
9: Building Collaborative Relationships

Process

9P1: Building relationships with schools and organizations

MSTC receives its students from area high schools, businesses, and industries. A number of students have come from government organizations involved in building and strengthening Wisconsin's workforce. The three types of organizations historically have been the primary sources for MSTC students.

Most MSTC students come directly from area high schools. Trend data indicates that approximately 25% of district high school graduates attend MSTC directly after graduation. MSTC's High School Relations Coordinator is devoted to the creation and enhancement of effective relations with area high schools. The Coordinator plays a critical role in serving as a liaison between district schools and college staff to communicate services that are essential to high school students. To facilitate this role the coordinator builds relations with schools by providing leadership to member schools, organizing high school staff development opportunities, promoting and facilitating school-to-work and tech prep options, and promoting the College. The work of the High School Relations Coordinator in building relationships is supplemented by various activities facilitated by Enrollment Advisors.

The second largest percent of students are from business, industry, and service organizations. Employers sponsor employees to develop or enhance skills required to perform a job efficiently and effectively. Employees may enroll in credit classes, pursue a degree, enroll in non-credit classes and seminars, or participate in classes and seminars provided as contracted services for their employer. The relationships that are built with local employers are broad, numerous, and extremely important to the College's focus on occupational education. In addition to serving students from these organizations, the organizations also provide clinical and supervised work experience for students, hire the college's graduates, support MSTC with gifts of equipment, participate on occupational advisory committees, and donate to the MSTC Foundation for scholarships. The occupational program Deans and Campus Deans are primarily responsible for fostering successful relationships with these partners. To develop these

relationships, the Deans actively participate in related professional, occupational, and community organizations; initiate meetings with organization leaders; attend decision making meetings; and collaboratively work on projects with various organizations and serve on committees and boards.

An increasing number of students come from government organizations involved in building and strengthening Wisconsin's workforce such as workforce development boards. This category increased due to severe layoffs and job eliminations resulting from the present economic environment. Affected individuals have turned to these government organizations to facilitate and fund job-skill retooling. These organizations have turned to the college to provide the necessary training. Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Financial Aid, and the Executive Committee pursue numerous opportunities to build relationships with these organizations. College staff members initiate meetings with organization leaders, attend decision making meetings, collaboratively develop and facilitate projects, and participate on various committees with these organizations.

9P2: Building relationships with colleges and employers

Before creating, prioritizing, or building relationships with educational organizations and employers who depend upon MSTC to supply students and graduates to meet organizational needs, the College ensures that the organization is reputable and valuable. In FY2006 14% of MSTC's students came to prepare for further education; today that number is 22%. MSTC works diligently to give students choices about which quality four-year institution might best serve their need. MSTC helps students understand choices for further education in the context of accreditation, program compatibility, and articulation with or recognition of credits earned at MSTC.

MSTC's Strategic Directions and College Goals drive the fundamental principles and guidelines used in establishing MSTC's numerous collaborations. Although Strategic Directions and College Goals change to reflect Board and district priorities, those directives consistently include meeting student and community needs along with establishing partnerships and other collaborative relationships.

At MSTC, the process for creating, prioritizing, and building educational relationships target peer technical

and community colleges, and public and private baccalaureate institutions. The WTCS program approval process has great influence on relationships with educational organizations. The process is well-defined (Table 1P03a). Because the program development process includes development of program and course outcomes, educational institutions and other organizations have a clear understanding of student and graduate skills and abilities. This process-driven approach is a key aspect of building and prioritizing relationships.

Although separated in Table 9P02a, often priorities are determined as the relationship is being built. The building process varies depending on the desired outcome of the relationship. Examples of approaches used in relationship building with other educational and employer organizations include: Memberships in professional organizations, advisory committees, more than two dozen articulation agreements with other higher educational institutions (Table 2R02f), in-district grant partnerships, state and federal grant opportunities, in-person meetings between presidents and chancellors and vice presidents of academic affairs and provosts, and contract-for-service agreements.

9P3: Relationships with student service providers

MSTC uses formal and informal processes to build relationships with organizations, including staff from student support, adult basic ed, and occupational programs collaborating to address student success.

