

Systems Appraisal Feedback Report

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

Kent State University

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for

The Higher Learning Commission

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Elements Of Kent State University's Feedback Report

Welcome to the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. This report provides AQIP's official response to an institution's *Systems Portfolio* by a team of peer reviewers (the Systems Appraisal Team). After the team independently reviews the institution's portfolio, it reaches consensus on essential elements of the institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by AQIP Category, and any significant issues related to accreditation. These are then presented in three sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*: "Strategic Challenges Analysis," "AQIP Category Feedback," and "Accreditation Issues Analysis." These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating institutional performance, surfacing critical issues or accreditation concerns, and assessing institutional performance. Ahead of these three areas, the team provides a "Reflective Introduction" followed closely by an "Executive Summary." The appraisal concludes with commentary on the overall quality of the report and advice on using the report. Each of these areas is overviewed below.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team has only the institution's *Systems Portfolio* to guide its analysis of the institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, the team's report may omit important strengths, particularly if discussion or documentation of these areas in the *Systems Portfolio* were presented minimally. Similarly, the team may point out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving widespread institutional attention. Indeed, it is possible that some areas recommended for potential improvement have since become strengths rather than opportunities through the institution's ongoing efforts. Recall that the overarching goal of the Systems Appraisal Team is to provide an institution with the best possible advice for ongoing improvement.

The various sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* can be described as follows:

Reflective Introduction & Executive Summary: In this first section of the *System's Appraisal Feedback Report*, the team provides a summative statement that reflects its broad understanding of the institution and the constituents served (Reflective Introduction), and also the team's overall judgment regarding the institution's current performance in relation to the nine AQIP Categories (Executive Summary). In the Executive Summary, the team considers such factors as: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback; and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that each AQIP

Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic Challenges Analysis: Strategic challenges are those most closely related to an institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Teams formulate judgments related to strategic challenges and accreditation issues (discussed below) through careful analysis of the Organizational Overview included in the institution's Systems Portfolio and through the team's own feedback provided for each AQIP Category. These collected findings offer a framework for future improvement of processes and systems.

AQIP Category Feedback: The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* addresses each AQIP Category by identifying and coding strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Through comments, which are keyed to the institution's Systems Portfolio, the team offers brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by AQIP Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is often considered the heart of the *Feedback Report*.

Accreditation Issues Analysis: Accreditation issues are areas where an institution may have not yet provided sufficient evidence that it meets the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. It is also possible that the evidence provided suggests to the team that the institution may have difficulties, whether at present or in the future, in satisfying the *Criteria*. As with strategic challenges, teams formulate judgments related to accreditation issues through close analysis of the entire Systems Portfolio, with particular attention given to the evidence that the institution provides for satisfying the various core components of the *Criteria*. For purposes of consistency, AQIP instructs appraisal teams to identify any accreditation issue as a strategic challenge as well.

Quality of Report & Its Use: As with any institutional report, the *Systems Portfolio* should work to enhance the integrity and credibility of the institution by celebrating successes while also stating honestly those opportunities for improvement. The *Systems Portfolio* should therefore be transformational, and it should provide external peer reviewers insight as to how such transformation may occur through processes of continuous improvement. The AQIP Categories and the Criteria for Accreditation serve as the overarching measures for the institution's current state, as well as its proposed future state. As such, it is imperative

that the *Portfolio* be fully developed, that it adhere to the prescribed format, and that it be thoroughly vetted for clarity and correctness. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution following this review, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Reflective Introduction and Executive Summary For Kent State University

The following consensus statement is from the System Appraisal Team's review of the institution's *Systems Portfolio Overview* and its introductions to the nine AQIP Categories. The purpose of this reflective introduction is to highlight the team's broad understanding of the institution, its mission, and the constituents that it serves.

Kent State University (KSU) offers associate through doctoral degrees.

KSU presented a comprehensive AQIP Systems Portfolio. The mission, values, and Kent core drive the strategic plan of the University. All divisions work to align their action plans with the University Strategic Plan. Results of the action plans are recorded annually in the WEAVEonline system but all university results are not recorded in the same manner which can lead to targets being missed or outcomes not achieved.

KSU works to provide an environment in which all key stakeholders have multiple opportunities to be informed and involved in processes and systems that govern, guide and direct the inputs and outputs of the University.

KSU utilizes a Strategy Map (strategic plan) to guide its decision making processes with divisional leaders aligning action plans to the University Strategic Plan. Retention and time-to-degree are of particular concern for KSU and a university-wide committee is committed to identifying and providing recommendations to address roadblocks to student success.

The complexities of the university system (operating semi-autonomous divisions from 8 campuses and multiple course sites) make it difficult to fully integrate all of the operational systems and processes. KSU acknowledges that many of its systems remain at the systematic level of maturity because of their current operating structure.

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight Kent State University's achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

- Category 1: KSU has some processes and services in the category of *Helping Students Learn*, including admission, advising, orientation, advisory boards, outside accreditation

or programs, student support services, curriculum development and review, and others. Also, KSU launched several new initiatives (Experiential Learning Requirement, online degree tracking, and mandatory advising).

Efforts related to assessment seem to be dependent on WEAVEonline, which is reportedly being used at the discretion of the various operating units. The portfolio does not include descriptions of specific goals, outcomes, and levels of desired achievement for student learning and development at the curriculum and program level and no results directly tied to the assessment of student learning were provided. It is vitally important for KSU to be able to demonstrate an integrated system of planning and assessment that ensures alignment of activities and efforts across disciplines and programs, curricular and co-curricular opportunities and non-credit offerings and demonstrates the cycles of continuous improvement.

- Category 2: KSU has made some admirable improvements and taken on a number of initiatives in recent years. The portfolio contains descriptions of activities undertaken, but does not describe the process(es) through which the projects/initiatives are designed and later assessed. Defining the processes utilized by the University could prove helpful in ensuring that the needs of stakeholders are considered and that the input/feedback solicited from affected stakeholders are utilized effectively. Further, the institution has an opportunity to identify measures and report results that go beyond listing accomplishments. Defining measures (direct and indirect) that can be utilized longitudinally and for comparative purposes may help the University in its planning efforts relative to *Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives*.
- Category 3: KSU has in place and created some new processes and built in technologies for understanding students and stakeholder needs. An opportunity now exists for determining specific metrics to obtain results that allow the institution to more clearly understand the nature of their relationship with key stakeholders and if the needs of these groups are truly understood. The University utilizes a limited number of methods and sources to gather information from its students, creating an opportunity for KSU to expand their data collection and demonstrate how it analyzes those results and who/how decisions are made as to what improvements are needed. Little or no information is gathered from its other stakeholders. KSU needs to take steps in establishing a systematic approach to comprehensive data gathering, analysis and utilization regarding its stakeholders.

