Criteria for Education Performance Excellence

High Plains Recognition
2011-2012

To: Colorado, Montana and Wyoming Organizations

From: Kim Griffiths
             Executive Director
             Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence

Subject: The Journey to Performance Excellence

Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence (RMPEx) is a program dedicated to enabling organizations to evolve and succeed through the effective application of the principles and practices embodied in the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Incorporated in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, RMPEx is one of more than 30 similar state programs that exist throughout the U.S. It serves all organizations regardless of size, type, or economic sector. Any organization or individual seriously committed to reaping the many benefits of systematic performance improvement can benefit from participating in the RMPEx community.

The RMPEx Award Program recognizes organizations for their achievements in performance excellence. Award applicants receive extensive feedback identifying the organization's positive attributes and opportunities for improvement. Additionally, in the fall of each year, RMPEx formally recognizes role-model applicants for performance excellence achievements with three levels of awards and one level of recognition.

At the High Plains level, organizations receive recognition by submitting a profile of their organization, describing key attributes and challenges.

At the Foothills level, organizations compete for awards based on their approach to meeting the RMPEx criteria.

At the Timberline level, organizations compete for awards based on their approach to meeting the criteria, their deployment of those approaches, the learning they have demonstrated in improving those approaches and deployment, and the extent that the approaches are aligned and integrated.

At the Peak level, organizations compete for awards equivalent to the National Baldrige Quality Award by adding the results of their activities to the Timberline requirements.

Choose the level appropriate to your organization and begin your journey to performance excellence. Visit the RMPEx website at www.rmpex.org for additional information or call me at 303-893-2739.

Contents

> Business/nonprofit and health care organizations should use the appropriate Criteria booklets for their respective sectors.

If you plan to apply for the award in 2011 or 2012, you also will need the RMPEx *Intent to Apply form* which can be downloaded from www.rmpex.org.

The award application process consists of two steps: the first is to provide a completed Intent to Apply form, and the second is to submit a completed award application.

RMPEx Education Criteria for
Performance Excellence Framework
A Systems Perspective

Organizational Profile:
Environment, Relationships, and Strategic Situation

1
Leadership

2
Strategic
Planning

3
Customer
Focus

5
Workforce
Focus

6
Operations
Focus

7
Results

4
Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management
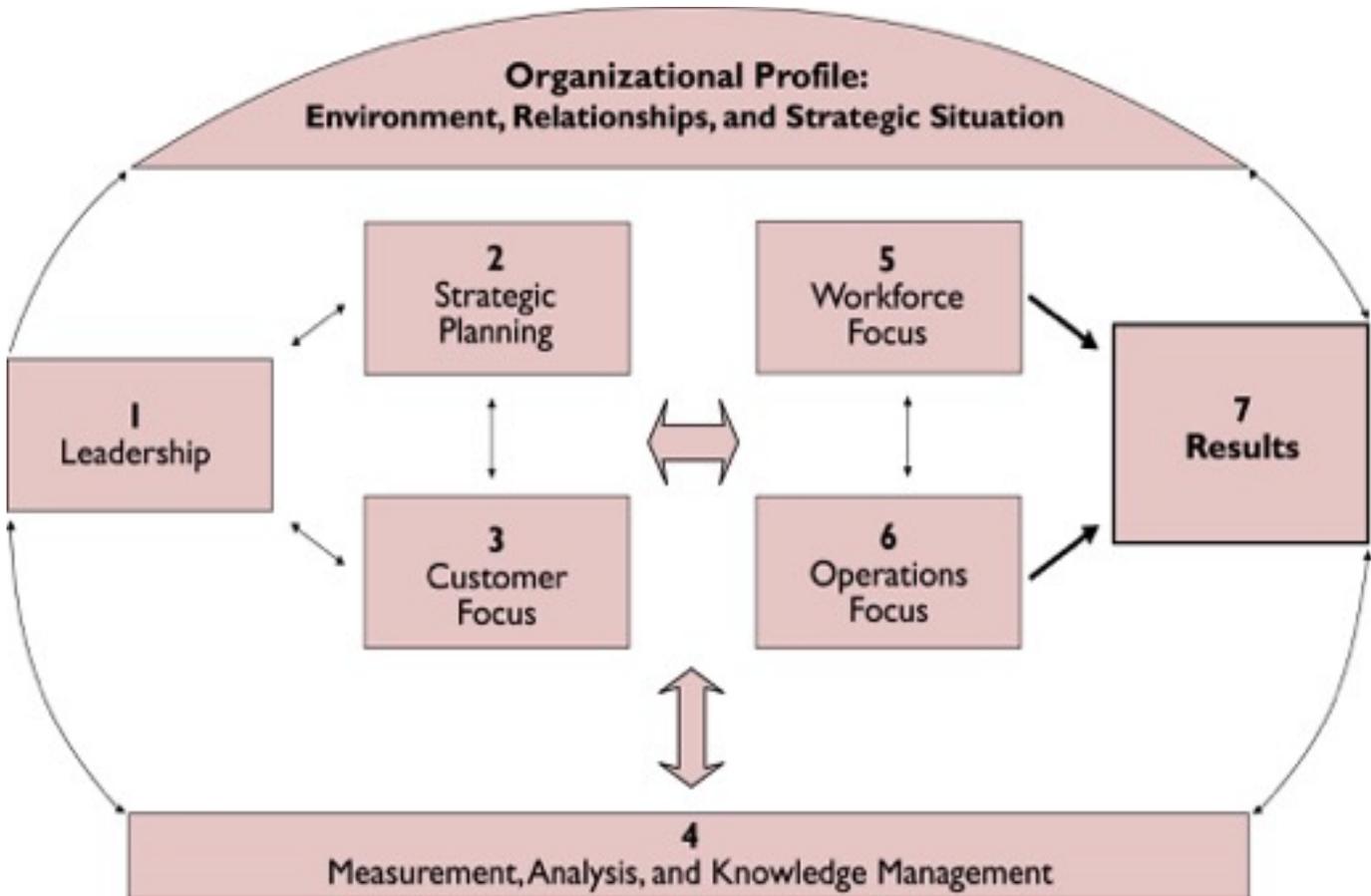
EDUCATION CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

The requirements of the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence are embodied in six categories, as follows:

1 **Leadership**

2 **Strategic Planning**

3 **Customer Focus**

4 **Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management**

5 **Workforce Focus**

6 **Operations Focus**

The figure on page 1 provides the framework connecting and integrating the categories.

From top to bottom, the framework has the following basic elements.

