

## Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

### Context

#### 3C1 Differentiating key groups of students and other stakeholders

MSTC classifies students by learning goal and by the various support services that learners seek from the college. The learning needs of MSTC's students are addressed in Category 1, *Helping Students Learn*. This section addresses the needs expressed by MSTC students that are not directly defined as learning.

The needs support service requirements that students present are the result of their life situation. MSTC serves many students who are dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, victims of domestic violence, single parents, who have inadequate academic skills, who are of very limited financial means, who have disabilities, who are first-time college students, and who work full or part-time jobs. A student may present one or more of these characteristics requiring a special service in order to be successful at MSTC. Various offices of the college provide services to address this wide range of student needs. Refer to Figure 4 for a breakdown of special populations at MSTC as defined by the Wisconsin Technical College System. Compared to state averages this district has 19%

economically disadvantaged students compared to 13% for the state and the disabled population is 5% for the district compared to 3% for the state. Figure 5 details the types of disabilities reported at MSTC (source WTCS Client Reporting System VE215406).

MSTC's other key stakeholders are employers, licensing agencies related to the college's occupational programs, local taxpayers, state legislators, alumni, parents of traditional age students, area high schools, pre-K 12 districts, occupational program advisory committees, WTCS partners, four-year colleges, and the WTCS state agency.

#### 3C2 Requirements and expectations of students and other stakeholders

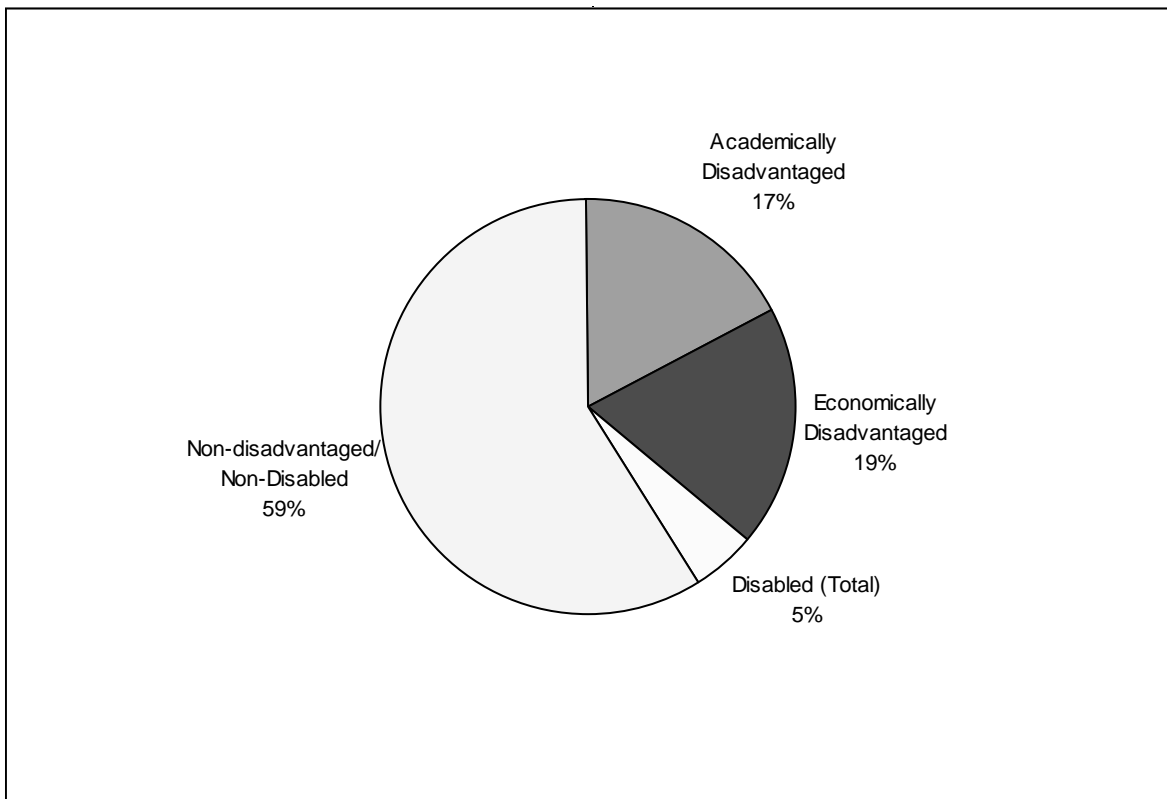
MSTC continuously evaluates the short and long term requirements of the stakeholders of the college. Table 26 highlights the stakeholders by classification and their expectations.