MSTC prioritizes the creation and maintenance of external partnerships by focusing on the relationship to student success. For example, financial emergencies directly impact a student's ability to successfully reach educational goals. The MSTC Foundation provides students with emergency loans and grants from funds supplied by external stakeholders, based on referrals from program counselors. This funding pool was established in response to requests from financial aid officers and student support staff to help students with short-term support (Table 9R02b).

Some partnerships are created in response to a crisis. For example, after suicides of three MSTC students (unrelated) during FY2004, MSTC student support services took immediate action. In partnership with the Wood County Health Department, a team of instructors, counselors, Deans, Associate Deans and student support specialists developed and implemented a plan to introduce suicide prevention education to all students. In addition, MSTC successfully partnered with a local newspaper foundation to provide

emergency funds to support students with immediate mental health crises. Student support staff developed partnerships with area mental health providers to offer treatment and developed an internal process to refer students for appropriate care.

MSTC is required by state statute to partner with certain area service providers, including the Workforce Development Board. MSTC uses those opportunities to improve the success rate of students who are also receiving services through the partner's programs. Counselors, enrollment advisors, adult basic education staff, and the financial aid office provide information to unemployed and dislocated workers. All of these efforts required partnering with the Workforce Development Board and its service providers to help students succeed. Examples of relationships related to student support are included in Table 9P03a.

9P4: Relationships with suppliers

MSTC's procurement policies and practices are founded on the premise that individual departments and academic divisions determine their needs and specifications for acquisition of all goods and services. The Purchasing Department collaborates with and assists all departments and academic divisions with market research, establishing critical specifications or deliverables, and soliciting proposals. Purchasing helps departments and divisions select vendors and comply with statutory and agency-prescribed procurement requirements. Current administrative bulletins and department guidelines related to purchasing are available on MSTC's intranet; MSTC policy encourages but does not require quotes for purchases under \$10,000, a minimum of three quotes for purchases between \$10,000 and \$25,000, and sealed bids for larger purchases.

The need for establishing relationships with materials and services suppliers is critical. These relationships create awareness of new features, emerging training and occupational requirements, new technology, and the availability of improved services, all essential keeping current and establishing MSTC needs and specifications. Vendor relationships are maintained within a department or academic division. Within the academic divisions, program advisory committees provide feedback regarding equipment and suppliers.

9P5: Relationships with other entities

When MSTC creates, prioritizes, and builds relationships with education associations, external

Table 9P02a: Creating and prioritizing collaborative associations

MSTC Process	C	P	B	E	O
Determine need for and value of collaborating with the organization relative to impact relationship has on MSTC students/graduates. <u>Example:</u> Franklin University and Lakeland College; both accept Associate Degree credits for program totals and provide for laddering from Associate to Baccalaureate to Master's Degrees	X			X	X
Determine organization has requisite integrity and reputation expected by MSTC; must meet required and desired regulations/licensures. <u>Example:</u> Franklin University and Lakeland College are HLC institutions	X			X	X
Identify organizations and employers that add value to students' learning experience and occupational/career preparation; meeting established competencies is the minimum criteria. <u>Example:</u> Utilizing Ministry Health Care/Saint Joseph's Hospital as a clinical site for most college health programs; this tertiary care teaching institution is the only major rural referral medical center in Wisconsin	X			X	X
Initiate contact with educational organizations/employers or respond to contact with the college. <u>Example:</u> Mutual contact between The Davey Tree Expert Company out of Kent, Ohio in support of MSTC's Urban Forestry program	X			X	X
Engage in external occupational activity such as trade fairs, job fairs, conferences, organizations, and seminars. <u>Example:</u> Clinical Research Coordinator program Associate Dean's membership on the Wisconsin Cancer Council and active participation in related workgroups	X			X	X
Confirm that mutual interest in collaboration exists and both participants contribute to the relationship. <u>Example:</u> MSTC is only provider of Clinical Research Coordinator Associate Degree in Wisconsin and one of very few nationwide. Clinical trials (in this case, cancer) for investigating organizations are substantially expedited with the availability of Associate Degree prepared personnel		X		X	X
Determine if relationship will enhance students' learning and working experiences along with the reputation of the college/program. <u>Example:</u> Professionals from The Davey Tree Expert Company fly to Central Wisconsin each semester to provide student training in Urban Forestry climbing class; organization also provides summer employment, internships, grants, and full-time employment to program students/graduates		X		X	X
Identify impact relationship will place on the college, financially or otherwise. <u>Example:</u> Students in the Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic program are required to obtain clinical experiences in healthcare settings and in "ride-alongs" with ambulance services; MSTC does not place students in those settings that would require either student or college payment for the experience(s)		X		X	X
Initiate discussion with another higher education institution to establish transfer agreement. <u>Example:</u> More than 24 formal articulation agreements are in place with public and private IHEs			X	X	
Provide transfer credit to peer technical college or baccalaureate degree granting institution through established and published college criteria for the sending and the receiving college. <u>Example:</u> Common statewide curriculums in place for many WTCS health programs enabling students to easily transfer from one technical college to another; agreements in place with 5 state public and 3 private universities to accept 60 or more Associate Degree Nursing credits for those students pursuing BSN			X	X	
Shape meaningful advisory committee membership in support of programs and engage College personnel to serve on external, related advisory committees. <u>Example:</u> Internally, the College manages 35 active advisory committees supporting technical diploma and associate degree programs; externally, many personnel serve on advisory committees such as the College of Professional Studies – Health for the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point			X	X	X
Establish "clinical" agreements for entities willing to provide teaching/learning experiences for students in specific areas, i.e., Respiratory Therapy, Nursing, Medical Assistant. <u>Example:</u> More than 50 active clinical agreements are in place for health programs at MSTC			X		X
Respond to external training requests to provide in-service/update/upgrade content to existing employees. <u>Example:</u> 57 currently employed personnel within the paper industry are currently receiving upgraded training as Medical First Responders through contract for service agreement			X		X
Establish active College memberships in professional organizations supporting occupations related to the education/training provided by MSTC. <u>Example:</u> 5 MSTC managers are actively involved in a group formed more than 10 years ago to improve region's business climate and civic infrastructure.			X	X	X
C: Create, P: Prioritize, B: Build, E: Educational Organizations, O: Other Organizations					