Organizational Profile

Your Organizational Profile (top of figure) sets the context for the way your organization operates. Your organization's environment, key working relationships, and strategic situation—including competitive environment, strategic challenges and advantages, and performance improvement system—serve as an overarching guide for your organizational performance management system.

Performance System

The performance system is composed of the six RMPEx categories in the center of the figure that define your processes and the results you achieve.

Leadership (category 1), Strategic Planning (category 2), and Customer Focus (category 3) represent the leadership triad. These categories are placed together to emphasize the importance of a leadership focus on students, stakeholders, and strategy. Senior leaders set your organizational direction and seek future opportunities for your organization.

Workforce Focus (category 5), Operations Focus (category 6), and Results represent the results triad. Your organization's workforce and key operational processes accomplish the work of the organization that yields your overall performance results.

All actions point toward Results—a composite of student learning and process outcomes, customer-focused outcomes, workforce-focused outcomes, leadership and governance outcomes, and budgetary, financial, and market outcomes.

The horizontal arrow in the center of the framework links the leadership triad to the results triad, a linkage critical to organizational success. Furthermore, the arrow indicates the central relationship between Leadership (category 1) and Results. The two-headed arrows indicate the importance of feedback in an effective performance management system.

System Foundation

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management (category 4) are critical to the effective management of your organization and to a fact-based, knowledge-driven system for improving performance and competitiveness. Measurement, analysis, and knowledge management serve as a foundation for the performance management system.

℗ **Organizational Profile**

> **The Importance of Beginning with Your Organizational Profile**
>
> Your Organizational Profile is critically important because
>
> - it is the most appropriate starting point for self-assessment and for writing an application;
>
> - it helps you identify potential gaps in key information and focus on key performance requirements and results;
>
> - it is used by the examiners and judges in application review, including the site visit, to understand your organization and what you consider important (you will be assessed using the Criteria requirements in relation to your organization's environment, relationships, influences, and challenges, as presented in your Organizational Profile); and
>
> - it also may be used by itself for an initial self-assessment. If you identify topics for which conflicting, little, or no information is available, it is possible that the Organizational Profile can serve as your complete assessment, and you can use these topics for action planning.

P   Preface: Organizational Profile

The *Organizational Profile* is a snapshot of your organization, the KEY influences on HOW you operate, and the KEY challenges you face.

P.1 Organizational Description: What are your key organizational characteristics?

Describe your organization's operating environment and your KEY relationships with students, STAKEHOLDERS, suppliers, and PARTNERS.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

a. Organizational Environment

(1) **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES** What are your organization's main EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (see note 1 below)? What is the relative importance of each to your organizational success? What mechanisms do you use to deliver your EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES?

(2) **VISION and MISSION** What are the distinctive characteristics of your organizational culture? What are your stated PURPOSE, VISION, VALUES, and MISSION? What are your organization's CORE COMPETENCIES and their relationship to your MISSION?

(3) **WORKFORCE Profile** What is your WORKFORCE profile? What are your WORKFORCE or employee groups and SEGMENTS? What are their education levels? What are the KEY elements that engage them in accomplishing your MISSION AND VISION? What are your organization's WORKFORCE and job DIVERSITY, organized bargaining units, KEY WORKFORCE benefits, and special health and safety requirements?

(4) **Assets** What are your major facilities, technologies, and equipment?

(5) **Regulatory Requirements** What is the regulatory environment under which your organization operates? What are the applicable occupational health and safety regulations; accreditation, certification, or registration requirements; education standards; and environmental, financial, and EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICE regulations?

b. Organizational Relationships

(1) **Organizational Structure** What are your organizational structure and GOVERNANCE system? What are the reporting relationships among your GOVERNANCE board, SENIOR LEADERS, and parent organization, as appropriate?

(2) **CUSTOMERS** What are your KEY market SEGMENTS and student and STAKEHOLDER groups, as appropriate? What are their KEY requirements and expectations for your EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, student and STAKEHOLDER support services, and operations? What are the differences in these requirements and expectations among market SEGMENTS and student and STAKEHOLDER groups?

(3) **Suppliers and P<small>ARTNERS</small>** What are your K<small>EY</small> types of suppliers, P<small>ARTNERS</small>, and C<small>OLLABORATORS</small>? What role do these suppliers, P<small>ARTNERS</small>, and C<small>OLLABORATORS</small> play in the production and delivery of your K<small>EY</small> E<small>DUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</small> and student and S<small>TAKEHOLDER</small> support services? What are your K<small>EY</small> mechanisms for communicating with suppliers, P<small>ARTNERS</small>, and C<small>OLLABORATORS</small>? What role, if any, do these organizations play in implementing I<small>NNOVATIONS</small> in your organization? What are your K<small>EY</small> supply-chain requirements?

Notes

N1. "Educational programs and services" (P.1a[1]) may include courses (credit and noncredit), research, outreach, cooperative projects and programs, and supplemental educational services that your organization offers in the market. Mechanisms for delivery of educational programs and services to your students and stakeholders might be direct or through partners and collaborators.

N2. "Core competencies" (P.1a[2]) refers to your organization's areas of greatest expertise. Your organization's core competencies are those strategically important capabilities that are central to fulfilling your mission or provide an advantage in your market or service environment. Core competencies frequently are challenging for competitors or suppliers and partners to imitate. Also, core competencies frequently preserve your competitive advantage.

N3. Many education organizations rely heavily on volunteers to accomplish their work. These organizations should include volunteers in the discussion of their workforce (P.1a[3]).

N4. Workforce or employee groups and segments (including organized bargaining units; P.1a[3]) might be based on the type of employment or contract reporting relationship, location, work environment, family-friendly policies, or other factors.

N5. Student and stakeholder groups (P.1b[2] might be based on common expectations, behaviors, preferences, or profiles. Within a group there may be student and stakeholder segments based on differences and commonalities. Your markets might be subdivided into market segments based on educational programs, services, or features; geography; volume; or other factors that your organization uses to define related market characteristics.

N6. Student segment, stakeholder group, and market segment requirements (P.1b[2]) might include special accommodation, customized curricula, safety, security, reduced class size, multilingual services, customized degree requirements, student advising, dropout recovery programs, administrative cost reductions, electronic communication, and distance learning. Stakeholder group requirements might include socially responsible behavior and community service.

N7. Communication mechanisms (P.1b[3]) should be two-way and in understandable language, and they might be in person, via e-mail, Web-based, or by telephone. For many organizations, these mechanisms may change as market, student, or stakeholder requirements change.

