Utilizing the HLC Assurance Review Process to Proactively Enact Positive Change:

Results from Southeast Community College Assurance Review Report
Open Pathway

Annual Institutional Update

Year 4: Assurance Review

Year 5-9: Quality Initiative

Year 10: Comprehensive Evaluation
Expected Outcomes for Assurance Review Process

- Utilize data-driven approach to build case for strengths and opportunities for improvement
- **Communicate opportunities for improvement in a transparent manner**
- **Provide a detailed plan for improvement if needed**
- Help reviewers build the College’s report that reinforces strengths and progress made toward opportunities for improvement
- **Receive validation for major initiatives/changes** that are critical to ensuring compliance with HLC criteria
Internal Process

Assurance Review Steering Team

29 employees with college-wide representation on three workgroups
- Mission (1), Integrity (2), and Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (5)
- Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support (3)
- Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement (4)

Organization of narrative (for each Core Component/Sub-component)
- Overview of evidence related to the process
- Evidence of process results (forms, reports, data) - Over 1,000 links to data
- Integrated responses with frequent cross-component references
- Plans for improvement/next steps (Opportunity for Improvement and Continuing Progress sections)
Cover Sheet for Each Link to Supporting Information

HLC Assurance Filing Evidence Document

Title: Enrollment Trend by Program Type (2012-13–2016-17)

Source: Office of Institutional Research

Summary: The following evidence is summary of overall student enrollment trends by program type: career/technical, academic transfer, dual credit, and undeclared. An interactive version of the report is available at:

https://www.southeast.edu/institutional-research/factbook-enrollment/.
Examples of SCC’s Responses to Compliance with HLC Core Components
Target Core Component: 1.A2 - The institution’s academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Excerpt from College’s Response: Forty-three percent of students are enrolled in a career or technical programs of study. These enrollment trends have been fairly consistent for the past five years. Fifty-three academic programs culminate in Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees, diplomas, and/or certificates.
Excerpt from College’s Response: The Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity conducted a student survey in May 2017 on students’ experience of diversity/climate-related topics. The College will use this survey data to inform planning and employee training for the 2017-2018 academic year, as well as conduct a similar survey for employees in October 2017. Initial survey data results indicate that students feel that they are treated with respect by faculty, staff, administrators, and other students.

Target Core Component: 1.C2 - The institution’s processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
Excerpt from College’s Response: To support the 2015-19 Strategic Plan, the College approved 93 new positions between July 2015 and February 2017. Three of those positions are in the Office of Human Resources to support the integrity of hiring processes due to the increase in number of employees. Prior to these three additional positions being added, the College had only a Vice President for Human Resources and an administrative support staff and did not have the capacity to deliver standard human resource functions for more than one thousand employees.

Target Core Component: 2A - The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Note: Data embedded in Year 1 Strategic Plan Progress Report to Illustrate data-driven culture rather than reactive culture to HLC request only.
Opportunity for Improvement – Program Length

HLC’s policy on program length, which was revised in June 2016, (FDCR.A.10.020) requires that program’s length be comparable to similar programs offered by its peer institutions. Following the adoption of the revised policy the College conducted a comparative analysis of program lengths of SCC and its peer institutions. The analysis by the Office of Institutional Research, concludes that 30 SCC programs have the most credit hours of their peers, with approximately a third of those between 10-20 semester hours longer than similar peer programs.

Note: Reduction of Program is a major SCC initiative; inclusion in Assurance Review creates an opportunity to receive validation and support for the Board, administration, and campus communities.
Excerpt from College’s Response: As discussed in 4.C.1., Goal 2 of the 2015-19 Strategic Plan includes student success metrics: fall to fall retention rate, overall success rate, overall course withdrawal rate, and graduation and transfer rate. The College has implemented a number of strategies in response to trends in these metrics. These improvements include additional instructional and student services programming, increases in staffing levels, and improvements in data collection and analyses to address strategic objectives.

Target Core Component: 4C3 – The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
Excerpt from College’s Response: **Opportunity for Improvement – Facilities**

The assessment of campus needs involved three primary components: enrollment analysis, space needs analysis, and facilities assessments of existing SCC facilities on the three main campuses in Beatrice, Milford and Lincoln and the two Lincoln satellite locations at 11th and O Street and 68th and O Street by architects, engineers, landscape architects, and interior designers. As part of the analysis, a tour of peer institutions confirmed the initial physical assessment, that most of SCC’s facilities were dated and inadequate with respect to current educational trends, market demand, and student needs. The final Facilities Master Plan was released in February 2016.

