

***AQIP Category Eight, PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans help you achieve your mission and vision.***

**Processes (P)**

**8P1.** What are your key planning processes?

**8P2.** How do you select short- and long-term strategies?

**8P3.** How do you develop key action plans to support your organizational strategies?

**8P4.** How do you coordinate and align your planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across your institution's various levels?

**8P5.** How you define objectives, select measures, and set performance targets for your organizational strategies and action plans?

**8P6.** How do you link strategy selection and action plans, taking into account levels of current resources and future needs?

**Address Core Component 5A under 8P6**

5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

- The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
- The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
- The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
- The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

**8P7.** How do you assess and address risk in your planning processes?

**8P8.** How do you ensure that you will develop and nurture faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities to address changing requirements demanded by your organizational strategies and action plans?

**Results (R)**

**8R1.** What measures of the effectiveness of your planning processes and systems do you collect and analyze regularly?

**8R2.** What are your performance results for accomplishing your organizational strategies and action plans?

**8R3.** What are your projections or targets for performance of your strategies and action plans over the next 1-3 years?

**8R4.** How do your results for the performance of your processes for Planning Continuous Improvement compare with the performance results of other higher education institutions and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?

**8R5.** What is the evidence that your system for Planning Continuous Improvement is effective? How do you measure and evaluate your planning processes and activities?

### **Improvement (I)**

**8I1.** What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for *Planning Continuous Improvement*?

**8I2.** How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in *Planning Continuous Improvement*?

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## Planning Continuous Improvement

Category Eight, Planning Continuous Improvement is a system in which we believe we have made progress in recent years. Our approaches in this category are aligned with stable processes that are consciously managed and evaluated. With the many changes and challenges to face in higher education, we believe that it is imperative to have well-considered plans to direct the College into the future. For this reason, we embarked on a strategic planning process that was very robust, dependent on the involvement of many people, and focused on the acquisition of significant amounts of data to make decisions. The process was very open and well communicated. An important goal of the strategic planning was to align it to our budgeting process.

As mentioned in the Overview, AQIP is a process that has had significant impact on the College. Employees have come to view AQIP as having an important role in making improvements and are supportive of the development of AQIP Action Projects. Employees talk the language of continuous improvement and are aware of the importance of AQIP in our planning processes.

Putting planning on a bigger and more visible stage has helped employees recognize their role in the development and successful completion of institutional goals. With a more aligned and rigorous approach BSC is able to focus efforts on that which is essential and most desirable.

**8P1** Bismarck State College embarked on a comprehensive [strategic planning process](#) that was initiated and completed in 2011-2012. An important part of the planning process was that it allowed us to align institutional budgeting and strategic planning (see 8P6). The process was collaborative in nature, transparent, and inclusive. Under the direction of a strategic planning consultant, an employee strategic planning task force led the college in the intensive process that ultimately involved nearly 900 people as either participants in or contributors to the planning effort.

The strategic planning task force consisted of a diverse set of thirty employees from a variety of college units or departments. The task force completed two days of training in the concepts of the process and in the methods of data gathering. Using surveys, focus groups, interviews and other methods, significant amounts of data were gathered by the task force members from BSC employees, alumni, community members, students (both on-campus and online), business leaders, educators, and others who participated in a variety of planning exercises. The data gathering served as an in-depth environmental scan that helped the college identify needs, trends, future opportunities, and potential threats.

After collecting the data, the planning task force identified five common themes that emerged and wrote concept papers to expand on them. A strategic vision based on the themes was formulated, and goals to address the themes were determined. The vision conference included an expanded group of employees and community members; participants in the goals conference included the strategic planning task force, as well as numerous additional faculty members, staff, and administrators. As we progressed with the planning, all the information was placed on the website for everyone to access.