### Process

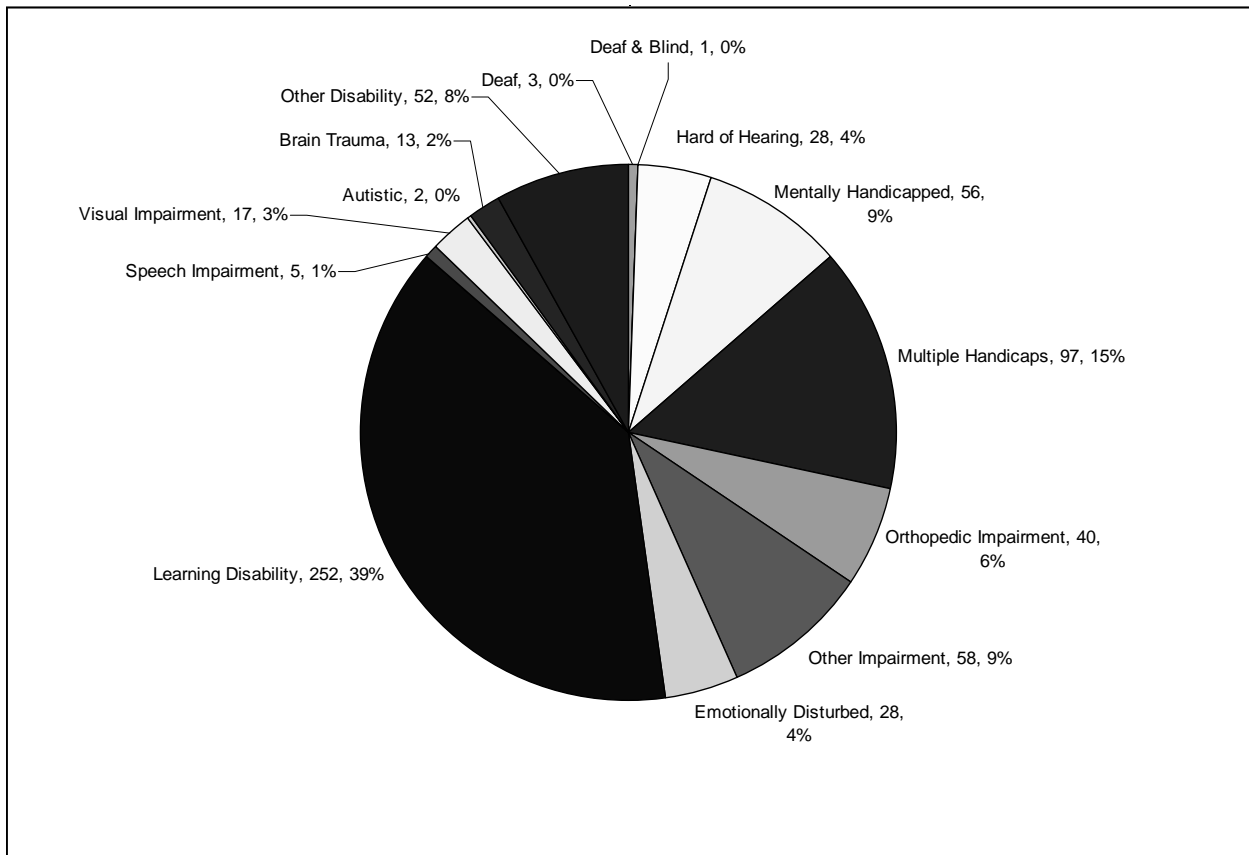
#### 3P1 Identifying and designing responses to changing student needs

Student needs can be categorized as those needs that

Figure 4 Special populations



**Figure 5 Disabled population detail**



students express regarding their experience at MSTC and the learning challenges that students must address. In addition to the student needs, learning needs are based in part on the needs of potential employers, which are addressed in Category 1, *Helping Students Learn*, in 3P3, and in Category 9, *Building Collaborative Relationships*.

MSTC has three quantitative devices for gathering systematic information about student needs not directly related to learning outcomes. The college has made routine the Noel-Levitz survey of Student Satisfaction and end-of-course student feedback, and has begun to use the Quality Review Process for academic programs and support services.