**Target Core Component: 5D2 - The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.**

Table 16. Beatrice Main Campus Building Assessment Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUILDING NAME</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>GSF</th>
<th>DEMOLISH</th>
<th>RETAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG Center</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1981-2008</td>
<td>54,557</td>
<td>54,557</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoover Hall</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>32,160</td>
<td>32,160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>31,715</td>
<td>31,715</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>32,055</td>
<td>32,055</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt Hall</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>25,605</td>
<td>25,605</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Hall</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>25,605</td>
<td>25,605</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower Hall</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>24,937</td>
<td>24,937</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>226,634</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POOR ASSET</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIUM ASSET</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOOD ASSET</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>109,708</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>109,708</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>336,342</td>
<td></td>
<td>336,342</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preliminary Results from HLC Peer Review Team Report – October 2017
Overall Findings from Review Team

- Commended/validated for major initiatives designed to address improvement opportunities
- Received “Met” rating on all 21 HLC Core Components
- Removed from monitoring for the first time in more than 15 years
- Received suggestions for continued improvement
- HLC Expectations of SCC in preparation for full site visit in five years
Overall Findings

- Commended/validated for major initiatives designed to address improvement opportunities
- Received “Met” rating on all 21 HLC Core Components
- Removed from monitoring for the first time in more than 15 years
- Received suggestions for continued improvement
- HLC Expectations of SCC in preparation for full site visit in five years
SCC Commended for Major Initiatives

- SCC’s 2015-19 Strategic Plan
- Facilities Master Plan
- Commitment to academic integrity
- Expanded personnel positions
SCC Commended for Major Initiatives

- Expanded technology infrastructure
- Additional Human Resource Staff
- Additional Institutional Research Staff
- Commitment to diversity
- Commitment to pursuit of truth in teaching and learning
Validated and Documented Opportunities for Improvement

1. Facilities Master Plan
2. Program length/Assignment of credit
3. Academic calendar
4. Improving enrollment process
5. Co-curricular assessment

Note: The College was not in compliance with the some sections of the core components associated with these five areas; the review team commended the College for its transparency and its plans for improvement in each case.
- The HLC Review Team provided detailed documentation related to each “met” rating.

- The Review Team cited specific SCC initiatives, activities, and strategies that led to each “met” rating.

- The report includes a number of suggestions and expectations to ensure SCC is prepared for its full HLC site visit in five years.
Core Component 1: Mission

1.D – The institution’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

Example Review Team Response:

“The college’s commitment to its educational responsibilities is demonstrated by the percentage of operating funds dedicated to instruction, academic and student support services, and institutional scholarships.”

“Budget decisions appear to be directly tied to the Strategic Plan as evidenced by the linking of requests for expanded dollars directly to objectives in the Strategic Plan.”

“Its large and growing Continuing Education Division is a reflection of the institution responding to community and employer needs.”

“The development of the Strategic Plan and resulting accomplishments are evidence of its responding to the needs of the communities it serves.”
Core Component 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

- 2.A – The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, and personnel, and auxiliary functions.

Example Review Team Response:

“The Strategic Plan even includes a goal intended to promote professionalism; i.e., Goal 9.6: maximize a positive and engaging organizational environment by encouraging input, reflective and transparent communication, and compassion and respect toward the views and ideas of others.”

“Supporting and overseeing these policies and procedures is an organizational structure that has recently been augmented with additional personnel positions in areas such as Human Resources. These additional personnel ensure standard Human Resource functions and integrity in hiring practices.”
Core Component 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

- 2. E. The institution’s policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its faculty, students, and staff.

Example Review Team Response:

“The college is to be commended for its extensive activities and procedures that demonstrate its commitment to academic integrity.” *

“Students are provided numerous resources to aid in ensuring the ethical use of information. Library staff provide orientations for more than 1,000 students annually on library resources and ethical citations.”

*Note: Academic Integrity was cited as an opportunity for improvement by the 2012 Visiting Team during the College’s last full HLC review.
Core Component 3: Quality, Resources, and Support

- 3 A. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Example Review Team Response:

“SCC is moving from a quarter to a semester system*. The calendar review team has a specific plan in place to address the quarter to semester conversion as well as a target date of FY 2019-2020.”

“During the calendar conversion process, program length which is currently not aligned with SCC's sister colleges, will be adjusted.”

“Quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery.”

*Note: The College recently received HLC approval for the substantive change to move from a quarter to semester calendar.
Core Component 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

4.A – The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

Example Review Team Responses:

“SCC's first Strategic Plan Progress Report contains several metrics that relate to graduate success. These measure course success rates, graduate and transfer rates, degrees awarded, participation in co-curricular activities, and CCSSE benchmarks.”