The culmination of the planning process was the identification of goals, objectives, and strategies that will lead the college for five years. The strategic operational plan for 2013-2018 is comprised of the goals, objectives, and strategies that arose from the collaborative strategic planning process. In addition, several ongoing objectives begun in our last planning phase were added to the operational plan, as were the AQIP Action Projects currently underway. At the annual strategic planning retreat, the new objectives were prioritized to enable us to focus on the most important objectives immediately. The goals and prioritized objectives are shown in the following table:

<b>Strategic Goal – Branding BSC for Beyond</b>	
<b>Prioritized Objectives</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>
Complete the follow-up market analysis for formal, quantitative data to compare with the benchmark finding from the 2005 research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare new data with benchmark data</li> <li>• Revise the marketing plan to address the new data</li> </ul>
Implement the full potential of the Hobson’s CRM software to increase enrollment and assist with student retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize needs and develop a phased process for adding components</li> <li>• Measure the effectiveness of the components</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Goal – Strengthening Collaborative Relationships</b>	
<b>Prioritized Objective</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>
Investigate ways to increase the efficiency of our workforce in a time of budget reduction and economic conditions that make recruiting qualified employees more difficult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review positions and workload</li> <li>• Uses process mapping to streamline work functions</li> <li>• Collaborate across departments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Goal – Using Technology Effectively</b>	
<b>Prioritized Objective</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>
Implement campus-wide information technology services that improve student education and campus administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify needs and determine funding</li> <li>• Implement e-Companion in all classes</li> <li>• Provide nearly real-time access to grades and course information</li> </ul>

**Figure 8.1 Prioritized objectives and performance targets**

The objectives and strategies have measurable outcomes, timelines, administrative champions, and resources identified by the work groups assigned to each objective. The progress on the objectives and strategies is entered into TracDat, a tracking and assessment software. Progress is reviewed quarterly by the Executive Council and Operations Council. Progress will also be reviewed at the annual planning retreat and new priorities may be set at that time.

Other key formal plans include the AQIP Action Projects, Master Facilities Plan, Enrollment Management Plan and Student Retention Plan, Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan, Marketing Plan, and the Information Technology Plan.

Key action plans with participants and inputs are shown in Figure 8.2.

Action Plan Development		
Key Action Plan	Participants	Inputs
AQIP Action Projects (embedded in the strategic plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AQIP Coordinating Team</li> <li>• Faculty, staff, and administrators</li> <li>• Executive Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee suggestions</li> <li>• AQIP Coordinating Team recommendations</li> <li>• Team and committee suggestions</li> <li>• Systems Appraisal and Quality Checkup Visit suggestions/recommendations</li> </ul>
Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Faculty, staff, and administrators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit interviews</li> <li>• Demographic change</li> </ul>
Enrollment Management and Student Retention Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment Management Team</li> <li>• Executive Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDUS goals</li> <li>• Enrollment, retention, marketing data</li> <li>• Demographic data</li> </ul>
Information Technology Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT staff</li> <li>• Computer Use Steering Committee</li> <li>• Technology Advisory and Coordinating Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDUS regulations and guidelines</li> <li>• Needs of employees</li> <li>• Instructional needs</li> </ul>
Marketing Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College Relations</li> <li>• Faculty, staff, and administrators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Environmental scan</li> </ul>
Master Facilities Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental scan</li> <li>• Enrollment data</li> </ul>

**Figure 8.2** Action plans

**8P2** BSC’s long-term strategies are primarily set through the strategic planning process with input from many internal and external stakeholders. The process, described in 8P1, resulted in goals, objectives, and strategies that align with the college mission, vision, and values.

AQIP Action Projects may be short- or long-term strategies. We encourage employees to submit suggestions for AQIP Action Projects via an online suggestion box. We also obtain Action Pproject suggestions from committees and teams. In the past, we have held “conversation days” or “mini-conversation days” to identify campus needs and solicit suggestions for AQIP Action Projects. An upcoming “mini-conversation” is planned for July 2013, as a part of the strategic planning retreat. The AQIP Coordinating Team oversees the work of the Action Projects and other AQIP activities.

Short-term strategies are established at the department or committee level in response to college needs and to support the strategic plan. Such strategies include meeting enrollment management annual objectives, completing cross-functional process mapping activities, and similar projects. The CETI division of the college also sponsors the Wild Endeavors (WE) program through which employees submit strategies for improving the college. The projects selected for financial support are generally of a short-term nature that will make a difference to students or employees.