agencies, consortia partners, or the general community, departmental subject matter experts consider whether the partnership:

- Positively impacts student learning;
- Helps advance the Mission, Vision, and College Goals;
- Provides positive economic opportunities for the College;
- Helps leverage resources; and,
- Enhances MSTC’s reputation or position in the community?

Relationships are essential to MSTC’s success. Collaboration and partnerships serve as the foundation to building and maintaining community support, new programs, consortium agreements, and articulation or transfer agreements. MSTC fosters partnerships with business, industry, and public service agencies in Central Wisconsin, and across the state. These partnerships provide clinical and other types of experiential learning opportunities for students. Business and industry partners provide student internships, hire MSTC’s students and graduates, support the college with in-kind gifts of equipment, donate to the MSTC Foundation, and participate on program advisory committees.

MSTC is one of three partners in the WILM consortium. MSTC participates in this consortium because the three-college system combines the limited resources of three small colleges into a larger array of services and provides efficiencies of scale. College leadership reviews this agreement annually and has a structured set of performance measures that provide a report card on partnership effectiveness.

Table 9P03a: Sample Relationships with Student Support Organizations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Service Agencies • MSTC Foundation • Literacy Councils • Local Non-profit Service Agencies • Employers for Internships, Clinical sites, financial support of MSTC Foundation • Child Care Referral Service • United Ways • Public Health Care Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area High Schools for HSED Completion • One Stop Job Center • Career Closet • The Family Center • Transfer • NAACP • Mental Health Providers • Community Foundations • Family Resource Centers
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9P6: Assessing partnerships

College staff members use a number of processes to validate that the varying needs of those involved have been met. These processes depend heavily on the quality and type of partnership relationships that have been established. Processes for major types of partners are discussed in the remainder of this response.

Educational Entities

College staff members facilitate matching course-to-course content and competencies for transfer from one WTCS institution to another through extensive collaboration. For instance, statewide curriculum exists for six of the 10 health programs offered at MSTC, two are unique in the state, and two are short-term programs. As noted in Table 2R02f, MSTC has extensive transfer agreements with other institutions.

The Transfer Information System documents state-wide credit transfer between WTCS courses and courses offered by the University of Wisconsin. MSTC assesses whether it is meeting the needs of those involved by monitoring the number of credits accepted in transfer and the number of students transferring; MSTC continuously reviews these data and uses it to update articulation agreements.