The Noel-Levitz instrument has been tested for reliability and validity, and is standardized against a national sample of students in two-year colleges. MSTC uses this instrument every other year. The sample design is replicated each time the study is conducted using a large sample of occupational and General Education courses. The process includes all MSTC campuses, day, and evening classes. This sample design is used to facilitate comparison of study

results between iterations. The survey is followed by focus groups on each of MSTC's campuses to gain additional insight into the survey results. The information from the survey and focus group discussions is used to design actions to address specific expressed needs as referenced in Table 27, stakeholder relationships.

Over the last ten years, MSTC has made college-wide a standardized process for student feedback on their classroom experience. The initial design of the survey instrument was developed with input from representatives of the faculty association. The student responses on survey items for a given class are compared against student feedback for other sections of the same course, and against all MSTC courses in a particular term. Instructors and immediate supervisors receive a summary student feedback data each semester. Instructors and supervisors review the data together and discuss what went well and opportunities for improvement that might have been identified.

The third procedure is the Quality Review Process (QRP), as referenced in 1P13, which is a new approach to occupational program review designed by

**Table 27 Stakeholder relationships**

Stakeholder	Results of Relationships
Students	MSTC Foundation provides funding for scholarships and grants; Financial Aid provides access to federal grants and loans; tutoring in specific disciplines; basic academic skill enhancement services; accommodations for students who have special needs; support services and groups for single parents; chemical dependency; social functions and athletic teams; admissions representatives and information for prospective students; rapid response team for workers facing layoff; placement services; transfers agreements with numerous private colleges and with the University of Wisconsin System campuses
Employers	High rate of employment of graduates (94% employed, 81% in related fields – 2003) Grants to MSTC Foundation: \$1M Bethke estate gift in appreciation of high quality automotive technician graduates \$450,000 from Ministry Health Care to support education of Nursing Professionals Paper industry, \$30,000 local contribution to support National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for Pulp and Paper Technician education, donations of equipment to occupational programs Urban Forestry, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \$50,000 to support program and provide funding for student work on various forestry projects; Madison Gas and Electric and Alliant Energy \$10,000
Taxpayers	Reduction in local tax levy rate from 2004 to 2005 operational years; partnerships with other technical colleges to control costs (shared co-insurance costs with all 16 Wisconsin Technical Colleges, share data management resources with Lakeshore and Indianhead Technical Colleges, shared library data base costs with nine other technical colleges and a private college; among the three lowest cost per full time enrollment in the WTCS for all of college history
Legislators	Regular meeting with area legislators to keep them aware of development at MSTC; \$600,000 Federal development grant for start-up equipment for Urban Forestry
Alumni	On-going job placement services; Promotion of college image; NSF grant for Pulp and Paper (the first NSF grant in college history); International recognition of Urban Forestry at the Hong Kong flower show, negotiations underway for provision of education to Chinese nationals
Pre K – 12 Schools	Tech Prep communication to prepare students for enrollment in a Technical College; recognition of appropriate course work for MSTC advanced standing; curricular alignment to prepare students for entry to MSTC; dual credit enrollment of high school students in MSTC courses; instruction on MSTC campuses to high school students who are credit deficient for graduation
WTCS Partners	WTCS consortium established a mutual insurance company to allow 16 WTCS colleges to for self-insure Database management collaboration with Lakeshore and Indianhead Technical College WTCS-wide curriculum design standards and common course outcomes to facilitate student transfer among Technical Colleges State-wide meetings of instructor and administrators on curriculum issues WTCS system adoption of a balanced score design for annual review of educational programs WISPALS library consortium for sharing of costs of electronic catalog and data base subscription expenses
Four-year schools	MSTC provision of law enforcement training for natural resources graduates of the UW Stevens Point (UWSP) College of Natural Resources MSTC – UWSP joint construction and operation of the Wisconsin Learning Center for corporate training (unique in Wisconsin) Participation by UWSP in NSF Pulp and Paper grant MSTC – UWSP joint planning for training at plant site for corporate customers MSTC curriculum revisions to ease credit transfer to University of Wisconsin System institutions Credit transfer agreements with Franklin University, Lakeland College, Upper Iowa University, Cardinal Stritch University, and others MSTC instructor serving an honorary professor at UWSP