Information for Understanding All Criteria Categories

For definitions of key terms presented throughout the Criteria and scoring guidelines text in S<small>MALL</small> C<small>APS</small>, see the Glossary of Key Terms on pages 9-19.

Frequently, several questions are grouped under one number (e.g., P.1a[3]). These questions are related and do not require separate responses. These multiple questions serve as a guide in understanding the full meaning of the information being requested.

Category notes serve three purposes: (1) to clarify terms or requirements presented in a category, (2) to give instructions and examples for responding to the category requirements, and (3) to indicate key linkages to other categories. In all cases, the intent is to help you respond to the category requirements.

P.2 Organizational Situation: What is your organization's strategic situation?

Describe your organization's competitive environment, your KEY STRATEGIC CHALLENGES and ADVANTAGES, and your system for PERFORMANCE improvement.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

a. Competitive Environment

    (1) **Competitive Position** What is your competitive position? What are your relative size and growth in your education sector or markets served? What are the numbers and types of competitors for your organization?

    (2) **Competitiveness Changes** What are any KEY changes taking place that affect your competitive situation, including opportunities for INNOVATION and collaboration, as appropriate?

    (3) **Comparative Data** What are your KEY available sources of comparative and competitive data from within your education sector? What are your KEY available sources of comparative data from outside your education sector? What limitations, if any, affect your ability to obtain these data?

b. Strategic Context

    What are your KEY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICE, operational, societal responsibility, and human resource STRATEGIC CHALLENGES and ADVANTAGES?

c. PERFORMANCE Improvement System

    What are the KEY elements of your PERFORMANCE improvement system, including your evaluation, organizational LEARNING, and INNOVATION PROCESSES?

Notes

N1. Strategic challenges and advantages (P.2b) might relate to technology, educational programs and services, your operations, your suppliers and collaborators, your student and stakeholder support, your education sector, globalization; the value added by your community, stakeholders, partners, and collaborators; and people. Strategic advantages might include differentiators such as tuition and fees, instructional design and delivery services, reputation for program or service delivery, innovation rate, geographic proximity, and accessibility.

N2. Performance improvement (P.2c) through learning and integration is an assessment dimension used in the scoring system to evaluate the maturity of organizational approaches. This question is intended to help you and the RMPEx examiners set an overall context for your approach to performance improvement. Approaches to performance improvement that are compatible with the systems approach provided by the RMPEx framework should be related to your organization's needs and might include implementing Plan-Do-Study-Act improvement cycles; completing accreditation self-studies; applying nationally validated systems to improve teaching performance; and performing independent institutional, departmental, or program assessments. It also might include using a Lean Enterprise System, applying Six Sigma methodology, using ISO standards (e.g., 9000 or14000), or employing other process improvement and innovation tools. A growing number of organizations have implemented specific processes for meeting goals in program and service innovation.

N3. Education organizations frequently are in a highly competitive environment; aside from the direct competition for students, they often must compete with other organizations to secure financial, volunteer, and human resources. This competition may involve other education organizations, as in the competition for grant funding or the opportunity to provide supplemental services. In the case of public education organizations, competition may involve other public agencies or departments, as in the competition for scarce budget resources.

For additional description of this category, see pages 7-8.

Page Limit

For RMPEx Award applicants, the Organizational Profile is limited to five pages. These pages are not counted in the overall application page limit. Typing and formatting instructions for the Organizational Profile are the same as for the application. These instructions are given in the RMPEx Application Content and Format Requirements document, which can be downloaded at http://coloradoexcellence.org/media/EDocs/ RMPEx_Application_Content_and_Format_Requirements.doc

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CATEGORY AND ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

Preface: Organizational Profile

The Organizational Profile provides an overview of your organization. The profile addresses your operating environment, your key organizational relationships, your competitive environment and strategic context, and your approach to performance improvement. Your Organizational Profile provides a framework for understanding your organization. It helps the RMPEx examiners and judges when reviewing your application to understand what you consider important. It also helps you to guide and prioritize the information you present in response to the Criteria in categories 1–6.

The Organizational Profile provides your organization with critical insight into the key internal and external factors that shape your operating environment. These factors, such as the vision, values, mission, core competencies, competitive environment, and strategic challenges and advantages, impact the way your organization is run and the decisions you make. As such, the Organizational Profile helps your organization better understand the context in which it operates; the key requirements for current and future organizational success and sustainability; and the needs, opportunities, and constraints placed on your organization's management systems.

P.1 Organizational Description: *What are your key organizational characteristics?*

Purpose

This item addresses the key characteristics and relationships that shape your organizational environment. It also addresses your organization's governance system. The aim is to set the context for your organization and for your responses to the Criteria requirements in categories 1–6.

Comments

- The use of such terms as "purpose," "vision," "values," "mission," and "core competencies" varies depending on the organization, and some organizations may not use one or more of these terms. Nevertheless, you should have a clear understanding of the essence of your organization, why it exists, and where your senior leaders want to take the organization in the future. This clarity enables you to make and implement strategic decisions affecting the future of your organization.

- A clear identification and thorough understanding of your organization's core competencies are central to organizational sustainability and competitive performance. Executing your core competencies well is frequently a market differentiator. Keeping your core competencies current with your strategic directions can provide a strategic advantage, and protecting intellectual property contained in your core competencies can support sustainability.

- The regulatory environment in which you operate places requirements on your organization and impacts how you run your organization. Understanding this environment is key to making effective operational and strategic decisions. Further, it allows you to identify whether you are merely complying with the minimum requirements of applicable laws, regulations, and standards of practice or exceeding them, a hallmark of leading organizations.

- Leading organizations have well-defined governance systems with clear reporting relationships. It is important to clearly identify which functions are performed by senior leaders and, as applicable, by your governance board/policymaking body and your parent organization. Board independence and accountability frequently are key considerations in the governance structure.

- Suppliers may play critical roles in processes that are important to running the organization and to maintaining or achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Supply-chain requirements might include on-time or just-in-time delivery; flexibility; variable staffing; research and design capability; innovation of processes, programs, or services; and customized services.

P.2 Organizational Situation: *What is your organization's strategic situation?*

Purpose

This item addresses the competitive environment in which your organization operates, including your key strategic

challenges and advantages. It also addresses how you approach performance improvement, including organizational learning and innovation processes. The aim is to understand your key organizational challenges and your system for establishing and preserving your competitive advantage.

Comments

- Knowledge of an organization's strengths, vulnerabilities, and opportunities for improvement and growth is essential to the success and sustainability of the organization. With this knowledge, you can identify those educational programs and services, processes, competencies, and performance attributes that are unique to your organization; those that set you apart from other organizations; those that help you to preserve your competitive advantage; and those that you must develop to sustain or build your market position.