- Category 4: KSU's efforts regarding *Valuing People* are evident from the improvements reported in this portfolio. Among these improvements are a Diversity Scorecard and creation of an Enterprise Data Warehouse that allows the University to track and compare demographics on faculty and staff recruitment and retention. KSU acknowledges the warehouse as new and trends not being available. The University also recognizes the challenges it faces standardizing processes across the various campuses while recognizing the unique qualities of each. It remains unclear the extent to which KSU has embraced the continuous improvement cycle for organizing change. Content provided here is primarily a laundry list of efforts with no connection to systemic process or ongoing measurement of effectiveness or success. In future portfolios, KSU should consider reporting on the measures it has identified and the improvements made having analyzed performance of those measures.
- Category 5: KSU has clear leadership structures, and multiple communication systems and strategies; however, there are limited measures of leading and communicating. Processes seem to rely on formal hierarchical pathways for communicating decisions and discussion with little direct evidence, beyond anecdotal notes, to show what processes prove effective. KSU could benefit from more formally developing/describing its decision making processes and consistent implementation of WEAVEonline. Once it identifies measures appropriate to leading and communicating, it will be able to assess the effectiveness of its planning efforts. KSU acknowledges that consistently sharing results and other significant data across divisions, academic units, campuses, and departments creates an opportunity for improvement.
- Category 6: Many of KSU's strategies in this area could serve as a model for other categories. The University Strategic Plan identifies goals to achieve. Each division at KSU is required to develop a strategy map that identifies specific improvements they are responsible for. An opportunity exists for the institution to document data arising from those maps and how it enables the institution to continuously improve.

Kent State University provides a variety of metrics and data related to supporting institutional operations, but KSU could better describe its processes and how it uses data in its decision-making relative to identifying and meeting the administrative support needs of employees. If the University creates systematic and comprehensive processes for prioritizing, planning and implementing improvements relative to *Supporting Institutional Operations* overall, it will be able to identify opportunities for improvement.

- Category 7: KSU clearly demonstrates that processes are in place for the collecting, managing and analyzing data to create a culture of continuous improvement. The University is building a strong foundation for measuring institutional effectiveness and, in particular, is working on its data warehouse through efforts such as IS and RPIE. While such initiatives illustrate the potential of providing data to drive the decision-making process, little evidence in the portfolio is provided as to how data are analyzed and utilized by the various units and departments to measure overall effectiveness. The University needs to define and systematize their processes for data collection, analysis, and dissemination to specific units for measuring effectiveness.
- Category 8: While KSU has made strides to enhance its efforts for continuous improvement through the implementation of processes and tools such as RCM, strategic planning, RPIE, the Provost Dashboard and Diversity Score Card, the University would benefit from a comprehensive evaluation process through which it assesses its planning processes, gathers relevant data, and identifies trends and other opportunities for improvement, particularly across campuses. The University acknowledges the need to strengthen their planning processes by placing more emphasis on its infrastructure and how it relates to continuous improvements.
- Category 9: KSU reports significant activity regarding its collaborative relationships and collects much information on its relationships with other organizations, however it is unclear how this information is collected systematically or how it reflects on building and maintaining collaborative relationships (see 9R1). The institution keeps up-to-date and informed about market trends as data is collected and stored in repositories that can record as well as aggregate data. As KSU moves into the future, it would benefit from a comprehensive evaluation process through which it assesses its planning processes, gathers relevant data, and identifies comparison institutions, measures, and other opportunities for improvement.

Note: Strategic challenges and accreditation issues are discussed in detail in subsequent sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.

Strategic Challenges For Kent State University

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the Systems Appraisal Team attempted to identify the broader issues that would seem to present the greatest challenges and opportunities for the institution in the coming years. These areas are ones that the institution should address as it seeks to become the institution it wants to be. From these the institution may discover its immediate priorities, as well as strategies for long-term performance improvement. These items may also serve as the basis for future activities and projects that satisfy other AQIP requirements. The team also considered whether any of these challenges put the institution at risk of not meeting the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. That portion of the team's work is presented later in this report.

Knowing that **Kent State University** will discuss these strategic challenges, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified the following:

- KSU showed a consistent pattern of reporting activities rather than quantitative or qualitative measures – activities that do not lend themselves to longitudinal or comparative analysis. There exists a need for greater distinction between processes and results. Often the same activities are referenced in multiple categories, but the institution does not report results in the context of each category topic or system.
- While the portfolio demonstrates that KSU undertakes significant data collection activities, quantitative results from the instruments mentioned, targets, and analysis of data evaluating the effectiveness of processes are often missing. While KSU has identified its priorities as an institution, they need to be able to define and systematize their processes for data gathering, analysis, and data-driven collaborative decision-making, consistent across campuses. The decentralized versus strong central administration descriptions might relate to differences in groups producing the portfolio, but still point to potential leadership issues. Data and analyses should be reported in the context of each of the AQIP categories.
- KSU should repeat their surveys and expand their use to demonstrate improvement. Surveys and other measures evaluating satisfaction as well as engagement should include external and internal stakeholders in the survey process. Results should be communicated to all stakeholders. Aligning activities and processes with comparative and longitudinal data,

specific measures, and clearly stated analysis of assessments of results would provide more insight for effectively guiding KSU in accomplishing continuous improvement.

- The appraisal team rarely commented on the institution's responses to the improvement questions in each category, because it was not clear from the portfolio how the institution (through its culture and infrastructure) selected processes to improve and or to set targets for improvement. In short, it remains unclear how the University implements its continuous improvement processes and how data are used to prioritize their improvement efforts. As mentioned above, the institution tended to report numerous examples of their improvement efforts without explaining how those efforts were intended to improve their processes/results. KSU would benefit from formally defining the processes by which it determines its systematic priorities for improvement and sets targets against which their efforts will be assessed.