**Table 26 Stakeholder expectations**

Stakeholders	Classification	Expectations
Students	Low income	Scholarships (MSTC foundation), grants, loans, time payment plan, credit card payment, documentation of attendance for third party reimbursement, emergency funds for personal needs
Students	Low academic Skill	Testing to determine skill improvement needs, subject specific tutoring, basic education remedial services, referral services for students struggling in classes, correct class enrollment based on skill level
Students	Students who have Disabilities	Accommodation in classes for students who have disabilities, Professional staff qualified to assist instructors in the provision of special accommodations, academic skill enhancement support
Students	Single parent	Support groups, special funding for emergency personal needs, referral service for child care, academic skill enhancement services
Students	Dislocated Workers	Rapid Response Teams to visit firms that have announced layoffs, support groups, career exploration services, job placement
Students	Displaced Homemakers	Financial assistance, personal counseling, support groups, job placement services
Students	Working Students	Assistance in planning a schedule around work, attendance documentation and prompt grade reporting for tuition reimbursement
Students	Victims of Violence	Protection of privacy, recognition and compliance with court orders for restraint of offenders, personal counseling
Students	Traditional Students	Student life social activities, athletic teams, career advice, introduction to requirements for success as a college student, job placement, credit articulation with area high schools
Students	Prospective Students	Career information, accurate information about MSTC programs and courses, cost information, opportunity to meet with instructors, accurate literature about MSTC, high school visits, parent nights for program information, campus visits, orientation for new students,
Employers		Graduates with essential job entry skills, graduates with essential knowledge
Tax Payers		Efficient, effective operation of the college; control of local tax levy; support for local economic growth
Legislators		Efficient use of state funds; response to legislative initiatives and questions; regular updates on MSTC growth and challenges
Alumni		Maintenance of positive college image; job placement resources
Parents		Safe and supportive learning environment for students; programs that lead to rewarding careers; credits that transfer smoothly to other college; recognition of appropriate credit from other colleges
PreK-12 Schools		Information on programming, advanced standing, enrollment opportunities, services to students at risk of not graduating from high school
WTCS partners		Collaboration on quality improvement, sharing costs, collaboration on curriculum design
Four-year colleges		Transferable credit, partnerships for educational programming

the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). This process is in its first year of implementation and measures occupational, General Education, and Basic Education student performance on a series of indirect measures of learning. The measures are based on WTCS Perkins variables. Perkins funding at MSTC supports a series of Basic Education and student support functions. Each year the College must write a plan to address any shortfall in performance on these measures. The QRP review compares student

performance in similar programs across all 16 WTCS institutions. Programs are required to address some aspect of program improvement at least once every five years.

MSTC uses a variety of qualitative strategies to gather information on student needs. The WTCS research group includes representatives from each of the system's 16 colleges. Every three to five years this group produces a state-wide environmental scan of

business and industry literature that is presented to the presidents of the system's colleges.

Each MSTC campus has a Student Senate that is elected from the student body. These forums have funding to support the projects of student clubs and to underwrite campus-wide events. In addition, the Senates serve as forums for student concerns and questions. Each Senate has an advisor who is an MSTC employee, who then transmits student concerns to the rest of college staff.

Insight into the needs of prospective students is gathered via MSTC's ongoing communication with area high schools, junior highs, community-based organizations, campus visits by school groups, high school fairs, workshops for high school educators, and the summer camp at the Wisconsin Rapids Campus for junior high students. In addition, incoming students are required to complete the Accuplacer entrance exam, and many meet with counselors or enrollment advisors. Student Affairs staff use the results of this test to advise incoming students on course enrollment, possible needs for remedial education, and support service needs.

### 3P2 Maintaining a relationship with students

MSTC is a commuter college. Therefore, the primary relationship that students have with college staff occurs during the time that students are on campus to attend class. MSTC policy is to limit class enrollments allowing instructors to come to know students as individuals. In addition, instructors report during the fifth week of a semester on students having difficulty in class. These reports are sent to Student Affairs staff, who then contact identified students to develop intervention strategies. In addition, faculty serve as advisors to MSTC's various occupationally-based student clubs.

In its Student Affairs unit, MSTC employs specialized professionals who provide personal and career counseling, support the needs of students with disabilities, displaced homemakers, and persons who have a chemical dependency problem. The Student Life and Athletics Coordinator is also a member of the Student Affairs staff. The Student Life and Athletics Coordinator works with MSTC's Student Senates to schedule campus-wide events that meet student needs and interests.

