



ENDs Monitoring Report

Process

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Presented To:

President Daniel J. Phelan
Jackson College Board of Trustees

Presented by:

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I. Executive Summary

Jackson College's commitment to documenting processes was a positive central theme during the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Comprehensive Quality Review visit in early February 2017. The College's ability to provide documented process maps, embedded with decision points, software systems used, and relevant associated policies was appreciated and recognized by HLC's visiting team as a critical component of our continuous quality improvement and quality focus.

Many of the College's employees have now participated in documenting critical processes, and through that experience, have a better understanding of its uses and importance for on-boarding of new employees, succession planning and College operations. During the past year, we've intentionally involved a cross-functional group of more than 20 employees in process mapping sessions.

Over the past year, the College has documented and/or intentionally improved the following processes:

- Gainful employment compliance reporting and disclosures;
- De-registering ('Backing-out') students for non-payment;
- Paying adjuncts for instruction;
- Policy Review;
- Student Academic Appeals;
- Using the Student Success Assessment outcomes;
- Strategic planning – aligning AQIP and Baldrige quality framework; and
- Updated the improved version of the students becoming residents process map

This work has increased our efficiency in completing a documented process. It has also made participating employees more aware of how their work influences the work of others within the system and across the process. This 'systems thinking' approach has yielded positive outcomes in the working relationships across offices and departments.

Documenting AS/IS processes through mapping sessions was a critical component of improving those maps through thoughtful insights revealed to participants. The improved maps, based on analyzing the AS/IS map, is yet another piece to the College's commitment to continuous quality improvement.

An unexpected, but positive, outcome of this work is that several departments have approached the Institutional Effectiveness office requesting processes to be mapped. The software used for mapping, IBM Blueworks Live, is also being analyzed as a potential tool for documenting the College's internal audit processes.

II. Institutional Context

Jackson College's participation in the HLC Academic Quality Improvement Pathway (AQIP) requires a concentrated and specific focus on three integrated, key elements across each AQIP category: process, results and improvements. The focus on process as the initial, or foundational, component is a central reason the College is committing its resources to formally documenting, and improving, processes. While the HLC does not require institutions to formally map its processes, without such maps, the institution is rendered to describing its critical processes in anecdote and narrative, which are less effective at yielding comprehensive understanding than visually conveyed sequential and parallel process maps. Verbally describing a process is much more difficult than using a workflow picture. And, with greater understanding of each employees' function and purpose within a process, the greater the efficiency in executing that process.

Jackson College was an early adopter of formally mapping its critical processes and that resource investment has proven useful in more ways than initially planned. For example, with the onboarding of new navigators, new housing staff, and new financial aid employees, we've been able to provide them with maps of very critical processes and they have immediately understood their role in that process. This immediate understanding of how to complete a specific activity within a fuller understanding of the larger process goal and outcome, has reduced the number of training hours.

Jackson College's Total Commitment to Student Success (TCS²) provides a context for improving our processes through mapping and documentation. It represents a frame for executing activities and initiatives aimed at achieving our mission and fulfilling our Statement of Beliefs. As is the case when conducting any analysis, documenting processes has led to new insights of unintended barriers and unexpected bridges in the programs, services and policies associated with our students' educational goals and employees' work activities and environment. The Institutional Effectiveness Office baselines our processes by documenting the 'AS/IS' process. The AS/IS process provides performance metrics that are then used to identify potential improvements and to design a new 'TO/BE process'. We are using IBM's 'Blueworks' software to document and map our processes so that we can manage process improvement changes over time, as well as to have the ability to easily share maps across departments and divisions. An outcome of documenting processes is a better understanding of how the services, functions, forms, reports, and dates come together in a complete system.

An example of a quality process map is the "Innovation Fund" process which is provided in Appendix A. Anyone who reviews the map can immediately understand the process. It clearly provides the flow of the process, who is involved in each activity, the sequence

of activities, when and who make the decisions. It also make clear the requirements for sustaining the innovation after implementation.

Through formal process mapping, the college can easily update the maps with minor, or incremental improvements, rendering our maps as always reflecting the current 'AS/IS' process.

To ensure the College is meeting its desired performance outcomes for this ENDS report, we monitor and document these metrics:

- Number of processes mapped
- Number of employees participating in process mapping
- Number of different offices participating in process mapping
- Reduction in the number of activities in improved process maps

III. External Context

The ability of colleges to demonstrate effectiveness and quality has become a common demand across many federal, state, and local government agencies. As resources, financial, human, technical, and physical, become more limited, and with greater competition for allocation, colleges able to answer this national call for quality will certainly yield better long-term outcomes. A critical component of that response is the expectation of colleges to be able to think of themselves as complete systems and for a greater number of their employees to possess a systems thinking knowledge base and the ability to use it in their routine work. For example, the admissions process, while containing unique milestones and activities, cannot be conducted independently of the financial aid process, course scheduling process, teaching and learning process, and degree completion process. All these system components are inter-dependent processes that collectively comprise the ultimate work of the College; achieving its mission. Jackson College is completing the foundational work necessary to demonstrate its effectiveness, in part, by formally conducting and documenting its processes.