AQIP Category Feedback

In the following section, the Systems Appraisal Team delineates institutional strengths along with opportunities for improvement within the nine AQIP Categories. As explained above, the symbols used in this section are **SS** for outstanding strength, **S** for strength, **O** for opportunity for improvement, and **OO** for outstanding opportunity for improvement. The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the team members and deserves the institution's thoughtful consideration. Comments marked **SS** or **OO** may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn. This category identifies the shared purpose of all higher education institutions and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. It focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet it also addresses how the entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and

efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 1.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

KSU has prioritized improvements in the processes and systems that lead to student success as measured by stakeholders' satisfaction, retention and graduation. Some of these process and systems include a three-year review process of the Kent Core to maintain a general studies curriculum that has relevance and worth and Graduation Planning Systems (GPS) - a road map for academic degree programs that allows for students to stay focused and informed of all degree requirement as well as monitors student progress. KSU has incorporated continuous improvement processes regarding student learning. New initiatives include a requirement for experiential learning for undergraduate students, an increased online presence, mandatory advising, and an employer survey. In a commitment to continuous improvement, KSU has most recently conducted curriculum and assessment reviews for alignment to goals, revised review processes to focus on continuous improvement, responded to stakeholder requests for new programs and online offerings, revised policies to increase retention (students must declare a major after 45 hours and advising is mandatory for freshmen and sophomores), and survey employers regarding graduate preparedness. KSU launched several new initiatives, including the Experiential Learning Requirement, online degree tracking, and mandatory advising and it is unclear what measures will be used to assess their effectiveness. Other more established practices still appear to be systematic in maturity. Measures are frequently mentioned but only limited results were included in the portfolio.

1P1, S. Kent State University (KSU) involves multiple stakeholders, including students, faculty, administration, and community members in determining common learning objectives. A recent addition is the establishment of an experiential learning requirement for all students as well as a diversity requirement.

1P2, S. Program level learning objectives are determined by the faculty and administrators from the unit sponsoring the program with further input from the faculty advisory council, curriculum committee and other external stakeholders.

1P3, O. Although new programs are developed based on market analysis, needs assessment, and faculty and facility resource availability, there is an opportunity to assess the local competitor's offerings as well in order to determine best use of resources.

1P4, S. To respond to the needs of perspective and current students, KSU has implemented a Graduation Planning System. This system serves as a roadmap for all academic programs.

1P5, S. Multiple assessment instruments and processes are utilized to determine student readiness, some of which are pre-college initiatives. Programming and support are provided to students as needed or as identified by the early alert system and Course Signals, launched in 2013.

1P6, S. KSU provides students virtual and in-person opportunities to learn program requirements. The University also provides programming and advising through its Student Success Programs and College Advising Offices.

1P9, O. There does not appear to be a formal process for determining students' learning styles and faculty training relative to learning styles is described as being FPDC led workshops. The University has an opportunity to develop formal and systematic processes for identifying and addressing differences in students' learning and supporting faculty development to incorporate strategies designed to improve teaching and learning based on those differing styles.

1P12, O. KSU utilizes a timetabling process and its Online Learning Team to ensure efficient scheduling and faculty support, but the portfolio does not describe how the University determines student need relative to course delivery. Developing a process to determine student need and align them with institutional requirements might aid the University in its efforts to systematically evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of course delivery.

1P14, S. Programs are evaluated via feedback from key stakeholders. Changes/discontinuation recommendations are reviewed by administrators, faculty, and curriculum committees. All programs are reviewed on a 7-year cycle with external evaluators.

1P18, S. Each academic program has an assessment plan that includes the goals, student learning outcomes, objectives, measures and results. The data from the assessment plans are posted on WEAVEonline and shared with key stakeholders to make necessary adjustments to instruction in the courses.

1R1–1R3, OO. The portfolio describes a program level assessment process in its response to question 1P18, but none of the results related to purported activities are

reported in questions 1R1, 1R2, and/or 1R3. Further, few of the measures mentioned in 1R1 are actually reported in 1R2 or 1R3. KSU does not provide direct learning results for common, development, and specific program learning outcomes other than exam pass rates for the limited number of programs that have nationalized exams. KSU has an outstanding opportunity to quantify and report data on student learning both at the course and program levels.

1R4, O. While alumni and graduate satisfaction surveys are one indication that students have acquired skills and knowledge required by stakeholders, survey results of those stakeholders, post-graduate activities, and program offering analyses will contribute to documented performance measures.

1R6, O. Only limited comparative results were provided. KSU offers no comparative data results relative to outside organizations. The institution might benefit from the development, analysis and use of additional timely and relevant, external comparative data sets.

AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. This category addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of its mission. Depending on the institution's character, it examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 2.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

KSU has worked to improve town-gown relationships by working with the City of Kent to reconstruct downtown so that it is reflective and attractive like other college towns. The revitalization of downtown represents collaboration between public and private key stakeholders that include KSU, KSU students, Ohio developers, the City of Kent, private investors, and the Kent Foundation. Strategic planning and key processes for external stakeholders guide the development, communication, and improvement of non-instructional objectives. The institution's strategic plan outlines three goals related to accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. KSU recognizes a need to coordinate the assessment processes to measure the recent

improvements. KSU describes its efforts related to accomplishing other objectives as “aligned and coordinated” and not “integrated and strategically assessed”. It recognizes the need to manage their processes in a more consistent fashion and develop ways to measure and assess their recent accomplishments other than through discussions with faculty, staff and external partners.

2P1, S. KSU places a priority on its relationship with key external stakeholders as evidenced in the strategic plan (three out of six goals focus on this area) and institutional offices and programs including University Communications and Marketing, Institutional Advancement, EMSA, and Intercollegiate Athletics.

2P2, S. Within each unit, implementation plans for non-instructional objectives are reviewed and revised annually to remain in line with strategic goals established by the president and executive officers. KSU partners with the local community and links the strategic plan with external stakeholders’ interests and needs.

2P3, O. Although multiple methods of communication of the non-instructional objectives are utilized within the campus, there is an opportunity to share the progress on these objectives with the broader community stakeholders to encourage continued participation and further demonstrate the value of the University to the community.

2P4, O. KSU appears to rely primarily on internal staff and administration for review and assessment of non-instructional objectives. Further, it is unclear how WEAVE and RCM are utilized with regards to improving external relations. KSU’s strategy for soliciting input for Kent’s Airport can serve as a model for seeking input from stakeholders and other partners regarding the review of its non-instructional objectives.

2P5, O. Processes for determining faculty and staff needs regarding non-instructional objectives are unclear, although multiple opportunities exist for providing input. Integrating a requisite step in planning processes for input from all impacted stakeholders relative to KSU’s non-instructional objectives might be effective in engaging people in the process and reducing barriers during implementation.