“As time goes on and data from successive progress reports becomes available, it is hoped that SCC will be able to report on how its programs, departments and divisions have used this data to foster improved graduate success.”
Core Component 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

- 4.C – The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Example Review Team Responses:

“With every program, department, and division making an effort to align themselves with the college’s mission and institutional priorities, more than 100 unit-level strategies were developed—all pointed toward improving student retention, completion, and fostering excellent academic achievement.”

“In response to a concern from the 2012 Peer Review Team, the college created a new Institutional Research Office in 2013. In the ensuing years, the office has added five additional employees to bring the total number to six. This has enabled the IR staff to broaden their efforts in data collection for retention, persistence, and completion.”
Core Component 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

4.C – The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Example Review Team Responses:

“In 2015-2016, working with the college's Information Technology Division and third party vendor ZogoTech, a data warehouse was created for the first time. Data is stored there, analyzed, and made into reports as needed throughout the academic year.”

“SCC has put in place some new improvement strategies for student success as a result of metrics in Goal 2 of the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. These include staffing increases, improvement in data collection, additional instructional and student services programming, and analyses to address strategic objectives.”
Core Component 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

- 4.C – The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Example Review Team Responses:

“To better serve the needs of its students the college has also switched to an open registration process for all students and has lengthened the time for students to withdraw from a given course.”

“Standard enrollment reports, which include information about high and low course utilization, are now being produced by the IR department. These will enable instructors to better determine if a given course needs more or fewer sections, based on student demand.”

*Note: In its response to this core component, the College provided evidence of specific strategies implemented to improve retention/completion/success; the response included a report showing a decrease in failing grades following a withdrawal policy change.
5. A – The institution’s resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Example Review Team Responses:

“Southeast Community College responded boldly to the need to hire additional staff as prioritized in the Strategic Plan. These new and expanded positions were in response to needs documented through the strategic planning process as well as investment in growth for the future.”

“The college acknowledges the need to improve its physical infrastructure. To address the need, SCC prepared its first Facilities Master Plan, which was released in February 2016. The college has been pursuing various financing options and is now moving toward implementing the recommendations cited in the plan.”
Core Component 5: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

- 5.D – The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

Example Review Team Responses:

“The creation of the college’s first Facilities Master Plan was an invaluable exercise in generating and analyzing a host of data sets. Gathering course utilization data, staffing data, facilities inventory, floor plans of existing building, library data, student enrollment, and current and potential instructional programs involves a broad cross section of the college and the list of participants in the report indicates that internal input was garnered. For this, SCC is to be commended.”

“Acknowledging that capital investment projects take a longer lead time, a more detailed plan identifying, at a minimum, a near-term project list with timelines and costs would have been anticipated by this time.”

The HLC Review Team indicated that SCC should be prepared to demonstrate progress on its facility master plan during its full accreditation review in five years.

An HLC representative will tour SCC’s facilities and provide clarification on expectations for progress toward modernizing facilities.
SCC Removed From HLC Monitoring

- SCC was removed from monitoring in relation to concerns associated with the assessment of student learning outcomes.

- The following concerns were adequately addressed:
  - Evidence of changes which have been implemented due to the implementation of program learning outcomes.
  - Evidence of a plan in place which will ensure that all of the GELOs will be addressed.
  - Evidence that program learning outcomes as well as GELOs are included in both traditional courses and on-line courses.
  - Samples of methods of measurement for evaluation GELOs for faculty to use if they need assistance on determining how to use these outcomes.
Suggestions for Continued Improvement

- Add accreditation affiliation to the College’s homepage.
- Develop process to regularly review and update Board policies.
- SCC should have a process for revising and updating its policy and procedure manual.
- Consolidate budgeting planning documents into one document.
- List faculty member’s office number and location within program’s webpage.
- Implement improvement strategies to raise SCC’s CCSSE benchmark scores.
HLC **Expectations** of SCC in Preparation for Full Site Visit in Five Years

- Continue to show progress on major initiatives validated in the Assurance Review Team Report (e.g., strategic planning, facilities master planning, calendar conversion, program length, and student learning outcome assessment).

- Continue to show progress on refinement of the assessment and use of student learning outcome data to improve learning.

- **Provide update on progress made toward multiple near-term facility projects during the next accreditation visit in five years.**

- Continue to refine use of data in decision making at all levels.

- Expand strategic plan progress reports to program and department levels.

- Formalize co-curricular assessment plan.

- Develop formal process for reviewing and updating policies and procedures.

- Consolidate planning, budgeting, and assessment processes through a specialized software solution.
Benefits of the HLC Assurance Review

- Validation of recent changes
- Clear direction to continue major initiatives
- Identification of new opportunities for improvement
- Documentation to leverage support both internally and externally
- Justification for costs associated with validated changes
- Reinforcement for transparent communication
- **Major step in preparing for full review in five years**