**8P3** Key action plans are developed through the strategic planning process and a continual scan of the environment by administrators and managers. The strategic planning process identifies needs and drives the development of programs, services, and functions that form the basis of key action plans.

Many action plans are long-term plans that have a foundational role for the College. They support basic functions, such as managing enrollment or information technologies. New directions or goals of the College will dictate the development of new action plans.

Strategic goals and objectives, AQIP Action Projects, and other action plans are championed by an administrator or committee/task force that has responsibility for ensuring the objectives are met. Through the champion, plans and processes will be developed and implemented. Progress related to the plan is monitored by the champion and presented to the Executive Council and Operations Council regularly.

**8P4** BSC coordinates and aligns planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across various levels through input to and dissemination of the strategic plan. Once a draft strategic plan is in a “workable” stage, it is communicated to the planning team, and feedback is requested. When the strategic plan is finalized, it is shared with the campus. In addition, the plan is placed on BSC’s CORE portal and website for employees to reference at any time.

Champions of the various strategies form teams to work on the strategies to successful completion. AQIP Action Projects are aligned to the strategic plan and are led by departments or cross-functional teams. The use of cross-functional teams to develop and implement the action plans assures involvement by various departments on campus and by varying levels within the organizational structure. The activities of the strategic and action plans are aligned and coordinated by regular meetings with the champions, the sponsoring team, department meetings, the AQIP Coordinating Team, and through the Operations Council. Feedback occurs through meetings and reports. The strategic planning retreat plays a major role in updating the campus on progress related to the strategic plan and action plans.

**8P5** We rely on the strategic planning process to define objectives, select measures, and set performance targets for organizational strategies and action plans. As a part of the collaborative planning process, action steps and strategies were identified for each of the objectives that emerged from the process. These strategies and steps provided basic targets for performance.

For all strategic objectives, champions are assigned to lead the efforts for achieving the objectives. The champions develop committees or utilize departmental staff who will more fully flesh out measures and performance targets. The objectives, measures, and targets are entered into TracDat so that progress can be easily tracked and made accessible to the campus community. The use of TracDat allows for a continual update of the activities related to strategic objectives. At the annual strategic planning retreat the progress for each objective is shared with the retreat participants who provide feedback and suggest strategies and activities to ensure that targets will be met.

In his annual State of the College address to the campus, the president updates the college community about the progress being made toward our performance targets.

**8P6 To ensure the appropriate distribution of resources, initiatives that support the goals and objectives of the organization are linked through the resource planning process and given priority for funding from unallocated dollars. All campus departments are required to submit requests for staffing, equipment, and other departmental needs. Those needs are evaluated for priority during the budget planning process. (5A)**

**All requests for new funding are required to be tied to the College mission, the strategic plan goals, objectives, initiatives, or AQIP Action Projects. In an effort to more tightly link planning and budgeting, a strategic initiative form must be completed with a number of key pieces of information (see below). (5A)**

Strategic Planning and Operational Budgeting Process	
Key Information for New Initiatives	Explanatory Comments
Links to NDUS Cornerstones and AQIP Categories	Each new initiative must be linked to a strategic plan goals.
Title and Specific Opportunity/ Problem to be addressed	An opportunity or problem will need to be clearly identified.
Expected Outcomes and Steps to Achieve Them	Outcome targets will need to be clearly identified. Specific steps will need to be included that will logically and realistically lead to the expected outcomes.
Timeline	A general timeline to accomplish the initiative will need to be specified.
Measure(s) of Success	Specific metrics will need to be identified that will later give BSC information on how successful the project has been.
Other Affected Departments	This list will help ensure that affected departments are included in the discussion, planning, implementation, and reporting phases.
Initiative Owner(s)/Champion(s)	Every initiative will require specific administrative owner(s) to ensure that the project is carried out effectively.
Budgetary Implications	A series of responses are required concerning possible new personnel, salaries, benefits, start-up costs (equipment, etc.) and ongoing costs (future budget implications).