MSTC graduates are contacted annually via the Graduate Follow-up Survey. This survey is conducted by all WTCS institutions and queries students on overall satisfaction with their education and their success in seeking employment after graduation. In keeping with its focus on occupational employment,

MSTC has a Career Services Manager who gathers information about employment opportunities for graduates and who helps students prepare for a job search with guidance on resume writing and interview techniques.

One initiative to improve student communication and access to academic information was implemented in May 2005. MyMSTC (see Figure 6) is a portal that allows students to manage their entire academic career online. In addition to the full functionality of a web portal, using MyMSTC a student can register for classes, check financial status, receive progress and grade reports, and view a transcript.

Figure 6 MyMSTC



MyMSTC also offers communication and management functionality for faculty and staff. Instructors can access rosters, student information, and manage the grading process using the portal.

### 3P3 Identifying and responding to changing stakeholder needs

MSTC's key external non-student stakeholders include potential employers of Mid-State graduates (business, industry, and local government agencies), employers of incumbent workers, trade unions, local property taxpayers, local, state and federal elected officials, Central Wisconsin high schools, the other 15 WTCS colleges, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) offices, four-year colleges that accept MSTC students in transfer, and other partner colleges and universities. Mid-State has identified these stakeholders as partners in various collaborative efforts. A partial listing of these partners is found in Table 49 in Category 9.

Internal stakeholder communication is addressed in appropriate category. Communication with MSTC students is addressed in sections 3P1 and 3P2 of this category. Communication with employees is being addressed by an Action Team project and is reported

in Categories 4 and 5. Communication with the Board of Directors is addressed in Category 5.

The processes MSTC uses to communicate with an external partner vary, depending on the nature of the relationship with that stakeholder. Employers participate in Advisory Committees for occupational programs and respond to employer surveys. The Wisconsin Learning Center, a joint operation between MSTC, the Portage County Business Council, and the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, is governed by a statement of agreement, the Pulp and Paper NSF project is governed by NSF guidelines and the guidelines developed for that project, and communication with area high schools is governed by state regulations regarding At-Risk services, Youth Options enrollments, and local Tech Prep procedures. Local property taxpayers receive communication via local newspaper stories, District Board meetings (which are taped for and televised on public-access cable), mailings of the college class schedule to district residents, and property tax notices. Category 9 addresses information on communication procedures with various collaborative partners.

### **3P4 Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders**

MSTC's mission and vision statements focus the institution on providing learning services to residents of Central Wisconsin. The college's relationship building emphasizes regular, formal contacts with area employers and other partners to support MSTC's education programming. Employers participate as members of occupational program advisory committees, on the MSTC Board of Directors, and are contacted on a regular basis with the Employer Feedback Survey process. In addition, MSTC employees are in routine contact with many area employers for the development of training with programs for incumbent workers. Table 27 portrays the processes used to communicate with various stakeholders. In addition to an active communication process using Advisory Committees and environmental scanning, MSTC employees participate as volunteers in a variety of community agencies or as board members of local organizations that have some sort of mission relationship to the College.

Formal processes for maintaining positive partnerships with high schools in and beyond the district include the Tech Prep Consortium, regular visits to high schools by MSTC representatives (including occupational program instructors), campus visit days by area high school and junior high classes, hosting the annual DECA regional competition, articulated credit agreements for advanced standing in designated courses, services to students at-risk of not graduating

from high school, Youth Options (dual credit enrollment of high school students in MSTC courses), and the summer college camp for junior high students. Responsibility for managing each of these partnership activities is spread throughout the college; e.g., the Associate Dean for Basic Education manages the At-Risk services to area high school districts and an Associate Dean of Business manages the house keeping and other arrangements for the annual DECA competition.

### **3P5 Determining new student and stakeholder groups**

The appropriate MSTC division or department determines if new stakeholder group should be addressed with educational offerings and services after planning and consideration of needs assessment, relationship to mission and goals, priority level, the relationship and nature of partnerships, supporting data, and resources. New stakeholder groups may emerge for a variety of reasons including shifts in population demographics, changes in labor market characteristics, in response to State or other directives, to address grant or funding source requirements, and identification through continuous improvement (see Category 8) and collaborative relationships (see Category 9).