Employers

College staff members constantly assess partnerships with employers to ensure the relationships are meeting the needs of the College and the partner. The College uses a variety of approaches:

- Input from the 35 program advisory committees;
- Satisfaction surveys for Contract for Service training provided to employers
- Evaluations of Apprenticeship training and clinical site evaluations
- Analysis of employer satisfaction using the Employer Follow-up Survey

Surveys serve as a strong vehicle to reveal graduate and business and industry employer satisfaction. Graduates are surveyed six months after graduation to gauge overall satisfaction with their MSTC program of study; the survey serves as a mechanism for graduates to indicate the relevance of training to the real-life experiences in the workplace. Employers are surveyed after student completion of clinical or supervisory work experience opportunities to assess student preparedness, emerging opportunities, and overall satisfaction. The WTCS also surveys employers at the five-year mark to assess long-term satisfaction in the training MSTC provided their the firm’s employees.

Suppliers

The MSTC employee working with a supplier is responsible for identifying and monitoring measures of success for the relationship, as well as actively monitoring the relationship and managing risk. The employee addresses areas of concern; supervisors decide when to escalate issues.

MSTC relies on employees to bring documented vendor issues to the Director of Auxiliary Services. The Director handles issues beyond the scope of employee expertise.

9P7: Building internal relationships

MSTC enjoys a rich and long history of internal collaboration. This model was formalized when Dr. John Clark became President of MSTC.

A strong infrastructure that encourages and supports internal relationships is essential to the sustainability of this dynamic leadership model. Recognizing that organizational structure significantly influences an institution's leadership model, departmental units have been shaped in ways that support and strengthen communication and build solid relationships across units. MSTC's President works primarily through the executive team and sets expectations for collaboration. The Executive Committee consists of four Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents also set collaboration expectations with employees; Vice Presidents are responsible for and support over 95% of MSTC employees.

Managers with responsibilities for both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs strengthen communication and relationship building between units. Campus Deans are responsible for campus operations (Student Affairs) and for academic programs (Academic Affairs). This dual responsibility creates a greater awareness of and appreciation for the integration of academic affairs and student affairs processes crucial to quality learning experiences.

Collaboration is also built into the organizational structure through committee membership. By design, committees have members from both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. This blend is intended to build relationships, strengthen communication, and encourage collaboration.

Employee Core Values are another element that significantly impacts MSTC's model of building relationships and ensuring communication (Table 5P01b). In 2002, MSTC employees identified six Core Values to guide employee behaviors. Core Values are

prominently displayed in all campus locations along with the College Mission and Vision statements, included in job position descriptions, introduced during new employee orientations, and incorporated into annual performance appraisals.

Results

9R1: Measures of performance

MSTC uses collaborative measures to determine the effectiveness of relationships. Primary types of measures are discussed in the remainder of this response.

Area High Schools

Measurements include the number of high school students and their parents who attend enrollment advising activities, including campus and high school classroom career exploration events. MSTC also uses surveys to assess satisfaction with MSTC's leadership and services provided to high schools.

Employer Satisfaction

An Employer Follow-up Survey is conducted once every five years to collect data on employer perceptions of recent WTCS graduates. Employers are in a unique position to assess the effectiveness of a technical college education in preparing people for employment. These trend data are another important measure.

Graduate Placement

The Graduate Follow-up Survey is conducted annually and gathers data regarding student activities and perceptions. The survey is conducted approximately six months after graduation.

The primary objectives of the survey are to identify the current activities of program graduates; to determine how current activities are related to the graduates' educational programs; to provide information 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.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is one element measured in the annual Graduate Follow-up Survey. Annually, graduates rate the training they received. MSTC also gathers student satisfaction information using the SSI, administered every other year.

Contract Services

As a means of assessing employer satisfaction with contracted training, MSTC's representative

coordinating the training administers an online survey that assesses customer satisfaction with the training. The online survey is administered at the conclusion of the training. These data are managed, maintained, and reported by the WTCS office; the WTCS office also surveys training participants.

Other Partnerships

The measures of success of collaborative relationships with government organizations involved in building and strengthening Wisconsin's workforce include the number of newly developed opportunities to meet the needs of this population. Such opportunities include academic preparation services and occupational training. The number of participants served also is a measure of performance.

Measurements of building collaborative relationships with non-educational organizations include the number and monetary value of training contracted services and trends in contract services with specific organizations over time. Additional areas measured include the number and amounts of scholarships, advisory committee participation, and student internship and clinical sites.