2P6, O. Although the University indicates that it evaluates staff and faculty needs, KSU has an opportunity to develop more proactive planning and needs assessment processes to better anticipate the changes needed to meet the needs of faculty and staff relative to its non-instructional programs and services.

2R1, S. KSU gathers information regarding its non-instructive objectives that include a

2011 employer survey, student center assessment of facilities, program and operations for University and local communities, Economic Impact Report, and Intercollegiate Athletics reporting a fundraising total of more than \$9 million, that led the Mid-American Conference.

2R2, O. KSU lists a variety of activities demonstrating the impact of some of its non-instructional initiatives, but it does not describe the measures by which it evaluates the effectiveness of those programs over time and it does not describe how those results are analyzed to guide and inform improvements. It could benefit the University to develop measures through which it can continuously assess its non-instructional programs and goals.

2R3, O. The institution provides a list of accomplishments, but there are no comparative data provided and no analysis or evaluation in relationship to other institutions is reported. Comparing performance to that of other institutions may provide a basis for determining goals and areas in need of improvement.

2R4, O. KSU has an opportunity to establish benchmarks and to provide specific data regarding the non-instructional activities and their relationship to KSU and the community. An opportunity exists for the University to become strategic in its non-instructional activities, analyzing data as it applies to *Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives*. The institution can examine how the non-instructional objectives enhance the institution in other ways.

2I1, O. Due to efforts for continuous improvements and responding to stakeholder needs, KSU has engaged in multiple initiatives to serve external stakeholders. Many of these initiatives are quite recent and therefore no data is available to illustrate the impact such initiatives have had on responding to external stakeholder needs.

2I2, O. While there have been successes in what KSU has improved with regards to its external relations, its efforts appear piece-meal and ad hoc. Efforts to improve and assess are neither systematic nor systemic.

AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs. This category examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification; student and stakeholder requirements; analysis of student and stakeholder needs;

relationship building with students and stakeholders; complaint collection, analysis, and resolution; determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 3.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

KSU strives to identify ways data from various assessments can be communicated and accessible to all University stakeholders so that the needs of the students and other key stakeholders can be better understood. For instance, understanding the needs of students and key stakeholders and identifying that as a priority is what led to successes such as the renovations of the New Downtown and increase in student enrollment over the last few years. A broad array of survey instruments and processes are used to measure student satisfaction. The institution is preparing an Academic Affairs Strategic Plan that will include the outcomes of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) as a measure of the meeting student learning goals. KSU integrates its institutional strategic plan with those of college, campus, and division plans. Plans are underway to analyze stakeholder assessment strategies and then base decision-making on findings from the improved assessments.

3P1, O. While numerous methods are utilized to assess student needs, KSU has identified the opportunity to tie assessment to strategic goals through setting targets and benchmarks. Narrowing the methods and tools used can help focus the actions taken related to meeting student group needs.

3P2, S. The University builds and maintains relationships with students through various direct interpersonal interactions and technology-based strategies that afford extensive communication channels through which KSU builds relationships.

3P3, O. A variety of data is collected regarding stakeholder needs yet no definitive process of analyzing the changing needs of stakeholders is articulated. Utilizing a formal evaluation process with set targets and benchmarks based on historical data can identify areas of needs and provide a basis for recognizing accomplishments.

3P4, O. KSU lists of tools, use of information, and general tactics to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders. Explaining how the listed activities operate within an organized process can insure that the stakeholders are engaged and contributing to institutional planning.

3P5, O. KSU uses multiple methods to gather data about potential groups of new students and new stakeholders, the portfolio does not include a description of how the data are used to determine whether the changes are necessary. The institution could benefit by using a more comprehensive and systematic process to analyze and to make decisions about whether to offer educational services to new students and stakeholder groups to ensure that it responds effectively to these opportunities.

3P6, S. KSU's complaint procedures are extensive and systematic, accessible to all stakeholders, and can identify patterns which in turn inform action plans.

3R1, S. The University has developed a set of key performance indicators to determine the satisfaction of students and other stakeholders. These indicators include direct and indirect measures, such as course evaluations, housing, and support service surveys, as well as nationally normed data for comparative purposes and setting goals.)

3R2, OO. KSU reports post-graduation employment status, and enrollment and retention figures. It is not clear how these results relate to student satisfaction with their experiences at the University. Additionally there is an opportunity to analyze measures reported in 3R1 for areas that can be improved.

3R3, OO. KSU reports some new initiatives that support building relationships yet does not report levels of participation or indicators of successful relationships with students. Such data can assist in allocating resources and indicate areas in need of improvement.

3R6, O. The University has received recognition in its efforts from the state and uses nationally normed surveys to compare performance to other institutions. Comparison data on specific performance measures achieved by peer institutions will support setting targets and improving performance.

3I1, O. Although many accomplishments are reported it is unclear how systematic and comprehensive these improvements are and how they relate to institutional goals for building and maintaining key stakeholder needs.

AQIP Category 4: Valuing People. This category explores the institution's commitment to the development of its employees since the efforts of all faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and

characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 4.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

KSU continues to recognize the importance of valuing people by having it part of the University's strategic goal. Many of its practices in valuing people from 2009 still continue. KSU is working to improve hiring and retention of minority faculty. Efforts include restructuring of the HR training programs, implementation of an Enterprise Data Warehouse, the President's Excellence Award, and Faculty Appreciation Week. Since the 2009 portfolio, KSU has initiated a number of new initiatives with positive results. The new DDEI offers the potential to become more aligned and eventually integrated in its processes relative to minority recruitment, hiring and retention. But as to all employees in general, little is mentioned about efforts to use the other data gathered on a regular basis, such as the employee exit interview process, to inform and assess their practices.

4P1, S. KSU's goal of "Developing and Recognizing Our People," hiring processes, stakeholder input, and recruitment practices indicate a commitment to diversity, foresight, and long term planning.

4P2, S. KSU utilizes online tracking and talent acquisition software to coordinate new hiring as well as to ensure candidates for consideration meet minimum desired and legal requirements.

4P3, S. The institution presents a plan for recruiting a diverse faculty and staff and has increased applications of diverse applicants. Kent State demonstrates its commitment to faculty and staff through its benefits programs, which have been recognized by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* four times.

4P4, O. While KSU offers training and electronic resources that orient new employees to the institution, it appears that participating or using these services and resources is optional. Systematically following a process to orient new employees can contribute to participation by all employees and make orientation more reliable.