### **3P6 Analyzing and acting on complaint information**

Complaint information is collected through multiple informal and formal processes. The college is committed to providing a positive educational environment for students and promotes a point of contact resolution whenever possible. Students are asked to discuss concerns with their instructor, counselor, or dean to attempt to resolve issues or complaints informally before proceeding to a formal process. Formal academic and non-academic appeal processes are outlined in the Student Handbook, which is distributed at orientation and registration and at Student Welcome activities at the beginning of each semester. The handbook is also available on the college website and at all campus offices and Student Affairs offices.

The Director of Student Support is designated as the Student Complaint contact. The Complaint Process differs from the academic and non-academic appeal process. A written complaint policy is in place and is also contained in the Student Handbook. While the complaint process does not supplant the appeal process, it does provide students with a point of contact if they do not know where to go. The Director of Student Support can offer guidance and advocacy, refer students to counselors for support in conflict resolution, or act as an intermediary with the

appropriate unit of the college in addressing the concern. All formal complaints are anonymously logged by the Director of Student Services. The log is open to review by college staff or appropriate outside agencies.

Deans, associate deans, and supervisors hear complaints from students, instructors, counselors, or other personnel through personal meetings, phone calls, or emails. Program Advisory Committees, employers, and community contacts may also serve as contacts for hearing complaints from stakeholders. The extensive external collaborations the college maintains offer a broad network of opportunities to hear stakeholder needs and concerns. The Student Senate also offers an open forum for students to share concerns with administration.

Logged formal complaints are evaluated by the Director of Student Support for trends. Any patterns are shared with the Vice-President of Student Affairs for review and action by the Executive Committee. Academic and non-academic appeals are processed and tracked through the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. Faculty, students, and management, as appropriate, are engaged in the process to resolve complaints and appeals with the Student Handbook outlining the process details. In the two preceding years there were six appeals (three from one individual) and seventeen complaints.

Action on complaints is shared directly with the complainant and staff involved. Informal complaints are shared verbally; formal complaints are communicated both verbally and in writing with specified timeframes for response.

### **3P7 Measuring and analyzing satisfaction**

Measures and analysis to determine student and stakeholder satisfaction ranges from casual to prescribed methods. Staff engages students and external stakeholders in casual conversation outside of the classroom, in student activities and athletics, and in a variety of collaborative relationships. Relationships and feedback mechanisms such as online website feedback, student government, student focus groups, advisory committees, WTCS committees, Foundation Board, and College Board offer a broad range of venues for staff to hear feedback and respond to stakeholder needs and satisfaction. Formal evaluations on satisfaction and recommendations for changes are conducted on college activities such as College (career) previews, parent nights, counselor workshops, summer externships for high school counselors, student internships, occupational and clinical experiences, and new student orientation and registration.

MSTC, as part of the WTCS, conducts an Employer Satisfaction Survey every four years and a Graduate follow-up survey annually. The employer survey collects data on employers' perceptions of recent graduates of the Wisconsin Technical College System. The Wisconsin Technical College System Office conducts this survey and administers it to employers across the 16 technical college districts who have hired technical college graduates.

Employers are in a unique position to assess the effectiveness of a technical college education in preparing people for employment. In turn, employers' responses can be used as a valuable tool for the evaluation of educational programs and services offered by the Wisconsin Technical College System. The primary objective of the Employer Satisfaction Survey is for employers to rate graduates' attributes on how well they meet the employers' expectations compared to what they expect of an entry-level employee.

Prescribed methods that are analyzed for results, benchmarks, trends, and comparisons include:

- Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey
- Course Evaluations
- Course Completion Rates
- Graduation Rates
- Graduate Placement Survey
- Employer Satisfaction Survey
- Enrollments
- FTEs
- Migration patterns of students in and out of college district
- Quality Review Process
- Socioeconomic Benefits study of the WTCS

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## **Results**

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### **3R1 Results related to student satisfaction**

There are indirect and direct measures of student satisfaction with the services that MSTC provides. Indirect measures that provide some indication of learner satisfaction with MSTC include the enrollment history of the college, employer satisfaction, resident migration out of the district to attend other technical colleges, and the demand of local residents for MSTC services.

