to develop and assess objectives and strategies aligned with the goals of the College Strategic Plan and utilize assessment results for continuous improvement.

Unit Planning Process:

The following approach helps guide the development of effective assessment plans for administrative support services units:

- 1. Define the Unit Mission Statement:** A mission statement provides a description of the core values and guiding principles that direct the work of the unit. It should help coordinate the work of the unit to ensure that everyone is working towards a common purpose aligned with the College's overarching mission.
- 2. Establish Expected Outcomes:** Expected outcomes primarily describe what the unit aims to accomplish related to the unit mission statement. Not only should outcomes align with the unit's mission statement but should also inform how the unit will realize its individual mission.
- 3. Identify Measures:** Once expected outcomes are established, the next step is to identify measures to evaluate the unit's effectiveness. Measures come in a wide variety of forms and from a wide variety of sources. Occasionally, measures require the development and implementation of new tools, but often measures rely on secondary analysis of data that are already collected by the unit, division, or College.
- 4. Set Performance Targets:** Targets are the specific values for each measure that the unit would like to reach and should be realistically ambitious: What is the minimum result / value that will represent success at achieving this outcome?
- 5. Collect Data:** After measures are identified and targets set, each unit develops a process for collecting data for all measures. The data collection process must align with the established assessment cycle.
- 6. Analyze Assessment Results:** Once data collection process is finalized, the unit should analyze the data to determine whether established targets have been met. Upon review of the data for each target, units should consider the extent to which expected outcomes were achieved and reflect on findings.
- 7. Utilize Results for Improvement:** The cycle closes with consideration of utilizing assessment results to enhance performance of the unit into the future and the implications for the next assessment cycle.

Participating Administrative Support Services Units:

Administrative Support Services units other than those directly related to educational programs or academic / student services are just as critical for the ability of the College to achieve its mission.

Identification of offices participating in the Administrative Unit Planning process is based on the following criteria:

- The office or unit supports the College mission in a manner other than the direct assessment of student learning outcomes.
- The office or unit provides administrative support services not directly related to “teaching/learning” nor to academic / student services that support student success.
- The office or unit is led by a director or higher-level position within the College.

Unit Planning Assessment Cycle:

The Administrative Unit Plans are assessed based on a one-year cycle that coincides with the academic year. The Deming Cycle (PDSA) drives the annual assessment of unit performance:

- **Plan:** Each unit will identify a feature of their responsibilities for which improvement or sustainability is appropriate, and develop an administrative unit plan that includes goals, objectives/strategies, an action plan, success measures, and targets.
- **Do:** Units actively carry out the administrative unit plan and collect data for analysis
- **Study:** As the administrative unit plan closes, each unit will analyze results and assess performance related to established success measures and targets.
- **Act:** Each unit will implement improvement plans, as needed, and develop unit plans for the next cycle based on studying the results.

Outcomes Assessment

At RPCC, the assessment of student learning outcomes is a key component of institutional effectiveness with an overarching goal to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to promote student success. Outcomes assessment is a formal, collaborative process driven by faculty and supported by academic administrators. Through this process, RPCC ensures that student learning outcomes demonstrate the achievement of educational goals congruent with the program of study, degree level, and College mission. Outcomes assessment is integrated across all academic divisions and instructional sites as well as high school dual enrollment courses and online learning settings. Two types of learning outcomes are evaluated within this model: Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) and General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO).

- **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):** RPCC identifies Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), assesses the extent to which students achieve the learning outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on the analysis of results. PLOs state what a student will know, think, and/or be able to do upon completion of the program. For program outcomes assessment purposes, an academic “program” is a credit-bearing curriculum that results in a degree or stand-alone certificate or diploma. All terminal degree academic and stand-alone certificate and diploma programs are assessed.
- **General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs):** RPCC assesses college-level general education competencies identified by faculty that embody the general education core of associate degrees. General education outcomes document what a student should know, think, and/or be able to do upon completion of the general education portion of their program. Each transfer degree program at RPCC contains the general education core; thus, students enrolled in all transfer degree programs and those enrolled in technical programs that contain general education courses (Certificate of Applied Science, Certificate of General Studies) receive instruction linked to the general education competencies.