**Figure 8.3 Strategic planning and operational budgeting process**

In addition, a cross-functional leadership team makes recommendations to the executive council with regard to new position requests. The following information is used in the evaluation:

- overall responsibilities, staffing levels, and functionality of the entire unit in which the requested position resides
- efficiency and effectiveness of current staff utilization, based on:
  - review of unit organization chart
  - review of job description(s)
  - interviews of department personnel, if needed
  - increase in work load, governmental mandates, or health and safety issues
  - enrollment trends and growth of campus overall
  - other relevant information
- need for new full-time faculty or replacement of retiring faculty, based on:
  - historical enrollment trends in the program/discipline
  - ratio of full-time to adjunct faculty
  - forecasted market demand for the program/discipline
  - other relevant information
- impact of the position on the budget
  - relationship to the strategic plan
  - existing position and salary information within the unit
  - staffing growth in the unit within last 3-5 years
  - grant-funded positions requiring supplemental college funds now and later
  - training and development expenses commensurate with the needs of the position
- benchmarking within the College and other market data when possible
- existing or future functional redundancies in College-wide operations
- alternative solutions

- impact of not filling or upgrading the position
- need to continue the function
- and/or reallocating resources to meet the need.

**A corollary to the process of determining the need for hiring new employees is the importance of ensuring that all employees are appropriately qualified and trained for their positions. Strong hiring guidelines, policies, and processes are in place to assure that employees come to the College well-qualified (Category Four). Faculty and staff members are provided a multitude of training and professional development opportunities to remain current and knowledgeable. (5A)**

**When all budget requests have been submitted, they are discussed jointly by the Operations Council and Executive Council to assure full understanding of the requested resources. The Executive Council is then responsible for the objective and mission-driven resource allocation process. The basic premise of the model is that all decisions can be based on the interdependence of four dimensions:**

- **strategic plan – institution driver**
- **financial performance – measure of affordability**
- **internal competencies – what the college does well**
- **market trends – external view. (5A)**

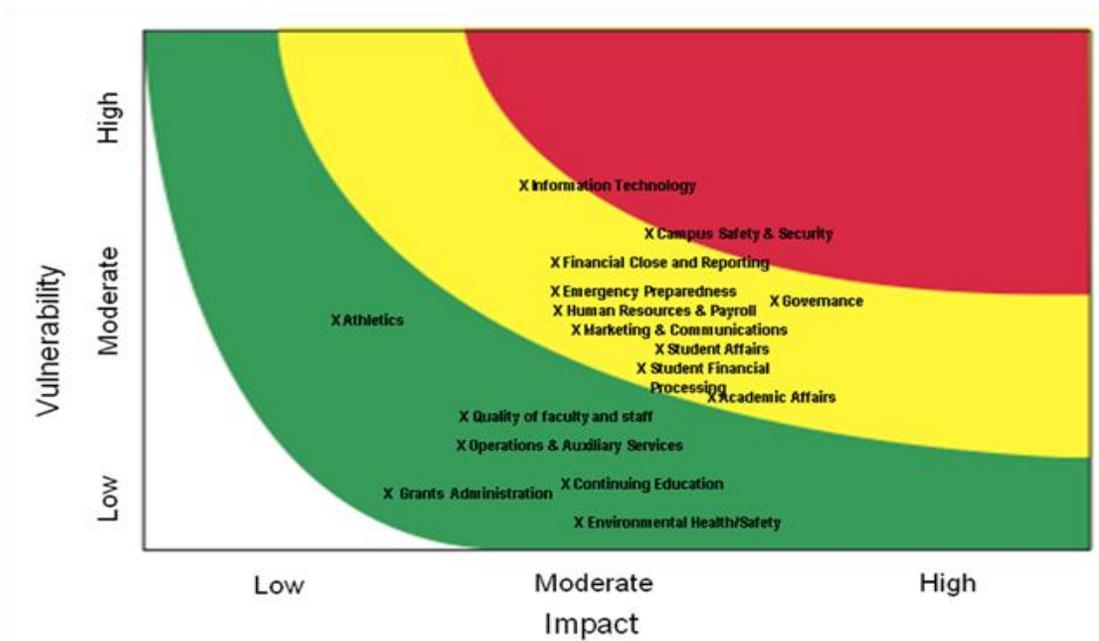
Using these four dimensions, identification of the importance of each dimension to the college is determined based on a matrix approach. Mission as articulated by the strategic plan is the driver of decisions, within funding limitations. Financial performance will not necessarily preclude a project from being funded at the college due to the existence of external state support. However, state funding may need to be reallocated from other programs/services to support new projects that are not independently financially viable.