9R2: Performance results

The High School Relations Coordinator (HSRC) and the Enrollment Advisors have been extremely beneficial to the College's relationships with its district high schools. Results indicate:

A relatively constant percentage of district high school graduates, approximately 18%, attend MSTC directly after graduation. Between 2002 to 2008, the percentage of graduates enrolling directly into MSTC has been greater than the state average (Table 9R02a). To continue to strengthen MSTC's relationship with area high schools, the College recently hosted an in-service for a local high school. More than 100 instructors attended; the agenda included a tour of MSTC's facilities and one-on-one time with instructors.

The number of high school students and their parents who attend college campus and high school classroom career exploration events steadily increased with marked increases in Career View, High School and Middle School events, Discovery Days, Parent Nights,

and Enrollment Advisor appointments. For example from FY2008 to FY2009 approximately:

- 100 additional students attended CareerView.
- 800 additional students attended classroom presentation and events at area high schools and middles schools.
- 400 additional students attended Discover Day.
- 250 additional parents attended Parent Night.
- 500 additional students met with Enrollment Advisors.
- Between FY2008 and FY2009, enrollment increased 10%

The number of students participating in Tech Prep opportunities increased through additional transcribed credit agreements with four district high schools. MSTC is experiencing a continued decline in Advanced Standing eligible courses, from 19 courses in FY2007 to 12 courses to-date for FY2010. This decline is a result of a shift in focus from Advanced Standing to Transcribed Credit at the state and district levels. MSTC piloted Transcribed Credit with Lincoln HS in FY2008 and expanded to four district high schools in FY2010.

High school satisfaction with College services remains high. MSTC received positive feedback regarding services from participants in the Mid-Wisconsin School to Work Consortium, which is chaired by MSTC's HSRC.

Given the higher-than-state-average for enrollments of high school graduates, the informal assumption is that the needs of this population is being met.

Every four years, MSTC conducts an Employer Follow-up Survey; the results from the 2006 survey indicated that 96% of the responding employers said they would hire a technical college graduate again. Employers who hired MSTC graduates were very satisfied with the technical college education.

FY2008 graduate follow-up responders showed 91% of MSTC graduates employed within six months of graduation; 97% of MSTC graduates were satisfied or more than satisfied with the education they received

Statewide, in the past 10 years, the percentage of WTCS graduates employed within 6 months exceeded 90% and graduates employed in a field related to their training exceeded 74%.

Table 9R02a: Comparison of Direct High School Enrollments

	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008
MSTC	20.0%	19.9%	19.8%	18.8%	15.9%	17.9%	16.0%
WTCS	17.8%	17.6%	16.0%	15.8%	15.5%	14.4%	14.1%

Transfer data regarding students within the WTCS from FY1997 to FY2008 show a greater number of FTEs leaving MSTC than those coming into the College from -55.07 in 1997 to -135.04 in 2008. However, embedded in those numbers, two important phenomena must be recognized:

1. Approximately 61% of the FTEs going out of the district are for programs MSTC does not offer (and is not likely to pursue offering in the future);
2. And, within three years after graduation, 50% of the high schools in MSTC's district send 50% or more of their graduates to MSTC; the remaining 50% of the high schools in the MSTC district send 40 – 49% of their graduates to a technical college within 3 years after graduation.

Analysis of contract service data indicates relationships with repeat non-educational clients remain relatively strong. Organizations with whom MSTC previously contracted for instructional services continued to do so but the amount of training requested diminished. Challenges in building new relationships exist since organizations find themselves in a challenging economic environment, which caused reductions in training funds. WAT grants, state grants that promote development of incumbent workers and expand technical college training services to businesses and industry, have developed new relationships for MSTC. For example, MSTC is using a WAT grant to lead the development of a consortium training model with the districts' chambers of commerce. This new initiative has strengthened relationships with the chambers.

MSTC's relationship with the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (NCWWDB) resulted in numerous collaborative programs that transition dislocated workers back into the workforce. For more than 10 years, MSTC collaborated with the local Rapid Response team, a team of organizations that provide information and assistance to workers facing layoffs and job elimination. MSTC collaboratively worked with NCWWDB representatives to address the unique

needs of dislocated workers by:

- Developing an online Adult Career Awareness and Assessment class;
- Facilitating an on-campus support group through MSTC Student Affairs;
- Developing a FAQ flyer with information expressly designed for dislocated workers;
- Developing a dedicated web page for dislocated workers;
- Conducting a special review of financial aid benefits for dislocated workers;
- Offering computer literacy classes; and
- Developing new short-term certificates to retool the skills of dislocated workers.