Assessment Processes:

GELOs and PLOs are assessed and evaluated through the following process:

- **Step 1:** Faculty review and confirm GELOs/PLOs for all educational programs
- **Step 2:** Faculty develop an assessment schedule ensuring that each GELO/PLO is assessed during the cycle in the fall or spring semester (or both).
- **Step 3:** Faculty map the GELOs/PLOs to Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) in specific courses to determine which courses will be assessed during the assessment cycle, including appropriate assessment measures (e.g., exams, capstone projects, research papers, simulations, case studies, etc.) and tools, such as rubrics, to document student performance.
- **Step 4:** Faculty submit student learning outcomes, rubrics, and assessment to the Academic Affairs Office.
- **Step 5:** Data is compiled and aggregated from all course sections by the Academic Affairs Office.
- **Step 6:** In collaboration with academic administrators, faculty review assessment data and complete an annual report.
- **Step 7:** Improvements identified from the previous year are implemented in the current academic year and analyzed through end of year annual assessment process.

Measures:

Assessment of learning outcomes should include multiple measures of student learning, with at least one direct measure. Direct measures assess students' displays of knowledge and skills (e.g., test results, written assignments, presentations, classroom assignments, demonstrations) resulting from learning experiences in the class/program. (Palomba and Banta, 1999). Indirect measures assess students' perceptions of learning rather than actual demonstrations of knowledge and skill achievement (e.g., alumni surveys, employer surveys, exit interviews).

Assessment Cycles:

The Outcomes Assessment model operates on an annual cycle based on the College's academic year. Assessment plans are implemented in the Fall semester and conclude at the close of the Spring semester. Assessment in the summer semester may be necessary for programs identified as 12 months in length.

Program Health Index

RPCC assesses program performance through the Program Health Index that is submitted to the Louisiana Technical and Community College System (LCTCS) annually. Program offerings are evaluated at least once every three years for relevancy, sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency. Completed reports are reviewed at the System level and recommendations may be made to the College's Chancellor based on the analyses conducted. This assessment supports decisions related to program continuation; modification; expansion; resource allocation; and/or program discontinuation.

Overview of Criteria Used in Analysis:

Program Overview

- Program CIP code
- Program title
- Program STAR Rating
- Types of awards offered

Section I: Program's Focus on Students

- Enrollment
- Retention
- Completion
- Time to Completion Estimates
- Cost of Attendance Average Earnings (where applicable)

Section II: Program's Relation to Workforce

- Employment Opportunities
- Regional demand for graduates
- Average local and state salaries

Section III: Program's Fiscal Health

- Revenue and Cost analysis

Section IV: Program's Link to the Community

- Number of articulation and transfer partnerships with four-year colleges and universities
- Number of partnerships with area businesses and industries

Section V: Program Assessment

- Enrollment, Retention, and Completion Goal Setting
- Identification of Learning Outcomes

Upon conclusion of the Program Health Index review process, the Chancellor will make a recommendation in terms of program continuation; expansion; resource allocation; and/or program discontinuation.

Surveys

River Parishes Community College administers multiple surveys to gather feedback related to institutional effectiveness and to assist units with continuous improvement of services. The surveys identified below are key sources of information used to assess the student experience.

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

RPCC administers the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). This survey helps the college to focus on good educational practices and identify areas for improving programs and services for students. The CCSSE is administered during the spring to mostly returning students and asks about institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and retention. The survey is administered at least once per strategic planning period but may be offered more often based on need.

Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)

RPCC administers the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) to explore why some entering students persist and succeed and others do not. SENSE is administered in the 4th and 5th weeks of the fall academic term and asks students to reflect on their earliest experiences (academic and services-related) with the college.

Student Evaluation of Faculty

At the conclusion of each fall and spring semester, students are provided an opportunity to submit feedback related to their experience within each class and with each instructor. As the semester nears a close, the survey is distributed through the College's learning management system. Survey results are made available to each instructor after the close of the semester and are used by faculty supervisors as part of the annual performance review process.