Once resources have been allocated and budgets approved, departments are notified of the results. In addition to e-mail communication, a link is included in the online budget system that includes the college's final approved priorities. This provides a central location for all decisions and can be accessed by all employees. Additionally, final decisions on new personnel are communicated in a timely manner to the appropriate supervisor/department head.

**The resource allocation process is designed to assure that the highest priorities for the college are given preference and to assure BSC has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations. (5A)**

**The college also has a process to monitor spending compared to budgets throughout the year. While departments have access to their spending and budgets, the reports and online information are not very user friendly. The controller's office reviews budgets at the department level on at least a quarterly basis, the status of spending compared to budgets. If problems of overspending appear imminent, departments are required to provide a plan to curtail spending and/or provide for alternative sources of funding. (5A)**

**SP7** In 2011, BSC participated in a third party risk assessment of the ND University System and its institutions. The review (based on interviews of select employees) was designed to identify potential exposure to risk before problems occur. The risk assessment focused on business strategies, financial operations, use and security of technology, operational processes, legal/regulatory, and human capital. Each area was reviewed for potential impacts such as financial, legal, or reputational damage – should a problem occur, as well as the controls currently in place to mitigate such risks. BSC's risk assessment results are mapped below. The areas identified as most vulnerable to risk and have the highest impact are Information Technology and Campus Safety and Security. Categories Six and Seven include information on improvements underway in these areas to mitigate risk.



Green – Low Risk; Yellow – Moderate Risk; Red – High Risk

**Figure 8.4 Risk assessment results**

The detailed results of the risk assessment have been reviewed by the Executive Council and Operations Council and have been and will continue to be factored into future management decisions, budget requests and campus internal audits. We anticipate updating this risk assessment periodically to stay abreast of changes in the risk climate.

In addition, the annual strategic planning retreat is an opportunity to discuss emerging trends and assess risks. In the July 2012 retreat, a pre-mortem was conducted relative to the new strategic plan strategies. Participants discussed challenges that could arise in the implementation of the new strategic plan and how to address those on the front end to assure a successful implementation.

To assess and address risk on an ongoing basis, management team members monitor and evaluate conditions in their departments and divisions. Areas of concern are brought to the attention of the Operations Council and Executive Council.

**SP8** Addressing development needs for specific new initiatives is accomplished during the planning and implementation phases. As new initiatives are developed, personnel requirements are identified, as are the resources needed to make the project successful.

With the installation of President Skogen in 2007, BSC began a shift to transparency in decisions and operations. As a result, more information is available to all levels of the campus, and effort has been made to involve the entire campus in providing input (through a variety of mediums) into the planning process. Approved strategies and action plans are communicated back through to all levels of the campus in the form of e-mails, blogs, and employee events.

Faculty, staff, and administrators receive a significant amount of training and professional development opportunities (see Category Four) that help keep them abreast of changes in the skills and knowledge required in the rapidly changing world of higher education.

Innovation and continuous quality improvement represent a significant component of campus culture. Training is provided to all new employees upon hire and to existing employees that would like a refresher. Additionally, select campus employees have been trained as CQI facilitators. All departments

and organizations (e.g., Faculty Senate, Staff Senate) of the campus are encouraged to utilize the facilitators to help with a variety of operational planning and implementation of meetings, events, and activities, as well as to assist with moving innovative ideas forward from conception to implementation.