- Understanding who your competitors are, how many you have, and their key characteristics is essential for determining what your competitive advantage is in your education sector and market. Leading organizations have an in-depth understanding of their current competitive environment, including key changes taking place.

- Sources of comparative and competitive data might include education publications; benchmarking activities; national, state, and local reports; conferences; local networks; and education associations. Comparative and competitive data may also be obtained from benchmarking activities utilizing national or state norms, from local or regional consortia created for the purpose of benchmarking, or from one or more of the many national and international groups that have been working to ensure the availability of longitudinal data systems that report high-quality data at the individual student level.

- Operating your organization in today's sometimes competitive environment means you are facing strategic challenges that can affect your ability to sustain performance and maintain advantages, such as academic program leadership, unique services, or an optimal student-to-faculty ratio. These challenges might include your operational costs; an expanding or decreasing student population; a decreasing local and state tax base or educational appropriation; changing demographics and competition, including charter schools; diminishing student persistence; the introduction of new or substitute programs or services; rapid technological changes; and state and federal mandates. In addition, your organization may face challenges related to the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a qualified workforce.

- A particularly significant challenge, if it occurs to your organization, is being unprepared for a disruptive technology that threatens your competitive position or your market. In the past, such technologies have included personal computers replacing typewriters, cell phones challenging traditional and pay phones, fax machines capturing business from overnight delivery services, and e-mail and social media challenging all other means of communication. Today, education organizations need to be scanning the environment inside and outside the education sector to detect such challenges at the earliest possible point in time.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

This Glossary of Key Terms defines and briefly describes terms used throughout the Education Criteria booklet that are important to performance management. As you may have noted, key terms are presented in SMALL CAPS every time they appear in the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence and scoring guidelines.

The general format in presenting glossary definitions is as follows: The first sentence contains a concise definition of the term. Subsequent sentences in the first paragraph elaborate on and further delineate the term. Any subsequent paragraphs provide examples, descriptive information, or key linkages to other Criteria information.

Action Plans

The term "action plans" refers to specific actions that respond to short- and longer-term strategic objectives. Action plans include details of resource commitments and time horizons for accomplishment. Action plan development represents the critical stage in planning when strategic objectives and goals are made specific so that effective, organization-wide understanding and deployment are possible. In the Criteria, deployment of action plans includes creating aligned measures for all departments and work units. Deployment also might require specialized training for some faculty and staff or recruitment of personnel.

An example of a strategic objective for an education organization might be to achieve student performance in the top quartile of the state's schools on a normalized test that is given annually. Action plans could entail determining in which subjects students have had the lowest scores, understanding skill deficiencies in those subjects, and developing curricula that enable students to master those skills. Deployment might include faculty training in instructional and assessment methods. Organizational-level analysis and review likely would emphasize student learning, budgetary performance, and student and stakeholder satisfaction.

See also the definition of "strategic objectives" on page 17.

Alignment

The term "alignment" refers to consistency of plans, processes, information, resource decisions, actions, results, and analyses to support key organization-wide goals. Effective alignment requires a common understanding of purposes and goals. It also requires the use of complementary measures and information for planning, tracking, analysis, and improvement at three levels: the organizational/senior leader level, the key process level, and the work unit, program, school, class, or individual level.

See also the definition of "integration" on page 13.

Analysis

The term "analysis" refers to an examination of facts and data to provide a basis for effective decisions. Analysis often involves the determination of cause-effect relationships. Overall organizational analysis guides the management of work systems and work processes toward achieving key organizational performance results and toward attaining strategic objectives.

Despite their importance, individual facts and data do not usually provide an effective basis for actions or setting priorities. Effective actions depend on an understanding of relationships, derived from analysis of facts and data.

Anecdotal

The term "anecdotal" refers to process information that lacks specific methods and measures. Anecdotal information frequently uses examples and describes individual activities rather than systematic processes.

An anecdotal response to how senior leaders deploy performance expectations might describe a specific occasion when a senior leader visited all of the organization's facilities. On the other hand, a systematic process might describe the communication methods used by all senior leaders to deliver performance expectations on a regular basis to all faculty and staff, the measures used to assess the effectiveness of the methods, and the tools and techniques used to evaluate and improve the communication methods.

See also the definition of "systematic" on page 18.

Approach

The term "approach" refers to the methods used by an organization to address the RMPEx Criteria category requirements. Approach includes the appropriateness of the methods to the category requirements and to the

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organization's operating environment, as well as how effectively the methods are used.

Approach is one of the dimensions considered in evaluating process categories.

Basic Requirements

The term "basic requirements" refers to the topic Criteria users need to address when responding to the most central concept of a category. Basic requirements are the fundamental theme of that category (e.g., your approach for strategy development for category 2). In the Criteria, the basic requirements of each category are presented as the category title question.

Benchmarks

The term "benchmarks" refers to processes and results that represent best practices and performance for similar activities, inside or outside the education community. Organizations engage in benchmarking to understand the current dimensions of world-class performance and to achieve discontinuous (nonincremental) or "breakthrough" improvement.

Benchmarks are one form of comparative data. Other comparative data organizations might use include appropriate data collected by a third party (frequently averages for other organizations), data on competitors' performance, and comparisons with similar organizations that are in the same geographic area or that provide similar programs and services in other geographic areas.

Capability, Workforce

See "workforce capability" on page 19.

Capacity, Workforce

See "workforce capacity" on page 19.

Collaborators

The term "collaborators" refers to those organizations or individuals who cooperate with your organization to support a particular activity or event or who cooperate on an intermittent basis when short-term goals are aligned or are the same. Typically, collaborations do not involve formal agreements or arrangements.

See also the definition of "partners" on page 15.

Core Competencies

The term "core competencies" refers to your organization's areas of greatest expertise. Your organization's core competencies are those strategically important capabilities that are central to fulfilling your mission or provide an advantage in your market or service environment. Core competencies frequently are challenging for competitors or suppliers and partners to imitate, and they may provide a sustainable competitive advantage. Absence of a needed organizational core competency may result in a significant strategic challenge or disadvantage in the market.

Core competencies may involve technology expertise or unique educational programs and services that are responsive to the needs of your students, stakeholders, and market.

Customer

In the Education Criteria, the term "customer" refers to students and stakeholders who are actual and potential users of your organization's educational programs or services (referred to as "products" in the Business/Nonprofit Criteria). The Criteria address customers broadly, referencing current and future customers, as well as the customers of your competitors and other organizations providing similar educational programs or services.