4P5, S. HR provides data to help analyze and determine who is eligible and fit for advancement. Furthermore, HR provides studies on employees who are eligible for

retirement. Such data provides information to departments so that proper assessment of staff needs can occur. HR encourages “365” recruitment in an effort to assist departments to constantly recruit talent in an effort to prepare for the exit of staff members.

4P6, S. KSU is actively seeking to improve its HR operations – this includes implementing new efficient online processes for previously paper-intensive processes. HR is also seeking feedback regarding its own strengths and opportunities for improvement to help prioritize its own process improvements. KSU has converted many of its processes from paper processes to electronic format in an effort to increase efficiency. These processes include change of program, change of grade, and mobile applications and annual performance evaluations

4P9, S. The majority of Kent State University’s faculty and staff participate in one of several opportunities provided by the institution, including a Provost’s fellows program, that allow for clear career progression and development.

4P10, S. KSU’s annual performance evaluation process is undertaken in an electronic form and includes assessment relative to the University’s core competencies, position specific requirements and professional development.

4R1, O. Measures that are collected and analyzed include a scorecard for recruiting and training AALANA faculty and staff. Indicators regarding faculty tenure and promotion were added and tracked by the scorecard beginning in the 2012-13 academic year. KSU notes the employee exit interview process has become more structured and consistent since 2009. Additional contextual information regarding the analysis of the measures and results would provide a broader view of institutional decision-making processes.

4R2, O. While satisfaction with benefits and longevity do reflect on KSU’s valuing of its people, these measures are indirect measures of employee satisfaction. There are few direct results demonstrating that KSU employees feel valued, satisfied, and motivated.

4R3, O. The institution provides a long list of data related to targets from the strategic plan but does not directly address the productivity and effectiveness of its faculty and staff.

4R4, O. KSU recognizes that it has opportunities to further identify and gather data for benchmarking purposes. Few comparative measures are provided for results in valuing people. Basic counts and proportions are provided with regards to AALANA faculty, but

no indication of comparison with true peer organizations is provided. Comparisons appear to be relative to whomever is available rather than being in a strategic (peer/aspirational) context.

AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating. This category addresses how the institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide planning, decision-making, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction-setting, use of data, analysis of results, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 5.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

Multiple methods of communication are utilized for the dissemination of information to the University community to ensure that all key stakeholders are kept abreast for their "general knowledge." Examples of these multiple methods of communication include the website, the University catalogue, Our Voices Our Vision-Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, and WEAVEonline, which was only recently implemented with data reporting from the various divisions not standardized. KSU utilizes a shared governance model overseen by the Board of Trustees with direct links to organizational units through vice presidents who then report directly to the President. Leadership and communication are hierarchical, relying on established pathways rather than informal or organic communication networks.

5P1, S. KSU mission is aligned with the University Strategic Plan and was approved by faculty senate, president, and board of trustees who regularly review and monitor its relevance. Strategic maps that support or align with the strategic plan are updated annually.

5P2, O. KSU reports its leadership identifies projects and initiatives that support the University's mission, vision and values; however it is unclear how this is accomplished, particularly in light of the varying needs and demands of its multiple campuses. Adopting a formal, well understood process for aligning planning efforts could ensure broadly representative participation in setting priorities.

5P3, O. While there are multiple informal and ad-hoc means for KSU to listen to stakeholder needs and expectations, these appear to be mostly non-systematic. Anecdotal evidence related to meeting student needs is presented, but it is not evident that this represents a consistent process. Having a clear process could help KSU respond to emerging opportunities and the changing needs of its current and potential students and other stakeholder groups.

5P4, O. While several examples of successful planning for the future are provided, it is not clear how seeking future opportunities is systematic.

5P5, S. The institution relies upon broadly representative committees and its administrative structure to arrive at decisions through shared governance. Most issues are addressed through standing committees, associations, or ad-hoc committees as needed. Dissemination of results and decisions are facilitated by having broad representations from multiple constituencies on the committees and councils.

5P6, S. KSU utilizes data, information, and performance results to make decisions as illustrated through its strategic planning process and annual strategy maps. The implementation of Banner provided an opportunity to explore processes and create efficiencies through ERP workflows and common data sets.

5P7, S. KSU has various communication vehicles for the sharing of information among the various units and divisions of the University. These various forms include electronic, face-to-face and print.

5P10, O. While KSU has processes in place to develop and cultivate leadership within the various units of the University for succession, all succession plans do not appear to be comprehensive and consistent across the University.

5R1, O. Measures collected pertaining directly to leading and communicating appears to be focused mostly on annual reviews and basic measures of institutional success.

5R2, OO. The institution does not provide results directly tied to leading and communicating and it is unclear how enrollment trends are performance results for this category.

5R3, O. KSU participates in several surveys that provide comparative data. The institution could benefit from a careful analysis of the data presented in its surveys and rankings.

AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations. This category addresses the variety of institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 6.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

KSU links strategic goals to its strategic plan with related metrics. There are plans to continue refining existing metrics. New means for determining student needs include a new student survey, focus groups, and a new student portal. KSU utilizes a measurement driven approach to planning and determining success of operations initiatives. KSU has added several tools and resources to offer more effective and productive operations including student retention GPS and the new LGBTQ Center. KSU gathers data from a number of sources and administers nationally normed surveys to provide results upon which to benchmark its progress. The university acknowledges that each division/department uses the information and deploys improvements in varying manners.

6P1, S. A variety of processes are used to identify student support needs including the admissions intake process, academic advising, and initiatives that help identify student support needs. These have accompanying tools and procedures that support processes in place.

6P2, S. KSU uses a variety of tools, processes and groups to identify the support service needs of employees. These tools, processes and groups include: performance evaluations, the collective bargaining process, the shared governance process, faculty senate, surveys, and town hall meetings.

6P3, S. KSU has in place systematic processes utilized on varied schedules to monitor student, administrative and organizational support service needs.

6P4, S. KSU's infrastructure manages organizational support services through regular meetings, obtaining input from stakeholders, and a systematic collection and analysis of data related to support services.

6P5, O. KSU's documentation of support processes appears to be filtered through administrative oversight based on a need-to-know strategy. Sharing documentation to

multiple stakeholders provides an opportunity to possibly streamline operations, share effective practices, and provide a venue for receiving ideas for improvement from the community at large.

6R1, S. KSU has identified and collects measures from a variety of activities that can inform decision-making and improve performance.

6R2, S. While unclear how many of the measures presented are linked to student support processes, there nevertheless appears to be quite a few successes from KSU's multiple improvement initiatives.