This relationship allows MSTC to meet demands for graduates in core and emerging programs, while providing critical outreach and support services necessary for dislocated workers to make the transition to postsecondary education.

MSTC has been able to build and develop strong partnerships with community organizations and individuals, to the benefit of students. For instance, MSTC has created and built more than 100 clinical relationships for healthcare occupations and more than 35 program advisory committees staff by community members. Also, the MSTC Foundation recently celebrated twenty-five years of helping students succeed; the number of students served continues to grow (Table 9R02b).

9R3: Comparative results

Results from other higher education organizations for the purpose of comparison are very limited. Baccalaureate institutions in Wisconsin do not measure or disclose information in ways that allow comparison to WTCS institutions. The performance results of MSTC's processes for building collaborative relationships are better compared with other WTCS institutions. There are many processes used by all technical colleges from which results data may be

Table 9R02b: MSTC Foundation Scholarships and Emergency Grants

Year	Scholarships Awarded	Scholarship Value	Emergency Loans	CNA Tuition	Students Served by MSTC Foundation
FY2005	280	\$138,000	38	25	343
FY2006	240	\$138,000	46	17	303
FY2007	250	\$142,000	49	4	303
FY2008	258	\$151,000	39	5	302
FY2009	300	\$164,000	39	3	342

compared; however, few if any of those measures are related to building collaborative relationships.

Some processes, comparative purposes, and collaborative relationships:

- Employer Follow up Survey every five years (see Tables 3R04a and 5P03a)
- 951 students graduated in FY2009 from MSTC, ranking twelfth out of 16 WTCS institutions in terms of graduates; MSTC had the second-largest increase (19.2%) in the number of graduates over the previous year. The increase reflects MSTC's collaborative approach to student success.

In reference to other higher educational organizations, the private colleges and universities with whom MSTC maintains collaborative relationships show the most positive results. One of the very successful results in building a key collaborative relationship involves Lakeland College. Lakeland College has a physical presence on MSTC's Wisconsin Rapids campus and endorses close, collaborative working relationships between Lakeland and MSTC personnel. Since 2003, 13 interwoven degree programs have been established, allowing MSTC students to enroll concurrently at MSTC and Lakeland College, take courses from both institutions, and complete a baccalaureate degree in four years. MSTC has the twelfth largest enrollment in the WTCS, but has the second-highest number of interwoven degrees with Lakeland College, which speaks to the strong relationship and collaboration between the institutions (Table 9R03a).

Improvement

911: Recent improvements

MSTC has made several recent improvements related

Table 9R03a: Lakeland Interwoven Programs and FTE Ranking within the WTCS

WTCS Institution	Programs	FTE Rank
Northcentral (NTC)	14	10
Mid-State (MSTC)	13	12
Moraine Park (MPTC)	5	9
Lakeshore (LTC)	3	13
Chippewa Valley (CVTC)	2	6
Fox Valley (FVTC)	2	4
Madison (MATC)	2	2
Northeast Wisconsin (NWTC)	1	3

to building collaborative relationships. Relationships with business and industry are documented in part through training contract agreements. Inconsistencies in contract service agreements led to an in-depth internal review involving a cross-functional team. The outcome of that review resulted in revised costing formulas, process changes, and the creation of new forms and databases. During the development phase MSTC employees responsible for contract services provided input and validated the changes.

In addition, a survey is now being provided to all contract service clients. Survey information will assist MSTC in determining the quality of instruction and overall client satisfaction.

Another improvement focused on internal collaborative relationships related to the student population. MSTC changed class schedules to four-day blocks to reduce student travel to campus and give students a day to use for their employment and childcare needs.

The final example of an improvement resulted in the termination of a relationship with a vendor. MSTC responded to online student and instructor complaints and help-desk documentation that showed the learning management system was not meeting the needs of students or instructors. A new vendor was secured that could supply a quality online course management services. Since the change, complaints and help desk tickets have declined significantly.