Student-centered excellence is a RMPEx core value embedded in the beliefs and behaviors of high-performing organizations. Customer focus impacts and should integrate an organization's strategic directions, its work systems and work processes, and its results.

See the definition of "stakeholders" on page 17 for the relationship between customers and others who might be affected by your programs and services.

Customer Engagement

The term "customer engagement" refers to your students' and stakeholders' investment in or commitment to your

organization and its educational programs and services. It is based on your ongoing ability to serve their needs and build relationships so they will continue using your programs and services. Characteristics of customer engagement include customer retention and loyalty, customers' willingness to make an effort to seek educational services with your organization, and customers' willingness to actively advocate for and recommend your organization and its programs and services.

Cycle Time

The term "cycle time" refers to the time required to fulfill commitments or to complete tasks. Time measurements play a major role in the Criteria because of the great importance of time performance to improving competitiveness and overall performance. "Cycle time" refers to all aspects of time performance. Cycle time improvement might include the time to respond to changing student and stakeholder needs, design time for new programs and processes, and other key measures of time.

Deployment

The term "deployment" refers to the *extent* to which an approach is applied in addressing the requirements of a RMPEx Criteria category. Deployment is evaluated on the basis of the breadth and depth of application of the approach to relevant work units throughout the organization.

Diversity

The term "diversity" refers to valuing and benefiting from personal differences. These differences address many variables and may include race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, age and generational differences, education, geographic origin, and skill characteristics, as well as differences in ideas, thinking, academic disciplines, and perspectives.

The RMPEx Criteria refer to the diversity of your workforce hiring communities and your student and stakeholder communities. Capitalizing on these communities provides enhanced opportunities for high performance; student, stakeholder, workforce, and community satisfaction; and student, stakeholder, and workforce engagement.

Educational Programs and Services

"Educational programs" refer to all activities that engage students in learning or that contribute to scientific or scholarly investigation, including courses, degree programs, research, outreach, community service, cooperative projects, and overseas studies. Design of programs requires the identification of critical points (the earliest points possible) in the teaching and learning process for measurement, observation, or intervention. "Educational services" refers to those that are considered most important to student matriculation and success. These might include services related to counseling, advising, and tutoring students; libraries and information technology; and student recruitment, enrollment, registration, placement, financial aid, and housing. They also might include food services, security, health services, transportation, and book stores.

Effective

The term "effective" refers to how well a process or a measure addresses its intended purpose. Determining effectiveness requires (1) the evaluation of how well the process is aligned with the organization's needs or (2) the evaluation of the outcome of the measure used.

Empowerment

The term "empowerment" refers to giving people the authority and responsibility to make decisions and take actions. Empowerment results in decisions being made closest to students and stakeholders, the "front line," where work-related knowledge and understanding reside.

Empowerment is aimed at enabling people to respond to students' educational needs, to satisfy students and stakeholders on first contact, to improve processes and increase productivity, and to improve student learning and the organization's performance results. An empowered workforce requires information to make appropriate decisions; thus, an organizational requirement is to provide that information in a timely and useful way.

Engagement, Customer

See "customer engagement" on page 11.

Engagement, Workforce

Ethical Behavior

The term "ethical behavior" refers to how an organization ensures that all its decisions, actions, and stakeholder interactions conform to the organization's moral and professional principles of conduct. These principles should support all applicable laws and regulations and are the foundation for the organization's culture and values. They distinguish "right" from "wrong."

Senior leaders should act as role models for these principles of behavior. The principles apply to all people involved in the organization, from temporary faculty and staff to members of the board of directors, and they need to be communicated and reinforced on a regular basis. Although the RMPEx Criteria do not prescribe that all organizations use the same model for ensuring ethical behavior, senior leaders should ensure that the organization's mission and vision are aligned with its ethical principles. Ethical behavior should be practiced with all students and stakeholders, including the workforce, partners, suppliers, and the organization's local community.

Well-designed and clearly articulated ethical principles should empower people to make effective decisions with great confidence. Some organizations also may view their ethical principles as boundary conditions restricting behavior that otherwise could have adverse impacts on their organizations and/or society.

Goals

The term "goals" refers to a future condition or performance level that one intends or desires to attain. Goals can be both short- and longer-term. Goals are ends that guide actions. Quantitative goals, frequently referred to as "targets," include a numerical point or range. Targets might be projections based on comparative or competitive data. The term "stretch goals" refers to desired major, discontinuous (nonincremental) or "breakthrough" improvements, usually in areas most critical to your organization's future success.

Goals can serve many purposes, including

- clarifying strategic objectives and action plans to indicate how you will measure success
- fostering teamwork by focusing on a common end
- encouraging "out-of-the-box" thinking (innovation) to achieve a stretch goal
- providing a basis for measuring and accelerating progress

Governance

The term "governance" refers to the system of management and controls exercised in the stewardship of your organization. It includes the responsibilities of your governing body (e.g., board of education, board of trustees/overseers) and senior leaders; in some private education institutions, it also may include owners/shareholders. A combination of federal, state, and municipal regulations, charters, bylaws, and policies documents the rights and responsibilities of each of the parties and describes how your organization will be directed and controlled to ensure (1) accountability to stakeholders, (2) transparency of operations, and (3) fair treatment of all stakeholders. Governance processes may include the approval of strategic direction, policy creation and enforcement, the monitoring and evaluation of senior leaders' performance, the establishment of senior leaders' compensation and benefits, succession planning, financial auditing, and risk management. Ensuring effective governance is important to stakeholders' and the larger society's trust and to organizational effectiveness.

High-Performance Work

The term "high-performance work" refers to work processes used to systematically pursue ever-higher levels of overall organizational and individual performance, including quality, productivity, innovation rate, and cycle time performance. High-performance work results in improved programs and services for students and other stakeholders.

Approaches to high-performance work vary in form, function, and incentive systems. High-performance work focuses on workforce engagement. It frequently includes cooperation among senior leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff, which may involve workforce bargaining units; cooperation among work units, often involving teams; the empowerment of your people, including self-directed responsibility; and input to planning. It also may include

individual and organizational skill building and learning; learning from other organizations; flexibility in job design and work assignments; a flattened organizational structure, where decision making is decentralized and decisions are made closest to the students and stakeholders; and effective use of performance measures, including comparisons. Many high-performing organizations use monetary and nonmonetary incentives based on factors such as organizational performance, team and individual contributions, and skill building. Also, high-performance work usually seeks to align the organization's structure, core competencies, work, jobs, workforce development, and incentives.