To encourage employee empowerment on campus, all supervisors are required to participate in annual empowerment training, including topics such as coaching for success, developing others, and leadership development. Additionally, employees have the opportunity to participate in BSC's Excellence Through Leadership Program, developed by BSC employees for BSC employees. Goals for the leadership program include providing opportunities for employees to develop, refine, and practice leadership skills and to strengthen leadership performance across BSC.

**8R1** Bismarck State College uses the following measures of effectiveness of our planning processes and systems:

- revalidation of the mission, vision, and values as a part of the strategic planning process
- environmental scanning of the external and internal environment (completed as a part of the strategic planning process)
- annual strategic planning retreat to evaluate the progress of the plans objectives
- use of TracDat to monitor strategic planning objectives and other planning efforts
- evaluation and adjustments of key action plans.

One tool that is used to evaluate the effectiveness of our planning process is the Campus Quality Survey. Four categories in the survey related to planning and quality are focused on evaluating planning and are most useful in measuring how well the institution is doing in this area.

**8R2** Performance results for accomplishing organization strategies are from its 2010-2012 strategic plan and are shown in the table below:

Strategic Plan Performance Results	
Strategic Objective	Performance Results
Fully implement the Enrollment Management Plan to foster future growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment increased from 4-6% over the previous three years</li> <li>• Enrollment management plan updated</li> </ul>
Evaluate operational processes to identify opportunities to increase efficiencies, trust, and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-functional team addressed this objective and reported recommendations to the Operations Council</li> <li>• Process mapping was implemented to help improve efficiencies and to encourage better communication and trust</li> <li>• Identified the need for centralized access to data and information</li> </ul>
Through a public relations strategy, bring the community to the campus to provide life-long learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CETI enrichment enrollments increased by 16.4%</li> <li>• New website developed</li> <li>• Campus events described in Category Two</li> </ul>
Enhance services and quality instruction that ensures students reach their goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidated Veterans Services, Student Accessibility, and Academic Support Services to provide a single location and improved service</li> <li>• Implemented the degree audit program for students and advisors</li> </ul>
Expand student access to BSC's offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented a welding program that uses simulation and other technologies</li> <li>• Increased dual credit from 215 to 368 headcount</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and from 962 credit hours to 1431 credit hours</li> <li>Developed two new academic/technical programs to serve the oil and gas industry</li> </ul>
Ensure quality “learn by doing” experiences for all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-functional team developed a report and recommendations</li> </ul>
Develop, fund, and implement a systematic approach to address issues regarding current, new, and emerging technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology Advisory and Coordinating Team develops and provides monthly reports on technology use</li> <li>Expanded the implementation of Image Now</li> </ul>
Identify, develop and use data and performance indicators to aid decision making, improve effectiveness, and encourage transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title III grant to address data and institutional research capacity was awarded in the amount of \$1.9 million</li> <li>Implemented a mobile iPad lab for student evaluation of faculty using an online survey</li> <li>Developed a department chair website to improve transparency</li> <li>Joined the National Community College Benchmark Project</li> </ul>
Develop criteria in support of a resource priority setting process for the budgeting cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed requirements to provide better linkages of data to the strategic plan</li> <li>Implemented a model for allocating resources in alignment with the strategic plan</li> <li>Integrated planning and budgeting</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan Performance Results</b>	
<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Performance Results</b>
AQIP Action Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six completed Action Projects; four in progress</li> <li>Improvements in advising; CQI training; culture of innovation; use of CampusConnection; service learning</li> </ul>
Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee sign-on bonuses provided in areas in which it is difficult to hire</li> <li>Implemented a tuition assistance policy</li> <li>Implemented the Excellence Through Leadership program</li> </ul>
Enrollment Management and Student Retention Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention plan developed</li> <li>New scholarships created to recruit students</li> <li>Studied the decline in enrollment of local high school students to determine reasons for students enrolling elsewhere</li> </ul>
Information Technology Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintains computer labs</li> <li>Adds and updates software to lab and employee computers</li> <li>Implemented new technologies, such as SharePoint</li> </ul>
Marketing Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing plan for eastern ND developed</li> <li>Implemented modified marketing plan for energy programs</li> </ul>
Master Facilities Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning for the addition of student housing on campus</li> </ul>

