

February 3, 2015

Steven Rosenstone
Chancellor
Minnesota State Colleges & Universities
30 7th Street East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Chancellor Rosenstone,

On October 14, 2014, the faculty at Inver Hills Community College responded to your request for feedback on the shared services model in place at Inver Hills. We responded within the 1-week deadline you requested. On December 5, 2014, we received your response to our concerns. The tabling of this decision suggests that more information may be required to fully express our concerns. As a faculty, we are not convinced that the shared leadership model in place for the past eighteen months meets the needs of Inver Hills Community College. The faculty at Inver Hills remain committed to provide you with relevant evidence that outlines our concerns with this model and President Wynes' leadership.

Student Success

In your letter of December 5 you state that student success has increased under President Wynes' leadership. To support that claim you provide a table of data on entering full-time students from 2008 to 2012. Those figures reflect completion rates for less than 15% of our students. While we are encouraged by these students' successes, we are also concerned and interested to know what focus is being directed towards the other 85% of our students. It appears that the total success rate from fall 2010 to spring 2013 has declined 2.5%. When looking at the data for the 4-year period selected, it displays student success actually declining by 4.1%.

Student Services

In the past year the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Inver Hills convened student focus groups to provide input into the planning for the master academic plan. The students asked for better access to library services and more intensive counseling and advising help. Under President Wynes' leadership the library materials budget was reduced by 33% and the counseling staff was reduced by 55%. The faculty at Inver Hills believe that our student population deserves the highest quality support services and that budget cuts in these critical areas negatively impact student success and our mission of delivering high quality education.

In your response you wrote that, "As to innovation and advocacy on behalf of IHCC, President Wynes has engaged Dr. John Asmussen to review the college's developmental education programs." In May, 2014, Dr. Asmussen submitted his

report based on recommendations of the IHCC Developmental Education Task Force, and one of the primary recommendations was for the college to implement a non-cognitive assessment tool for incoming students. The college paid Dr. Asmussen \$18,700 for his work. Previously, during the 2011-2012 academic year, a task force, comprised of both faculty and administrators recommended to President Wynes that the college implement an innovative non-cognitive assessment tool for incoming students. As of this date, President Wynes has refused yet to act on Dr. Asmussen's recommendation from last May or the faculty recommendation from 3 ½ years ago.

You stated that President Wynes has "funded a proposed honor's program." This semester the funding for the honor's program was drastically reduced. This was a fraction of the resources necessary to establish a credible honor's program, and in fact, the faculty who wrote the proposal had been encouraged by an administrator to "think big." For context, the amount President Wynes allocated to the honor's program was \$3000. In comparison, the College spent \$3,500 for an oxygen bar, aromatherapy, and foot massages.

Climate and Communication

The faculty at IHCC dispute that the 120-page limit on the AQIP system portfolio should be justification for ignoring faculty input. The faculty at IHCC believe the AQIP system portfolio feedback can also address many of the concerns relating back to the shared leadership model. Below are direct statements from the report created by the Higher Learning Commission reviewers in response to our system portfolio that outlines, in the euphemisms of HLC, many "opportunities" related to communication and application of data. We believe that many of these issues are the result of shared leadership and campus services.

The Portfolio would benefit from the inclusion of direct measures of learning. Satisfaction and course completion data are valuable but they do not directly measure results for program learning objectives. This is an important factor to consider when judging curricular performance.

The portfolio does not provide an indication of how IHCC analyzes the data. IHCC has an opportunity to obtain valuable information from the data by developing statistical procedures for analysis appropriate to each of its data sets, which would enable the College to use data to set targets for improvement.

The College has yet to come up with a comprehensive system that is capable of targeting College-specific improvements for helping students learn.

It is unclear from the portfolio how strong the community orientation and emphasis on collaboration reflects IHCC's culture and infrastructure and in

selecting specific processes to set targets for improvements. Many efforts seem to be driven by the activities of the administration. The College has an opportunity to provide information to clarify the depth to which its culture and infrastructure truly drive Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.

IHCC shared longitudinal results for building relationships with prospective and current students that indicated the number of students in a select group of programs improved, as did attendance. The College, however, provides little context for interpreting this data and many cells in the tables presented are listed as “not applicable.” The College has an opportunity to present data to improve its presentation to indicate properly that it is making progress in its quality journey.

IHCC shared performance results for stakeholder satisfaction related to CBL and partnership maintenance. The College has an opportunity to provide more robust data from multiple sources to provide evidence that it is gathering and analyzing data to inform decision-making efforts in several areas.

IHCC provided performance results with key stakeholders using one chart and describing trends over three years. The results indicate that the gap between importance and satisfaction has widened in the period between 2006 and 2010. The College has an opportunity to study and analyze the reasons this gap has grown and to prove more robust data related to its efforts to build relationships with stakeholders.