How

The term "how" refers to the systems and processes that an organization uses to accomplish its mission requirements. In responding to "how" questions in the process category requirements, process descriptions should include information such as approach (methods and measures).

Indicators

See "measures and indicators" on page 14.

Innovation

The term "innovation" refers to making meaningful change to improve programs, services, processes, or organizational effectiveness and to create new value for students and stakeholders. Innovation involves the adoption of an idea, process, technology, program, service, or business model that is either new or new to its proposed application. The outcome of innovation is a discontinuous or breakthrough change in results, programs, or services.

Successful organizational innovation is a multistep process that involves development and knowledge sharing, a decision to implement, implementation, evaluation, and learning. Although innovation is often associated with technological innovation, it is applicable to all key organizational processes that would benefit from change, whether through breakthrough improvement or a change in approach or outputs. It could include fundamental changes in organizational structure to more effectively accomplish the organization's work.

Integration

The term "integration" refers to the harmonization of plans, processes, information, resource decisions, actions, results, and analyses to support key organization-wide goals. Effective integration goes beyond alignment and is achieved when the individual components of a performance management system operate as a fully interconnected unit.

See also the definition of "alignment" on page 9.

Key

The term "key" refers to the major or most important elements or factors, those that are critical to achieving your intended outcome. The RMPEx Criteria, for example, refer to key challenges, key plans, key work processes, and key measures—those that are most important to your organization's success. They are the essential elements for pursuing or monitoring a desired outcome.

Knowledge Assets

The term "knowledge assets" refers to the accumulated intellectual resources of your organization. It is the knowledge possessed by your organization and its workforce in the form of information, ideas, learning, understanding, memory, insights, cognitive and technical skills, and capabilities. Your workforce, curricula, software, databases, documents, guides, and policies and procedures are repositories of your organization's knowledge assets. Knowledge assets are held not only by an organization but reside within its students and stakeholders, suppliers, and partners, as well.

Knowledge assets are the "know-how" that your organization has available to use, to invest, and to grow. Building and managing its knowledge assets are key components for your organization to create value for your students and stakeholders and to help sustain a competitive advantage.

Leadership System

The term "leadership system" refers to how leadership is exercised, formally and informally, throughout the organization; it is the basis for and the way key decisions are made, communicated, and carried out. It includes structures and mechanisms for decision making; two-way communication; selection and development of senior leaders, administrators, department heads, and faculty leaders; and reinforcement of values, ethical behavior, directions, and performance expectations.

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An effective leadership system respects the capabilities and requirements of workforce members and other stakeholders, and it sets high expectations for performance and performance improvement. It builds loyalties and teamwork based on the organization's vision and values and the pursuit of shared goals. It encourages and supports initiative and appropriate risk taking, subordinates organizational structure to purpose and function, and avoids chains of command that require long decision paths. An effective leadership system includes mechanisms for the leaders to conduct self-examination, receive feedback, and improve.

Learning

The term "learning" refers to new knowledge or skills acquired through evaluation, study, experience, and innovation. In addition to their focus on student learning, the Education Criteria address two other distinct kinds of learning: organizational and personal. Organizational learning is achieved through research and development; evaluation and improvement cycles; ideas and input from the workforce, students, and other stakeholders; best-practice sharing; and benchmarking. Personal learning (pertaining to faculty and staff) is achieved through education, training, and developmental opportunities that further individual growth.

To be effective, these types of learning should be embedded in the way an organization operates. In addition, they contribute to a competitive advantage and sustainability for the organization and its workforce.

Levels

The term "levels" refers to numerical information that places or positions an organization's results and performance on a meaningful measurement scale. Performance levels permit evaluation relative to past performance, projections, goals, and appropriate comparisons.

Measures and Indicators

The term "measures and indicators" refers to numerical information that quantifies input, output, and performance dimensions of processes, programs, services, and the overall organization (outcomes). Measures and indicators might be simple (derived from one measurement) or composite.

The Criteria do not make a distinction between measures and indicators. However, some users of these terms prefer "indicator" (1) when the measurement relates to performance but is not a direct measure of such performance (e.g., the number of complaints is an indicator of dissatisfaction but not a direct measure of it) and (2) when the measurement is a predictor ("leading indicator") of some more significant performance (e.g., a gain in student performance or satisfaction might be a leading indicator of student persistence).

Mission

The term "mission" refers to the overall function of an organization. The mission answers the question, "What is this organization attempting to accomplish?" The mission might define students, stakeholders, or markets served; distinctive or core competencies; or technologies used.

Multiple Requirements

The term "multiple requirements" refers to the individual questions Criteria users need to answer within each area to address. These questions constitute the details of a category's requirements. They are presented in black text under each category's area(s) to address.

Even high-performing, high-scoring users of the Criteria are not likely to be able to address all the multiple requirements with equal capability or success.

Overall Requirements

The term "overall requirements" refers to the topics Criteria users need to address when responding to the central theme of a category. Overall requirements address the most significant features of the category requirements. In the Criteria, the overall requirements of each category are presented in one or more introductory sentences printed in bold.

Partners

The term "partners" refers to those key organizations or individuals who are working in concert with your organization to achieve a common goal or to improve performance. Typically, partnerships are formal arrangements for a specific aim or purpose, such as to achieve a strategic objective or deliver a specific program or service. Partners might include other schools, employers and workplaces, social service organizations, private foundations, and parents, as

appropriate, with which your organization has cooperative relationships to facilitate effective learning for students. For example, partners might include schools with which "feeder" relationships exist, into or out of your school. Partnerships with social service organizations might involve helping students make these transitions.

Formal partnerships are usually for an extended period of time and involve a clear understanding of the individual and mutual roles and benefits for the partners.

See also the definition of "collaborators" on page 10.

Performance

The term "performance" refers to outputs and their outcomes obtained from student learning, processes, programs, and services that permit the organization to evaluate and compare its results relative to performance projections, standards, past results, goals, and the results of other organizations. Performance can be expressed in nonfinancial and financial terms.

The Education Criteria address four types of performance: (1) program and service, (2) student- and stakeholder-focused, (3) operational, and (4) budgetary, financial, and market.

"Program and service performance" refers to performance relative to measures and indicators of program and service characteristics important to students and stakeholders. Examples include the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, assessment of student learning, participation in professional development opportunities, and student placement following program completion.

"Student- and stakeholder-focused performance" refers to performance relative to measures and indicators of student and stakeholder perceptions, reactions, and behaviors. Examples include admissions, retention, complaints, and survey results. Student- and stakeholder-focused performance generally relates to the organization as a whole.