6R3, O. The portfolio describes a number of initiatives, but these activities do not lend themselves to measures that could be used to assess the manner in which the institution is meeting the administrative support service needs of its staff. KSU would benefit from identifying and administering measures designed to assess the effectiveness of its administrative support services for longitudinal planning and comparative purposes.

6R4, O. Although units use a variety of results and information, utilization of a systematic process across the institution could enhance improvement results and enable comparisons.

6R5, O. While the measures of success provided demonstrate improvement (improved percentage of diverse students, increase in overall enrollment) relative to peers, it is unclear the extent to which these measures are reflections of student and administrative support processes. KSU has an opportunity to identify high priority services and compare performance with other institutions as a strategy to monitor and identify areas for improvement.

6I1/6I2, O. From the information provided, it is not evident which student and administrative support processes are in fact part of a plan-do-check-act cycle. There clearly have been improvements, but it is difficult to link any results directly to any specific continuous improvement processes.

AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness. This category examines how the institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data both at the institutional and departmental/unit levels. It considers institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with

institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 7.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

KSU continues to improve its feedback mechanisms for providing evidence-based decisions, noting the need for access as well as accuracy in its data. Data comes in from program reports as well as newly developed GPS. The institution recognizes the importance of continuous improvement processes and emphasizes that as a learning institution, it must continually plan and assess in line with its strategic plan and goals. KSU places a priority on data collection and analysis to drive decision-making. Cognos reports and RPIE unit-specific data provide core academic data and performance reports are available via the institutional dashboard.

7P1. S. KSU has processes established for collecting, analyzing and distributing data to inform the decision-making processes related to academic programs and operational performance.

7P2. S. Institutional data is available through the Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE) website. Information on student enrollment, distance learning, degrees awarded, diversity and course enrollment is available through the Provost's Dashboard.

7P3. S. The implementation of the IS and RPIE systems has established comprehensive processes to determine data collection and management needs including assigning project managers assigned to divisions, training of appropriate staff, and soliciting needs through committees, councils and key academic groups.

7P4. O. Through its dashboard and scorecards, KSU is able to make data available for planning purposes. The portfolio, however, does not contain a description of how those data are analyzed and utilized in its planning process.

7P5. S. KSU relies upon its planning processes to establish comparative data needs. The institution has defined a peer group of 16 universities for comparative purposes. The institution also compares itself against schools in the MAC Conference and the "four corner" universities as defined by the Ohio Board of Regents.

7P6. S. KSU has key oversight committees that are in place to monitor data appropriateness, and selection with a heavy emphasis on RCM budgeting.

7P7. O. KSU has processes in place related to timeliness and security of data, but KSU could benefit from processes that ensure reliability and accuracy of data.

7R1. O. KSU reports having processes to collect and manage data, but the measures used to assess the performance and effectiveness of their system for knowledge and data management is not evident from the portfolio report. The portfolio provided no performance results of processes related to measuring effectiveness; no comparative data are provided; and no direct evidence that these processes help the institution to fulfill its mission and goals.

7R2. OO. KSU states that results of measures are reported through assessment platforms such as Dashboard. However, there is no evidence of information on needs being met.

7R3. OO. Based on the information presented, it is unclear how performance compares with other organizations. Appendix 7R3 is referenced, but it is unclear how the institution uses this information or what value it is.

7I1. S. KSU has prioritized making systematic and comprehensive improvements to measuring improvements including RCM, data reviews stored in WEAVEonline, a dashboard with drilldown capabilities, a scoreboard related to enrollment and persistence, and GPS which provides a roadmap for students.

7I2. O. Working within a decentralized community, KSU's collaborative engagement model allows identification of needs and improvements to be made from multiple levels. However, it is not clear how processes are selected and targets are set.

AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement. This category examines the institution's planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping to achieve the institution's mission and vision. It examines coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 8.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

KSU strives to be systematic in its priority of continuous improvement through alignment of planning, and budgeting with mission, vision and core values. KSU supports and encourages integration and collaboration through the institutional strategic plan, strategy maps, RCM model, and WEAVE online planning and management system.

8P1. S. KSU's key planning processes are all linked to its strategic plan, revised in 2010, and rely on strategy maps that serve as guides in managing the University's objectives and key action items. Through WEAVEonline, the University intends to track and manage its academic planning processes.

8P2. S. KSU appears to have a structure in place for determining which strategies/actions to prioritize. Divisional strategies are realized through action items (short-term if needing no additional resources; long-term if requiring additional time or resources). Strategies are selected based on feedback from stakeholders, overall trends in higher education, and fiscal/human resources required.

8P3. S. Action plans are developed as part of the strategy mapping process for short-term projects in the central planning cycle. Action plans and metrics are entered into WEAVEonline for tracking.

8P4. S. To align the strategic plan with the objectives and goals of each unit or division, 171 of the key action items are assigned to the various units and divisions.

8P5. S. Objectives from the planning process lead to goals for the institution. Multiple resources are used to determine performance targets.

8P6. S. The RCM model has shifted the focus toward defining objectives, setting performance targets, measuring improvements, and creating transparency in communications and reporting.

8P7. S. KSU assesses risk through monitoring of financial threats and internal audits, primarily through the Compliance and Risk Management Department.

8P8. O. It is unclear how the processes implemented by HR and conference attendance develop and nurture faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities. KSU has an opportunity to think through these processes and how they nurture internal stakeholders.

8R1. S. KSU has a number of measures in place by which it measures the effectiveness of its planning processes, including the Provost's Dashboard and RPIE data.

8R2-3. O. KSU reports on the success of several of its initiatives, but does not provide any results for measures listed in 8R1. The University could benefit from isolating a comprehensive set of measures to determine planning processes effectively.

8R4. O. Formal metrics, internal and external, will enable the institution to develop benchmarks and trend lines to assess its performance results relative to planning continuous improvement for internal and benchmarking purposes.

8R5. O. The institution states that there is evidence that planning and continuous improvement processes are effective. Further contextual analysis of how the institution knows its processes are effective would be helpful. How does the institution know that its planning and continuous improvement processes are effective and are an integral part of the institution's culture?

AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships. This category examines the institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution accomplishing its mission. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, and building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Kent State University** for Category 9.