There are 16 institutions in the Wisconsin Technical

College System (WTCS). The system was established in 1967. From 1969-1970 through 2004-2005, MSTC has had the second highest average annual growth rate in student FTEs in the WTCS (2.24%). With the exception of courses of study that MSTC does not provide, such as Liberal Arts transfer degrees, and Fire Science or Dental Hygienist Associate degrees, MSTC experiences a net in-migration to its district, even though the districts that surround MSTC have larger cities and larger technical colleges.

With regard to resident demand for MSTC's services, the college ranks fourteenth in population and fifteenth in terms tax base of the 16 Wisconsin Technical Colleges. Yet, MSTC is the twelfth district in enrollment in the system. That is, MSTC serves more students than one might expect in comparison to other WTCS institutions, based on district population and value of the taxing districts.

Direct measures of student satisfaction with MSTC services include the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), course feedback data, and annual Graduate Follow-up Survey information. The most recent Graduate Follow-up survey was conducted in 2003; results of the survey found that 97% of responding students indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their education.

The course feedback process surveys students in targeted classes using a college-wide instrument. This process is conducted every semester. The range of scores possible on the instrument is 1 to 5, with 5 being defined as "strongly agree." The results in the fall of 2004, the score for all MSTC students in all credit courses on "In general, I was satisfied with this course" was 4.25. The range of student responses on all questions was from 4.04 on "satisfaction with the course text", to 4.46 on "assignments were related to course objectives."

Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) surveys were conducted in 2002 and 2003; a third survey occurred in the spring of 2006. In the spring 2002 survey, on the 11 variables students identified as most important to them, MSTC students were statistically significantly more satisfied than were their counterparts at the norm-referenced two-year colleges.

### 3R2 Results for Building Relationships with Students

Course evaluations, student complaint processes, academic and nonacademic appeal processes, Student Senate, faculty advisors, and program counselors all provide means of students being heard. A low number of complaints and those resolved informally would indicate that relationship is being built at point of

contact (see 3P6). Noel-Levitz results (2002) reported in 3R1 indicate that MSTC students are more satisfied than students nationally, they feel safe and secure on campus, and 73% picked MSTC as their first choice for postsecondary education. Enrollment, course completion, and graduation rates also provide an objective picture of results. From 1976 to 2003 MSTC showed a 67% total growth rate in FTEs, which was the second highest in the state. Course completion rates for 2003-2004 were 74%, (passing 80% of credits), which compares favorably to a state technical college system average of 75%. Graduation rate data, as measured by Perkins core indicators, is 60.54% for 2001-02.

### 3R3 Results for Stakeholder Satisfaction with Performance

Table 28 reflects the most recent Graduate Follow-Up Survey results. The Graduate Follow-Up Survey is conducted at the technical college district level to gather data regarding the activities and perceptions of the students. The survey is conducted approximately six months after graduation from Wisconsin's Technical Colleges.

**Table 28 Would the employer hire a graduate?**

Hire graduate?	Yes	No	Maybe
Statewide	95%	0%	5%
MSTC	98%	0%	2%

The primary objectives of the survey are to identify the current activities of program graduates, to determine the extent to which current activities are related to the graduates' educational programs, to provide information to be used as tools in career awareness and planning efforts for those making or assisting in career decisions, and to provide data to facilitate program planning, evaluation, and development.

For 2003, graduate placement rates based on the follow-up survey showed 94% of graduates were employed. Of the employed students, 81% were employed in fields directly related to the degree.

### 3R4 Results of building relationships with key stakeholders

Table 27 details the results of building relationships with key stakeholders.

### 3R5 Results Comparisons

Comparison results are included in 3R1-3R4. Comparisons for employer satisfaction — graduate placement survey, Perkins performance indicators, enrollments, and the Quality Review Process (QRP) are made across the 16 colleges in the Wisconsin

Technical College System. The Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey is based on a national norm of students in two-year colleges.

### *Improvement*

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#### **3I1 Improvement of Current Processes**

We have improved our processes for gathering student satisfaction by instituting the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory. These results are shared with student, internal, and external stakeholders through publications, presentations, and discussions. Academic programs respond to the changing needs of employers through the program advisory committee process. Implementation of PeopleSoft administrative software is causing review and documentation of, and changes in, many institutional processes. The Quality Review processes will also allow us to gather specific data for program evaluation.

#### **3I2 Targets, Improvement, Priorities, Communications**

At present, MSTC lacks centralized data compilation and analysis resources and methodology. Targets are typically set by State and Federal driven standards and comparisons. Priorities are set by the Executive Committee and College Board.