*Figure 8.5 Performance results of the 2010-2012 strategic plan and action plans*

**8R3** Priority objectives from the 2013-2018 strategic plan are described in Figure 8.1. Additional objectives are shown in the table below:

Strategic Goal – Enhancing the Student Experience	
Objectives	Performance Targets
Establish a Teaching and Learning Center to promote teaching excellence and provide a better student experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct environmental scanning to identify needed training</li> <li>• Identify measurement criteria for success</li> <li>• Use the CCSSE and SSI as benchmarks for comparison</li> </ul>
Integrate BSC and community activities, facilities, and recreation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas to be developed</li> <li>• Increase the number of students and community members using the facilities</li> <li>• Measure student satisfaction</li> </ul>
Strategic Goal – Strengthening Collaborative Relationships	
Objectives	Performance Targets
Improve collaborations processes to streamline efforts, reduce duplication, and work proactively with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralize collaborative efforts</li> <li>• Increase awareness of existing collaborative agreements</li> </ul>
Identify and promote more opportunities for student internships and apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways to increase opportunities</li> <li>• Connect with businesses, government agencies, and others to ascertain needs and possibilities for internships and apprenticeships</li> </ul>
Strategic Goal – Ensuring High Quality Education	
Objectives	Performance Targets
Integrate soft skills (reading, writing, speaking) across the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a reading and writing center</li> </ul>
Action Plans	
Objectives	Performance Targets
Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure the effectiveness of the plan</li> </ul>
Enrollment Management and Student Retention Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively use the College Student Inventory to improve student success</li> </ul>
Information Technology Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement five-digit dialing communications system</li> <li>• Expand network address range</li> </ul>
Marketing Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement full marketing plan as budget allows</li> </ul>
Master Facilities Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete addition to the mechanical maintenance program building</li> <li>• Construct the Communication and Creative Arts Center</li> <li>• Student Union addition and renovation</li> </ul>

*Figure 8.6 Performance targets of the 2013-2018 strategic plan and action plans*

**8R4** The Campus Quality Survey is an indicator of the development of our processes in planning continuous improvement. This tool queries employees about their perceptions of many areas, including planning and quality improvement, and provides a comparison with other campuses across the nation. The mean scores indicate that BSC employees view campus efforts to conduct quality planning as effective. The scales related to planning continuous improvement compared to two-year colleges that participated in the survey are provided below:

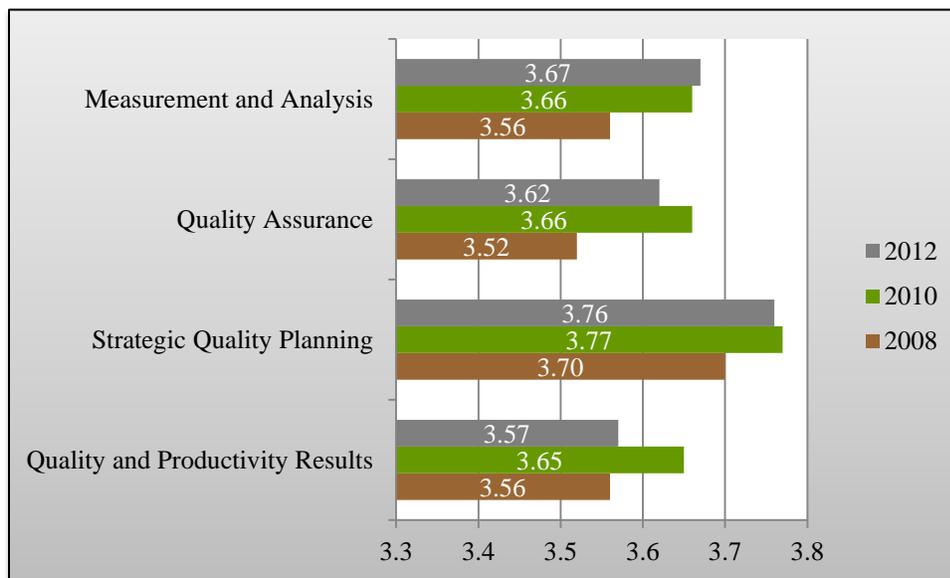
Scales	Two-Year Colleges	Bismarck State College
Quality and Productivity Improvement Results	3.315	3.588
Strategic Quality Planning	3.235	3.761
Quality Assurance	3.313	3.622
Measurement and Analysis	3.375	3.671