Team Reflection Consensus Statement

The institution builds and maintains the collaborative relationships one would expect from an institution of higher learning: relationships with educational organizations, including school districts, funding organizations, and dual credit relationships; relationships with potential employers, and relationships with service providers. While KSU is a multi-campus organization with 8 campuses in Ohio, three states, and two countries, it historically has encouraged independent operations. Initiatives are underway to improve IT systems collaboration, expanding intra-campus/stakeholder collaboration, improve administration – student relations, and promote research collaboration. Efforts relative to Building Collaborative Relationships are reportedly siloed. The semi-autonomous operating structure of the regional campuses and other operating sites inhibits KSU's ability to mature in its approach.

9P1. S. KSU has several initiatives that foster relationships with institutions that can

serve as of feeder for underserved student populations. Such initiatives include TRIO Upward Bound, the Higher Education Compact of Cleveland and dual credit initiatives.

9P2, S. The institution works closely through Career Services and Community Relations to build relationships with potential employers and offers opportunities for employers to interact with students.

9P3/9P4, O. KSU reports that it has relationships with outside vendors, but it does not describe the process by which it creates and supports those relationships. If a process does not yet exist for doing so, KSU would benefit from formally defining its processes for selecting and assessing the vendors who provide services to its students.

9P5, S. The institution utilizes both formal and informal processes to build relationships with external agencies, including a specific process for creating new relationships.

9P6, S. KSU uses a variety of strategies to ensure the needs of partners are being met including market research, needs assessments, satisfaction surveys, assessment and evaluation of programs and focus groups.

9P7, S. KSU has informal and formal processes to build relationships among its units. In addition, KSU's tradition of shared governance also fosters a spirit of collaboration among the units of the University to meet the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.

9R1, O. It is not readily apparent how the variety of reports, dashboards and data sets KSU regularly collects are used to assess its relationships with internal and external stakeholders. It is unclear how data measured for *Building Collaborative Relationships* is based on such criteria as difficult course list, grade distribution, and student enrollment. KSU has an opportunity to define measures specific to its collaborative relationships by which it assesses and evaluates the effectiveness of those relationships.

9R2, S. Performance results indicate that KSU is making strides in its economic impact for the Northeast region of Ohio and its graduates. From an admissions standpoint, KSU maintains positive results in the number of students who enroll from KSU's initiatives.

9R3, O. KSU has been recognized for its partnerships and collaborations. However, such acknowledgements do not indicate performance against that of peers. The institution would benefit from establishing comparative benchmarks across consistent measures rather than relying upon awards for determining results.

Accreditation Evidence: Kent State University

The following section identifies any areas in the judgment of the Systems Appraisal Team where the institution either has not provided sufficient evidence that it currently meets the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components, or that it may face difficulty in meeting the Criteria and Core Components in the future. Identification of any such deficiencies as part of the Systems Appraisal process affords the institution the opportunity to remedy the problem prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

No evidence issues noted by the team.

Criterion 1: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	1A	1B	1C	1D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 2: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	X
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 3: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.			X		
Adequate but could be improved.	X	X		X	X
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 4: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	4A	4B	4C		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X		X		
Adequate but could be improved.		X			
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 5: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	5A	5B	5C	5D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X				
Adequate but could be improved.		X	X	X	
Unclear or incomplete.					

Team Consensus Accreditation Evidence Statements

1P1 & 1P2. HLC Core Component **3.B.** *The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.*

- KSU adopted a Philosophy Statement on Undergraduate Education and this philosophy serves as the foundation for the university's Kent Core designed to broaden student views and encourage intellectual exploration so as to prepare them for life and career.
- The Experiential Learning Requirement offers students the opportunity to learn outside the classroom and make connections between theory and practice in an applied and meaningful way.
- The University uses surveys, course evaluations, and its participation in Complete College Ohio to determine program-specific learning outcomes.

1P2 & 1P18. HLC Core Component 4.B. *The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.*

- A variety of measures are used to assess student learning.
- Faculty, administrators and external stakeholders are involved with the institution's 7 year program review process.

1P4 & 1P10. HLC Core Component 1.C. *The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.*

- KSU has an undergraduate Diversity Requirement, which is intended to promote awareness of diversity issues.
- The Office of Global Education recruits international students to enhance student interaction with individuals from diverse cultures.
- The University established the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in 2010 to integrate the strengths and behaviors of different groups and behaviors.

1P4 & 1P12. HLC Core Component 3.A. *The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.*

- GPS program outlines all degree program requirements so that students can complete degrees in a timely manner. GPS also identifies prerequisites and course sequencing to help students stay focused and on track.
- Program and course learning outcomes are the same regardless of the manner of course/program delivery.

- Review of facilities has led to new improvement initiatives to ensure that facilities meet student learning needs.
- The University established its Online Learning Team to support quality online instruction. The university is using Quality Matters to guide course development and design. Instructional grants, stipends and/or release time are available to faculty to design and deliver courses online.

1P4 & 1P13. HLC Core Component 4.A. *The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.*

- The Office of Quality Initiatives and Curriculum conduct program reviews on a 7 year cycle and the services of external evaluators are utilized in the process to ensure rigor and relevance. Upon receipt of the external report, faculty members analyze the report and propose an action plan to respond to noted opportunities for improvement.
- Transfer credits are evaluated by the University Articulation Committee and there is an established transfer policy that can be found on the KSU website and in its catalog.
- Program level learning outcomes are determined by faculty and reviewed on a regular basis. Several programs maintain external advisory boards that provide industry expertise and feedback.
- Alumni are consulted during the departmental review process and a graduate survey is conducted annually.

1P6. HLC Core Component 2.B. *The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.*

- KSU has mechanisms in place that communicate requirements, resources and services that are available to key stakeholders.
- The GPS system identifies program requirements for each academic degree program and monitors and tracks students in an effort to assess student progress.
- The Dynamic Student Checklist provides students with clear steps that are necessary to fulfill all responsibilities and obligations related to admissions

1P7 & 1P15. HLC Core Component 3.D. *The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.*

- KSU offers some support for diverse learning needs across programs and throughout the college experience.
- KSU identifies various relationships that are vital in identifying needs relative to learning support including those with the University Libraries.

1P11. HLC Core Component 2.D *The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.*

- KSU has structured a commitment to freedom of expression and pursuit of truth in teaching and learning through its relationship with AAUP.
- Shared governance and dialogue is/are the cornerstone of relationships and are designed to improve communication between faculty and administration.

1P11. HLC Core Component 2.E. *The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.*

- Students on all campuses are offered a variety of resources and support services to address the ethical issue of information.
- A standardized curriculum approach has been developed for cheating and plagiarism in FYE courses.

