

Goal 6: Illinois colleges and universities will continually improve productivity, cost-effectiveness, and accountability.

What is Joliet Junior College now doing that advances this goal and related actions?

Joliet Junior College conducted a formal process for improving productivity during the summer and fall of 2002 which resulted in a referendum vote in November of 2002. The College redesigned its comprehensive Facilities Master Plan through a series of meeting with BLDD Engineering and external constituencies for the purpose of identifying capital improvement projects that would best support student learning and expand campus outreach. The plan also helped in the identification of future space requirements, replacement and repair work, and space utilization. Although the \$252 million referendum did not succeed, the process was very instrumental in JJC identifying long-term goals and way to be cost effective. A byproduct of this work was the identification of a funding strategy (not requiring voter approval) which will allow the college to finance about \$30 million over the next ten years and care for the maintenance and repair of the 35 year old Main Campus facility. Accountability to the physical facilities is an important goal often overlooked in times of tighter budgets and JJC is well positioned in this area.

Joliet Junior College is in the process of refining internal employee productivity and accountability through a new employee management system for administrators and professional support staff. This process is better described in the “best practices” section; however, in general it is a performance management system based on the SMART approach (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-defined). It will be a cascading process to establish/communicate priorities and subsequently develop both functional and individual metrics and objectives. Perhaps the most exciting outcome of this second phase of the process will be the development of a system whereby individuals and units set annual goals within the context of institutional goals and their performance measured against these goals. A merit-based section of the annual compensation system will be the eventual outcome of the performance management system.

The Business Office developed a new system of using an approved credit card system (Elan) to handle many small and medium cash purchases. The credit card system allows departments to make purchases directly without having to ask for reimbursements or check advances. The system has cut down drastically on staff time required to process many small cost type of purchases. The system will be expanded into airline tickets and conference registration fees during the coming year and is anticipated to have similar cost savings results.

The productivity numbers for JJC seem very good when compared to the ICCB state averages. First, the percentage change in the population served at JJC is virtually equal to the state average changes (see the following table). There is

roughly an eight percent increase in the population served for each of the following three years.

Percentage Change in Total Population Served				
	2000	2001	2002	00-02
JJC averages	8.0%	7.8%	7.7%	7.8%
State averages	8.3%	7.9%	7.6%	7.9%

An interesting pattern of cost-effectiveness has occurred at Joliet Junior College over the last few years. The cost of instruction exceeds the state average. This is not surprising considering the elevated salaries needed to attract and retain quality faculty and support staff in the southern suburbs of Chicago. However, the five year change in the percentage increase for the cost of instruction was only 12.5% compared to an average state increase of 15.4%.

Cost of Instruction per Credit Hour						
	FY 1998	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	5-Year Change	
					Number	Per Cent
Joliet	\$187.89	\$202.67	\$205.02	\$211.38	\$23.49	12.50%
State Average	\$171.76	\$187.34	\$194.25	\$198.13	\$26.37	15.35%

The administrative cost change was 9.3% at JJC for the previous five years; however, the state average was actually 21.1%. In fact, the administrative cost at JJC was actually under the state average, despite being on of those institutions “north of I-80” in terms of employment cost.

Administrative and Support Cost per Credit Hour						
	FY 1998	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	5-Year Change	
					Number	Per Cent
Joliet	\$76.48	\$79.40	\$78.15	\$83.60	\$7.12	9.31%
State Average	\$75.66	\$103.70	\$88.69	\$91.65	\$15.99	21.13%

It appears from these data that JJC is maintaining a cost effective approach to educating residents of District 525. Perhaps the most important performance measure is how your tuition and fee structure related to other community colleges in the state. Joliet is unique in that it has the cost of the south suburbs of Chicago, the need to maintain competitive salaries, and its tax rate is comparatively low. These factors, combined with more limited state funding, would seem to suggest that the only way to provide a quality education would be to rapidly increase tuition and fees. However, JJC will be exactly at the state average for FY2004

and some 4% lower than two years ago. JJC has been able to maintain high quality without large impact on what students must pay to attend the institution. This has been a testament to the work of the administration and includes a recent half-million dollar effort to pare funds from the departments funded by the education fund. Will County is the largest provider of JJC students and is currently the fastest growing area in the state. This certainly assists the college in the number of taxpayers; however, with the tax rate so low the institution may not be able to maintain its current growth rate for many more years (especially if state revenues continue to erode).

What specific actions does Joliet Junior College intend to undertake in the coming year (or two) to advance this goal and related actions?

Following up on the last statements made above. Joliet Junior College will have to redefine its priorities to include the possibility that passing a bond referendum in the near future is a low probability. Therefore, the college will have to discuss goals which may reconfigure its future to include more of an online presence, setting enrollment limits and goals for traditional in-class courses, and looking for very creative ways to find low-cost day-time alternative sites.

As a result of the enrollment/marketing audit, the college is streamlining some of its operations in terms of admissions and registration to address the concerns of students and the community. Among some of the changes slated for the near future is a redesigned web page, offering more accelerated degree programs, and expanding adult education programs through a “faith-based” initiative.

The budget process, now firmly tied to institutional core values and goals, has proven to be effective in determining priorities. The fiscal year 2004 budgeting process, replete with a Board requested reduction in the education fund, was balanced along with the core values and institutional objectives. The new money went toward new faculty positions, a couple of part-timers in student services, and another professional to assist in expanding distance education. Each of these needs and all of the other budget changes were identified under the institutional planning process.