The federal government's focus on outcomes, graduation rates, gainful employment, transfer and further education, are fundamentally based on good processes across complete systems. The processes yielding those outcomes, must be intentional, and repeatable, regardless of the resources available. This represents a small part of the value in mapping processes and including a larger cross-section of employees in this work.

Most importantly, understanding (mapping), and aligning and improving the College's processes, maximizes the expected outcomes of the system, which is critical to the College's future and its students' achievements. Knowing processes, employees are more equipped to fully support students in achieving their education goals. This in turn helps the college achieve its TCS² outcomes. And, ultimately, students are the beneficiaries of well documented and thought out process maps.

IV. Institutional Performance Reporting and Assessment

Performance is based in process and Jackson College is a national leader in this process mapping work. Our students' and employees' experiences and perceptions of the college are based, not only on the interactions they have with each other and their peers and colleagues, but are also highly influenced by the processes in place to help them accomplish their goals and objectives. Documenting processes allows us to fully understand the experience from both students' and employees' points of view. For example, the *paying adjuncts for instruction* process led to over 10 improvements that were implemented by winter 2017. These improvements were all aimed at ensuring the pay experience for adjuncts was timely and accurate. The improvements were embedded across five (5) departments which made the entire system more efficient and effective.

Our process mapping system includes regularly revisiting the AS/IS maps to ensure they are still current and accurate. We've also added a 'compliance' component to capture the milestones or activities that may be required or mandated by external agencies, such as the Department of Education. Mapping the *paying adjuncts for instruction* process, and applying the compliance component, changed the way we reported IPEDS HR data in 2017, which is exactly the type of outcome desired through mapping and represents a more complete systems understanding.

Not all of the benefits of process mapping are quantifiable, but are still worth noting. For example, formally documenting processes can reveal unexpected understandings of sub-optimizing system components to the detriment of the entire system. This was experienced when mapping the *De-registering (backing-out) students for non-payment* process. The AS/IS map revealed that a process component was being conducted concurrently by multiple offices and potentially negatively impacting students. Once documented in the process map, participants immediately were able to improve that component of the process to better serve students.

A total of 9 processes have been formally documented through mapping them in IBM Blueworks. Collectively, these maps contain over 35 milestones, nearly 125 departmental activities, approximately 75 business process owners, 45 decisions and incorporate 15 institutional policies. To map those 9 processes, over 25 different employees experienced mapping sessions from a nearly 20 different offices.

After documenting the AS/IS process, we are able estimate the number of hours, days or months required to complete the process and can document the number of times the process occurs within the timeline. Development of the improvements leads to a reduction in the time required to complete the process and better student experiences. Not all performance metrics are easily quantifiable and are more qualitative in nature. We consider improvements in those qualitative measures as success measures for the College.

V. Institutional Performance Improvement Planning

In 2017, Jackson College has plans to map the following mission-critical processes:

1. Financial aid application received to award offered;
2. Application to admission; and
3. Course Registration

These processes represent a core-section of the College's operations. Our goal in mapping these specific processes is to use the understanding gained through this collective work to align these processes in a very intentional manner from the students' point-of-view.

An improvement to our process mapping is to begin including the students' 'swim lane' in our maps. This will involve students directly in our process mapping documentation and again position the College as a leader among others doing this type of fundamental work. The students' perspective will allow Jackson College to more fully understand how the process is experienced by its students. We'll include students' suggested process improvements in order to enrich the College's process maps and to make them more comprehensive.

The Leadership Council ultimately decides which processes will be put through the rigor of documentation and improvement. We are cognizant in planning and ordering the processes for documentation so that a broad range of customer-facing employees are exposed to the thinking and knowledge embedded in process mapping.

Once we have mapped a process, the Institutional Effectiveness office has scheduled follow-up reviews every six months with the primary process owner to ensure the maps remain current and align to federal compliance requirements, if appropriate. A six month formal process review will include the opportunity for the process owner to update the milestones and activities that may have changed during this time.

A long-term goal, over the next five (5) years is to have a total of 50 different employees experience and contribute to process mapping sessions and for the College to have mapped from admissions to graduation, including the students' point-of-view.

The goals associated with process mapping next year (i.e., over the next 12 months) include:

- Align documented processes into a partial system map;
- Involve 12 new customer-facing employees in mapping sessions; and
- Train 5 employees in the methodology of process mapping

VI. Conclusion

Jackson College is meeting, and exceeding, HLC expectations for our AQIP documentation by formally process mapping its critical core processes; those that impact students or employees. In doing this work, the College is among a few institutions conducting similar work. Process mapping will be a key component of the College's next HLC systems portfolio which is to be submitted in 2018.

As more and more employees are exposed to process mapping sessions we are growing the College's knowledge base for systems thinking which can only yield positive results for our TCS² and students.

Training other employees beyond the Institutional Effectiveness office in the process of conducting mapping sessions and documenting them in the IBM software will allow the College to achieve its long-term goal of mapping a complete system.

VII. Appendix

The innovation Fund – process map ([click here](#))

The innovation fund process is a good example of formally documenting a process.