**Figure 8.7 Campus Quality Survey scales related to planning continuous improvement**

**8R5** Planning occurs in College departments and units and through the strategic planning process for the institution. There is significant employee participation in planning efforts. In addition, employees are empowered to be innovative in their jobs and continually strive to improve.

Approximately 50 employees who attended the annual strategic planning retreat in July 2012 were asked to complete a survey about the collaborative strategic planning process that took place in 2011-2012. The respondents to the survey indicated that they believed that the most positive aspect of the process was the significant involvement by both college employees and external stakeholders. The input from all stakeholders was invaluable in determining strategic planning goals and objectives.

Below are Campus Quality Survey (2008, 2010, 2012) scales related to quality improvement and planning at Bismarck State College:



**Figure 8.8 Employee perceptions of current status (how it is now)**

**8I1** Since the arrival of our current president in 2007, BSC has used a streamlined approach to strategic planning with annual review. This practice has served us well, but it was felt that it was time to undergo a more comprehensive and broad-ranging strategic planning process in 2011-2012. We hoped through the process to more closely connect the budgeting process with a new five year strategic plan and to involve more people in the process. The Executive Council approved this approach and the use of a planning consultant to help the College through the process.

In keeping with our desire to acquire a significant amount of data and information on which to make planning decisions, the process drew in the knowledge, beliefs, and opinions of a wide variety of people. From the amount of information gathered we were able to identify trends, commonalities, and consensus for objectives and specific strategies to include in the strategic plan.

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One of the most important elements of the collaborative strategic planning process is that it involved a large number of people, both internal and external. All employees and students could participate through an online survey and many students and employees were involved in a variety of data gathering activities. The participation of community members was extraordinary and brought a real-world insight to our deliberations. The comprehensiveness of the process provides assurance that the result is a plan that can lead BSC into the future by focusing on the goals that are of most importance to the College, the community, and the region.

AQIP Action Projects are included in the strategic plan and the strategic plan objectives are prioritized for more immediate attention. The College budgeting processes are now closely aligned with our strategic plan and the plan drives budget decisions. Champions ensure that the plan is being implemented. TracDat, an assessment and tracking software, is used to monitor progress and quarterly reviews are provided to the Executive Council and Operations Council. An annual planning retreat will provide updates and progress to other professional and administrative staff.

**8I2** BSC's continuous quality improvement focus, along with our emphasis on innovation and employee empowerment, has fostered a culture of employee freedom and responsibility for making the College a better place. Structural and organizational changes also assist in allowing improvement and innovation to flourish. One such infrastructure change was the development of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning. This office and the resources provided by the Title III grant are helping BSC to develop benchmarks and target needed improvements that enable the College to meet its mission and goals.

Strategic planning has become a more institutionalized process in recent years and has benefited from the development of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning. Through a strong planning process we have heightened understanding and buy-in of planning that carries through to the department and committee level.

There are several ways in which we select processes to improve and set targets for improved performance results. We regularly use cross-functional teams to develop solutions to problems that we face. Other teams, committees, and senates are empowered to suggest or implement improvements. Through the Operations Council we have developed a more formal process for selecting teams and creating charters that will provide direction and parameters in which the teams will work. The AQIP Coordinating Team works with campus employees to identify possible AQIP Action Projects, and the Office of Innovation encourages new ideas through its Wild Endeavors program and by offering innovation training and employee support.