"Operational performance" refers to workforce, leadership, organizational, and ethical performance relative to effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability measures and indicators. Examples include cycle time, productivity, accreditation, waste reduction, workforce turnover, workforce cross-training rates, regulatory compliance, fiscal accountability, and community involvement. Operational performance might be measured at the organizational/senior leader level, the key work process level, and the program, school, class, or individual level.

"Budgetary, financial, and market performance" refers to performance relative to measures of cost containment, budget utilization, revenue, and market position, including budget utilization, asset growth, and market share. Examples include instructional and general administration expenditures per student as a percentage of budget; income, expenses, reserves, endowments, and annual grants/awards; program expenditures as a percentage of budget; annual budget increases or decreases; resources redirected to education from other areas; performance to budget; scholarship growth; the percentage of budget for research; the budget for public service; and market gains.

Performance Excellence

The term "performance excellence" refers to an integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in (1) delivery of ever-improving value to students and stakeholders, contributing to improved education quality and student learning, as well as to organizational sustainability; (2) improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities; and (3) organizational and personal learning. The Education Criteria for Performance Excellence provide a framework and an assessment tool for understanding organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement and thus for guiding planning efforts.

Performance Projections

The term "performance projections" refers to estimates of future performance. Projections should be based on an understanding of past performance, rates of improvement, and assumptions about future internal changes and innovations, as well as assumptions about changes in the external environment that result in internal changes. Thus performance projections can serve as a key tool in both management of operations and strategy development and implementation.

Performance projections are a statement of expected future performance. Goals are a statement of desired future performance. Performance projections for competitors or similar organizations may indicate challenges facing your organization and areas where breakthrough performance or innovation is needed. Where breakthrough performance or innovation is intended, performance projections and goals may overlap.

See also the definition of "goals" on page 12.

Persistence

The term "persistence" refers to the continued attendance by students (from term to term, semester to semester, grade to grade, or class to class) toward the completion of an educational goal or training objective.

Process

The term "process" refers to linked activities with the purpose of producing a program or service for students and/or stakeholders within or outside the organization. Generally, processes involve combinations of people, machines, tools, techniques, materials, and improvements in a defined series of steps or actions. Processes rarely operate in isolation and must be considered in relation to other processes that impact them. In some situations, processes might require adherence to a specific sequence of steps, with documentation (sometimes formal) of procedures and requirements, including well-defined measurement and control steps.

In service situations such as education, particularly when those served are directly involved in the service, process is used in a more general way (i.e., to spell out what must be done, possibly including a preferred or expected sequence). If a sequence is critical, the service needs to include information to help those served understand and follow the sequence. Such service processes also require guidance to the providers of those services on handling contingencies related to the possible actions or behaviors of those served.

In knowledge work, such as teaching, strategic planning, research, development, and analysis, process does not necessarily imply formal sequences of steps. Rather, process implies general understandings regarding competent performance, such as timing, options to be included, evaluation, and reporting. Sequences might arise as part of these understandings.

Productivity

The term "productivity" refers to measures of the efficiency of resource use.

Although the term often is applied to single factors, such as the workforce (labor productivity), machines, materials, energy, and capital, the productivity concept applies as well to the total resources used in meeting the organization's objectives. The use of an aggregate measure of overall productivity allows a determination of whether the net effect of overall changes in a process—possibly involving resource trade-offs—is beneficial.

Projections, Performance

See "performance projections" on page 15.

Purpose

The term "purpose" refers to the fundamental reason that an organization exists. The primary role of purpose is to inspire an organization and guide its setting of values. Purpose is generally broad and enduring. Two organizations providing different educational services could have similar purposes, and two organizations providing similar educational services could have different purposes.

Results

The term "results" refers to outputs and outcomes achieved by an organization in addressing the requirements of a RMPEx Criteria category.

Segment

The term "segment" refers to a part of an organization's overall base related to students, stakeholders, markets, programs, services, or the workforce. Segments typically have common characteristics that can be grouped logically. In results categories, the term refers to disaggregating results data in a way that allows for meaningful analysis of an organization's performance. It is up to each organization to determine the specific factors that it uses for segmentation.

Understanding segments is critical to identifying the distinct needs and expectations of different student, stakeholder, market, and workforce groups and to tailoring programs and services to meet their needs and expectations. Student segmentation might reflect such factors as the educational service delivery (e.g., classroom or Web-based) or students' career interests, learning styles, living status (e.g., residential versus commuter), mobility, or special needs. For those education organizations that must respond to the annual requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, segmentation might include the NCLB-designated accountability subgroups (i.e., a student's race or ethnicity, economically disadvantaged status, limited proficiency in English, and classification as in need of special education).

Workforce segmentation might be based on geography, skills, needs, work assignments, or job classifications.

Senior Leaders

The term "senior leaders" refers to those with the main responsibility for managing the overall organization. Senior leaders might include administrators, department heads, and/or faculty leaders. In many organizations, senior leaders include the head of the organization and his or her direct reports.

Stakeholders

The term "stakeholders" refers to all groups that are or might be affected by an organization's actions and success. Examples of key stakeholders might include parents, parent organizations, the workforce, collaborators, governing boards, alumni, employers, other schools, regulatory bodies, funding entities, taxpayers, policy makers, suppliers, partners, and local and professional communities. Although students are commonly thought of as stakeholders, for purposes of emphasis and clarity, the Education Criteria refer to students and stakeholders separately.

See also the definition of "customer" on page 10.

Strategic Advantages

The term "strategic advantages" refers to those market benefits that exert a decisive influence on an organization's likelihood of future success. These advantages frequently are sources of an organization's current and future competitive success relative to other providers of similar educational programs and services. Strategic advantages generally arise from either or both of two sources: (1) core competencies, which focus on building and expanding on an organization's internal capabilities, and (2) strategically important external resources, which are shaped and leveraged through key external relationships and partnerships.

When an organization realizes both sources of strategic advantage, it can amplify its unique internal capabilities by capitalizing on complementary capabilities in other organizations.

See the definitions of "strategic challenges" and "strategic objectives" below for the relationship among strategic advantages, strategic challenges, and the strategic objectives an organization articulates to address its challenges and advantages.

Strategic Challenges

The term "strategic challenges" refers to those pressures that exert a decisive influence on an organization's likelihood of future success. These challenges frequently are driven by an organization's future competitive position relative to other providers of similar educational programs and services. While not exclusively so, strategic challenges generally are externally driven. However, in responding to externally driven strategic challenges, an organization may face internal strategic challenges.