IHCC reported comparative satisfaction rates for two years which indicated a general decline in satisfaction and a number of results below the MnSCU and national levels. The College has an opportunity to explore the reasons for these decreases and develop an improvement plan in response. It also has an opportunity to use comparative data that use the MnSCU framework and local surveys.

IHCC shared a number of recent improvements focused in student services, particularly advising and counseling, financial aid, services to underrepresented students, information technology services, and adult and distance learners. Because there does not appear to be systematic and comprehensive processes and performance results for Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ needs, the College has an opportunity to develop and implement formal, centralized processes to plan, budget, track, and assess performance results to assist it in using scarce resources more effectively and allow for strategic, coordinated improvements College-wide.

An Action Project is underway and due diligence to fulfilling it will allow the campus to continue its quality journey in the important task of effective

organizational communication. It is unclear what process is in place for students or alumni to communicate with campus leadership.

It is unclear how campus leadership, in the messages it communicates, deepens and reinforces the traits of high performance organizations, especially by including an intentional focus on learning. IHCC has an opportunity to explore how to incorporate these principles into the cultural fabric of organizational practices as they are basic to decision-making.

The portfolio lists three specific measures of collecting data, but there is no evidence provided and thus no interpretation of the results from the assembled data. The portfolio would be stronger with a more detailed description of how the collected data aligns with IHCC's performance measures.

The data presented only indirectly answers the AQIP stated requirement for this category. IHCC has an opportunity to examine the results and select areas for improvement regarding leading and communicating in the context of longitudinal data.

IHCC uses campus climate data to compare itself a limited number of peer institutions. The mentioned tool (CSSE) allows for a more robust ability for the campus to know about itself and to compare itself to like institutions. An opportunity exists to collect and analyze data from other nationally normed instruments allowing for benchmarking with other peer and aspirant institutions on a regional and national level.

The College can benefit from using the AQIP Action Project in this area to become increasingly systematic, consistent and comprehensive in gathering data, and evaluating its performance and setting targets for improvement.

The targets for continual improvement are set in the large scheme by the MnSCU and carried-out by the IHCC community to fit the specific context. The Systems Portfolio could be stronger with a more detailed description of how the IHCC culture and infrastructure align with and contribute to the performance results of "leading and communicating" on the IHCC campus. The campus community has an opportunity to review the functioning of its committee structure to determine if mechanisms exist to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for meeting the requirements of this category.

There is little documentation provided for how IHCC encourages knowledge sharing, innovation and empowerment. A few examples are provided, but the intent of the category item is not demonstrated. The campus has an opportunity to examine its processes in this area of organizational need and to implement relevant best practices.

A couple of specific, isolated examples are provided, but the performance results are very limited and lacks context for an adequate interpretation. IHCC has an opportunity to effectively analyze existing data to determine if the resources used have been properly allocated to care for the concerns of this portfolio category.

Limited examples are provided to suggest the type of data collected for certain campus functions, but there is little reflective analysis given to validate how the campus community is able to use data to guide its decision-making. Also, IHCC has an opportunity to compare its performance with other institutions in positioning targets for improvement in meeting the needs of its stakeholders and to increase its financial efficiency.

It is unclear whether the improvements in this category are systematic or comprehensive. IHCC has an opportunity to systemize and formalize processes and procedures to assist overall College operations as it begins to routinely take proactive steps in making improvements in this area.

It is unclear how the campus culture and infrastructure help the leaders select specific processes to set targets for improvement. The College has an opportunity to use multiple methods and measures to gather comprehensive and consistent data to facilitate continuous quality improvements that support its organizational operations and overall effectiveness.

It is unclear from the portfolio if IHCC has established processes for the analysis of all its data sets. No information is included concerning how the institution determines its own needs and priorities for comparative data and information and what criteria and methods are utilized for selecting comparative data and information within and outside of the higher education community. The College has the opportunity to extract and use College specific information to enable data-based decision-making.

The institution's response does not provide evidence of regular measurement of the effectiveness of IHCC's planning processes and systems for Planning Continuous Improvement. The College may benefit by using multiple methods, such as all-College events or email feedback, to collect and regularly analyze the effectiveness measures of its planning processes and systems.

Based on the limited evidence provided, it appears that IHCC lacks a systematic method of measuring and evaluating planning processes and activities. Additionally, the evidence provided did not demonstrate that the College had made improvements compared to its peer institutions. Lastly, the data does not establish that the College is meeting its own goals and targets. The College acknowledges that such processes are being developed. IHCC has

an opportunity to explain how the measures related to an AQIP Action Project for its orientation processes constitute success when several efforts developed from the process have been discontinued.

Our faculty are deeply concerned with the systemic flaws evident in the shared services model as it has been implemented at Inver Hills. It is clear to us that the co-presidency model is not working and on January 20, 2015, the faculty voted unanimously to share these concerns with you.

We remain committed to the complex and difficult job of educating students for a rapidly changing world and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

David Riggs
MSCF Chapter President on behalf of the faculty at IHCC.