912: Culture-driven process improvement

MSTC is a smaller institution with a culture and infrastructure that allows areas to identify many process improvement opportunities in formal and informal ways. The MSTC culture, modeled by leaders and mentors throughout the institution, encourages collaboration, creativity, mutual respect, and collegiality. Today there is a greater awareness among instructors and staff of how processes are interrelated and interdependent across MSTC. Problem-solving at MSTC is migrating from a silo-based approach to one that incorporates cross-functional teams. It is common to see a variety of departments and divisions working together on issues. The ability to effectively collaborate while planning for improvement is a pillar of MSTC's strength as an institution. The Check-up Visit team noted, "On an institutional level, long-range planning includes all levels of the College. The Board of Directors sets long-range goals based upon input from community members, employees, students,

and other stakeholders. Data is [sic] gathered and analyzed throughout the year and a final plan completed at the annual Board Advance. The Executive Committee members meet weekly to evaluate progress on goals and review information received from all data sources. Departmental faculty members meet monthly in departments to assess progress and plan for improvements based on data.”

The culture of the organization is reflected in MSTC’s Core Values (Table 5P01b), which were developed with a reliance on collaboration; the institution has a long history of seeking and embracing continuous improvement opportunities. The culture encourages each staff member to take responsibility for processes, decisions, and outcomes within her or his scope of influence, and to apply expertise to continuously improve systems and strengthen organizational performance. The result is a collaborative, student-centered organization where each staff member works together to ensure that MSTC achieves its Mission.

The collaborative culture that exists at MSTC increases the opportunity for employees to discuss issues and concerns before they escalate to a level of serious concern. One small piece of evidence of the benefit of this type of culture is that there have been very few bargaining unit grievances in the past several years (Table 4R02i). Issues are being resolved at the supervisory level or through Human Resources rather than the formal grievance process.

The use of surveys to determine employees’ needs and to gather information on how processes and procedures can be improved assists leadership in selecting specific processes to improve. Ad-hoc committees (MSTC calls this approach “solve-and-dissolve”) are formed to develop solutions and recommendations as well.

Infrastructure is designed around the strategic planning model, which facilitates setting manageable targets and identifying individual processes that work best in specific situations. Accurate alignment of tasks to people is an on-going effort, particularly in an organization where many tasks need to be accomplished by a finite number of employees. Although responsibilities are clearly delineated it allows for a broad scope of practice, particularly within organizational divisions and departments. Ample latitude is supported in planning to address challenges, and in following the established steps and criteria in the development and implementation phases. The collaborative culture, use of surveys, and solve-and-dissolve teams serves to reduce the number and level of problems and issues as new processes are implemented.

Some examples of how MSTC’s culture and infrastructure drive planning and continuous improvement include:

Selecting action projects: The Director of College Advancement sends an open-ended electronic survey to all staff members to solicit ideas for action projects. The responses are collated and sorted into common themes, which are used to build a second survey. The second survey is used to further narrow down the list of possible projects; a final survey presents six possible action projects with one-sentence descriptions. The three projects garnering the most support are implemented. Finally, cross-functional teams are identified for each action project, which allows for broad input from all areas of MSTC.

Engaging instructors: Some health programs have lead instructors to meet accreditation requirements; the operational policy was developed in 2002 and revised in 2006. Instructors receive workload for assuming the lead instructor role; planning is a critical component of the role. MSTC uses lead instructors in nursing to promote consistency across different class sections and clinical rotations, ensuring instructors deliver the same high quality instruction and have access to the same developed activities for clinical. Lead instructors ensure everyone (including adjunct instructors) are all on the same page; the lead instructor is for a whole level and not just a single course.

WTCS benchmarking: The WTCS has an extensive data system, including QRP and other WTCS reports, that permits MSTC to use comparative information to evaluate the institution’s performance against peer colleges. Users from across MSTC use the information daily for both short- and long-term planning.

WILM benchmarking: The WILM consortium has purpose-built comparative measures (AEIs) that are designed for benchmarking within the consortium. Short- and long-term planning is informed by these data; MSTC users access such data daily and make decisions based on the information.

Budget development and monitoring: MSTC has an outstanding financial reporting system. Employees with budget management responsibilities have real-time access to accurate revenue and spending information, including rolling forecasts. The rolling forecasts, coupled with ongoing training, support flexible and timely management and planning activities.