External strategic challenges may relate to student, stakeholder, or market needs or expectations; changes in educational programs or offerings; technological changes; or budgetary, financial, societal, and other risks or needs. Internal strategic challenges may relate to an organization's capabilities or its human and other resources.

See the definition of "strategic advantages" and of "strategic objectives" on this page for the relationship among strategic challenges, strategic advantages, and the strategic objectives an organization articulates to address its challenges and advantages.

Strategic Objectives

The term "strategic objectives" refers to an organization's articulated aims or responses to address major change or improvement, competitiveness or social issues, and organizational advantages. Strategic objectives generally are focused both externally and internally and relate to significant student, stakeholder, market, program, service or technological opportunities and challenges (strategic challenges). Broadly stated, they are what an organization must achieve to remain or become competitive and ensure long-term sustainability. Strategic objectives set an organization's longer-term directions and guide resource allocations and redistributions.

See the definition of "action plans" on page 9 for the relationship between strategic objectives and action plans and for an example of each.

Sustainability/Sustainable

The term "sustainability" refers to your organization's ability to address current educational needs and to have the

agility and strategic management to prepare successfully for your future educational, market, and operating environment. Both external and internal factors need to be considered. The specific combination of factors might include sectorwide and organization-specific components.

Sustainability considerations might include workforce capability and capacity, resource availability, technology, knowledge, core competencies, work systems, facilities, and equipment. Sustainability might be affected by changes in the educational market, student and stakeholder preferences, the operating environment, budgets and finances, and the legal and regulatory environment. In addition, sustainability has a component related to day-to-day preparedness for real-time or short-term emergencies.

In the context of the Education Criteria, the impact of your organization's programs, services, and operations on society and the contributions you make to the well-being of environmental, social, and economic systems are part of your organization's overall societal responsibilities. Whether and how your organization addresses such considerations also may affect its sustainability.

Systematic

The term "systematic" refers to approaches that are well-ordered, are repeatable, and use data and information so learning is possible. In other words, approaches are systematic if they build in the opportunity for evaluation, improvement, and sharing, thereby permitting a gain in maturity.

Trends

The term "trends" refers to numerical information that shows the direction and rate of change for an organization's results or the consistency of its performance over time. Trends provide a time sequence of organizational performance.

A minimum of three historical (not projected) data points generally is needed to begin to ascertain a trend. More data points are needed to define a statistically valid trend. The time period for a trend is determined by the cycle time of the process being measured. Shorter cycle times demand more frequent measurement, while longer cycle times might require longer time periods before meaningful trends can be determined.

Examples of trends called for by the Education Criteria include data related to student learning results; the performance of education design and delivery processes and student services; student, stakeholder, and workforce satisfaction and dissatisfaction results; budgetary, financial, and market performance; and operational performance, such as cycle time, support process, supplier/partner, and safety performance.

Value

The term "value" refers to the perceived worth of a program, service, process, asset, or function relative to cost and to possible alternatives.

Organizations frequently use value considerations to determine the benefits of various options relative to their costs, such as the value of various educational program and service combinations to students or stakeholders. Organizations need to understand what different student and stakeholder groups value and then deliver value to each group. This frequently requires balancing value for students and other stakeholders, such as your workforce and the community.

Values

The term "values" refers to the guiding principles and behaviors that embody how your organization and its people are expected to operate. Values reflect and reinforce the desired culture of an organization. Values support and guide the decision making of every workforce member, helping the organization accomplish its mission and attain its vision in an appropriate manner. Examples of values might include demonstrating integrity and fairness in all interactions, exceeding student and stakeholder expectations, valuing individuals and diversity, protecting the environment, and striving for performance excellence every day.

Vision

The term "vision" refers to the desired future state of your organization. The vision describes where the organization is headed, what it intends to be, or how it wishes to be perceived in the future.

Voice of the Customer

The term "voice of the customer" refers to your process for capturing student- and stakeholder-related information. Voice-of-the-customer processes are intended to be proactive and continuously innovative to capture stated, unstated, and anticipated student and stakeholder requirements, expectations, and desires. The goal is to achieve customer engagement. Listening to the voice of the customer might include gathering and integrating various types of student and stakeholder data, such as survey data, focus group findings, satisfaction data, and complaint data, that affect students' and stakeholders' engagement decisions.

Work Processes

The term "work processes" refers to your most important internal value creation processes. They might include program and service design and delivery, student and stakeholder support, organization, and support processes. They are the processes that involve the majority of your organization's workforce and produce student, stakeholder, and market value.

Your key work processes frequently relate to your core competencies, to the factors that determine your success relative to competitors and organizations offering similar programs and services, and to the factors considered important for organizational growth by your senior leaders.

Work Systems

The term "work systems" refers to how the work of your organization is accomplished. Work systems involve your workforce, your key suppliers and partners, your contractors, your collaborators, and other components needed to produce and deliver your programs, services, and support processes. Your work systems coordinate the internal work processes and the external resources necessary for you to develop, produce, and deliver your programs and services to your customers and to succeed in your market.

Decisions about work systems are strategic. These decisions involve protecting and capitalizing on core competencies and deciding what should be procured or produced outside your organization in order to be efficient and sustainable in your market.

Workforce

The term "workforce" refers to all people actively involved in accomplishing the work of your organization, including paid employees (e.g., permanent, part-time, temporary, and telecommuting employees, as well as contract employees supervised by the organization) and volunteers, as appropriate. The workforce includes administrators and supervisors at all levels.

Workforce Capability

The term "workforce capability" refers to your organization's ability to accomplish its work processes through the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies of its people.

Capability may include the ability to build and sustain relationships with your students and stakeholders; to innovate and transition to new technologies; to develop new educational programs, services, and work processes; and to meet changing education, market, and regulatory demands.

Workforce Capacity

The term "workforce capacity" refers to your organization's ability to ensure sufficient staffing levels to accomplish its work processes and successfully deliver your educational programs and services to your students and stakeholders.

Workforce Engagement

The term "workforce engagement" refers to the extent of workforce commitment, both emotional and intellectual, to accomplishing the work, mission, and vision of the organization. Organizations with high levels of workforce engagement are often characterized by high-performing work environments in which people are motivated to do their utmost for the benefit of their students and stakeholders and for the success of the organization.

In general, members of the workforce feel engaged when they find personal meaning and motivation in their work and when they receive positive interpersonal and workplace support. An engaged workforce benefits from trusting relationships, a safe and cooperative environment, good communication and information flow, empowerment, and performance accountability. Key factors contributing to engagement include training and career development, effective recognition and reward systems, equal opportunity and fair treatment, and family-friendliness.