1P16. HLC Core Component 3.E. *The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.*

- KSU's strategic plan provides the framework by which to align co-curricular developmental goals with curricular learning objectives.
- The University is committed to develop ways for all students to be informed about the world, to develop capacity for applying learning to solve problems, and to communicate.
- All students must complete the ELR, which was endorsed by Undergraduate Student Government and passed by the faculty senate.

3P1. HLC Core Component 4.C. *The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.*

- Strategic planning, implementation of programs, and program review align with goals of student success for KSU. Based on evaluation of such processes, changes are made to adjust to student needs.
- KSU demonstrates a commitment to continuous educational improvements by participating in periodic assessments at the national and local level. Data collected from such sources allow for the University to respond and adjust appropriately to the needs of students.
- The institution offers various technology and campus supports to underprepared students.
- 78% of students who enroll at Kent State University persist from the first to the second year.

3P3 & 3P5. HLC Core Component 1.D. *The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.*

- KSU actively monitors its economic impact on the area, supporting growth through various initiatives.
- KSU is responsive to stakeholder needs in the development of new academic areas of study.

4P2 & 4P10. HLC Core Component 3.C. *The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.*

- The institution is using coordinated hiring to recruit faculty members with expertise to teach and research in more than one department in order to build upon existing strengths.
- All new hires are required to complete training programs.
- Annual staff performance evaluations focus on core competencies, position specific objectives, and opportunity for improvement.
- Goals are established as part of the annual review process. The University has recently revised its tenure and promotion process to focus upon research, teaching, and service.

4P7. HLC Core Component 2.A. *The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.*

- KSU has multiple processes for ensuring ethical behavior of its employees including employee handbook and code of conduct, internal audits, ethics committees, and Office of Affirmative Action, Human Subject Review Board, and online compliance training required for all employees.
- Violations can be reported anonymously to supervisors or through an electronic reporting system.

4P7. HLC Core Component 2.E. *The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.*

- The University has enhanced its conflict of interest policy for sponsored programs to require investigators to disclose a list of significant financial interests that could compromise objectivity.
- KSU has an established policy, published online, regarding student cheating and plagiarism, as well as programs in place to assist students in this area. The institution has established a Human Subject Review Board, and Faculty Ethics Committee to ensure compliance with appropriate policies and regulations.
- Online training modules are available to all employees, and training is mandatory for supervisors.

5P1 & 5P2. HLC Core Component 1.A. *The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.*

- KSU's mission is to discover, create, apply, and share knowledge, as well as to foster ethical and humanitarian values in the service of Ohio and the global community. Strategy maps align the mission statement, unit goals, and the strategic plan.
- Budgeting and planning are aligned with the priorities identified in the strategy maps.
- Through Responsibility Center Management processes, strategic priorities are linked to specific budgets.

5P2 & 5P6. Comment on the evidence provided for Core Component 5.C. *The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.*

- Priorities and strategies are developed via regular staff and leadership meetings and annual department/division planning retreats. Employee performance evaluations at all levels also support alignment with the mission. In line with continuous improvement

processes, the University regularly assesses its strategic plan and adjusts its plans as necessary in line with the mission statement.

- Strategy maps, which are generally reviewed annually, align the mission statement, unit goals, and the strategic plan.
- Annual employee evaluations include goal setting and assessment based on the strategic goals to support alignment of planning at all levels.
- KSU has integrated processes such as RPIE and ERP, and WEAVEonline that allow for the sharing of data which impact the decision-making process.

5P2. HLC Core Component 2.C. *The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.*

- The KSU Board of Trustees is appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate to ensure the board is autonomous from the administration.
- Trustees are bound by requirements set forth by the state of Ohio and include specific ethical guidelines and rules regarding conflict of interest and they receive online ethics training.
- Trustees are provided with an agenda and supporting documentation in advance of their quarterly meetings so as to ensure that they have time to consider the implications of their decisions, including impact to the external stakeholders.

5P3 & 5P8. HLC Core Component 1.B. *The mission is articulated publicly.*

- KSU uses both print and electronic means to disseminate and publicize its mission.
- All strategic planning documents – aligned with the mission – are publically available through the University's website.

5P5 & 5P9. HLC Core Component 5.B. *The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.*

- KSU's governance and administrative structures provide oversight of operations and strategic planning while relying on stakeholder input throughout decision-making processes and implementation of projects.
- Leadership and collaboration are important factors in the decision-making processes.

Committees, task forces, and ad hoc groups are created to address particular work or initiatives of the University. Changes resulting from the work of these groups are approved at appropriate levels.

7P2 & 7P4. HLC Core Component 5.D. *The institution works systematically to improve its performance.*

- KSU utilizes its Responsibility Center Management approach to analyze how unit and departmental performance align with institutional goals for instructional and non-instructional units.
- Institutional data is widely available through the Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness website.
- Key indicators are reported on the Provost Dashboard and include measures such as student enrollment, course enrollment, persistence and graduation, degrees awarded and credit hours taught.

8P6. HLC Core Component 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 uses Responsibility Center Management Budgeting to link strategy and action plan through the annual budget process.
- It provides deans and directors with more flexibility on expense allocations and considers risk at the beginning of the planning process.

Quality of Systems Portfolio For Kent State University

Because it stands as a reflection of the institution, the *Systems Portfolio* should be complete and coherent, and it should provide an open and honest self-analysis on the strengths and challenges facing the organization. In this section, the Systems Appraisal Team provides Kent State University with constructive feedback on the overall quality of the portfolio, along with suggestions for improvement of future portfolio submissions.

KSU's portfolio was an opportunity to share successes, which was done well. They provided numerous examples of improvement efforts. Also, it was very straight forward to review the core

component criteria because the portfolio was written in a manner where these competencies were clearly delineated. For example, on 1P7, “(cc3D)” is highlighted in red to indicate information pertaining to that competency. However, the team noted the portfolio appeared to be written in pieces by different authors. Without the necessary editing, the document lacks “one voice”. In many places, the institution didn’t answer the “how” portion that is implicitly or explicitly embedded in the question. The institution needs to provide more quantitative data rather than rewards as evidence of a result and measure. The team felt that the institution needs to work on providing more quantitative data. Additionally, at times it was difficult to navigate the portfolio because of cross referencing the categories. In many of these instances, the statements that were made were not applicable for the category.

Using the Feedback Report

The AQIP Systems Appraisal process is intended to initiate action for institutional improvement. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution, the Commission expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of this report may include: How do the team’s findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned? How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP’s core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration, and integrity.

The Commission’s goal is to help an institution clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities in ways that will make a difference in institutional performance.