

Assurance Argument
Southeast Community College Area - NE

1/16/2018

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

1.A.1.

Southeast Community College developed its current mission statement through a systematic [process](#) led by the President and the [Institutional Strategic Planning Team](#). The 2012 HLC peer reviewers [noted](#) that SCC did not have an institutional strategic plan, and while the College did not receive a recommendation, there was agreement with the reviewers' suggestion to establish a strategic plan. In 2013, a team of SCC employees began a planning process focused around strategic enrollment planning. The Strategic Enrollment Plan was [integrated](#) into the newly formed Institutional Strategic Planning Team with the arrival of the new president in July 2014, who recognized the urgent need for SCC to develop and adopt a Strategic Plan. Both internal and external stakeholders provided qualitative and quantitative data during the 2014-15 academic year to elucidate both [community needs](#) in the 15-county service area and internal perceptions of growth opportunities that capitalized on institutional strengths. Several groups shared feedback, including the [Board of Governors](#), [CEO Advisory Team](#), [Administrative Team](#), and all employees through a [college-wide survey](#).

The new 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, which includes the following [mission statement](#), [core values](#), and [strategic goals and objectives](#), was presented to the Board of Governors and [approved](#) in April 2015.

The mission of Southeast Community College (SCC) is to empower and transform its students and the diverse communities it serves.

The College provides accessible, dynamic, and responsive pathways to career and technical, academic transfer, and continuing education programs.

Student success and completion is maximized through collegiate excellence, exemplary instruction, comprehensive student support services, enrichment programs, and student-centered processes.

SCC is committed to a proactive and evidence-based approach that continually assesses and

responds to student, community, and employer demand for higher education.

The College's core values stem from the mission statement and drive the decisions and actions of the institution.

- 1. Excellence – Commitment to the highest level of performance in all facets of the College's programs, services, and operations through effective investment and support of all assets.*
- 2. Integrity – Continuous pursuit of fulfillment of mission and goals through transparency and ethical practices in all College operations.*
- 3. Innovation – Commitment to inquiry and the respectful challenging of assumptions to promote creativity, alternative points of view, and opportunities for ongoing discovery.*
- 4. Inclusion – Promotion of opportunities and advancement for a diverse and dynamic student, faculty/staff, and community population through the creation of a positive, compassionate, and reflective culture.*
- 5. Stewardship and Accountability – Commitment to investment in appropriate resources in fulfillment of the College's mission and goals and reliance on responsible management of human, physical, and financial resources.*

In addition to the College's mission statement and core values, the Board of Governors also adheres to the [statutory regulations](#) as required by the state of Nebraska regarding the college mission.

The College's mission guides its operations across the institution. Each [division](#) has operational units that make up the organizational structure. As part of the 2017-2018 annual planning process, more than 100 of these units (academic programs, student services, and other administrative areas) submitted their department, division, or program mission statements in December 2016. All mission statements of instructional and non-instructional areas were collected in a central database and linked to the unit-level plans.

1.A.2.

"The College provides accessible, dynamic, and responsive pathways to career and technical, academic transfer, and continuing education programs."

The Nebraska Statutes and the College mission state that SCC provides educational pathways to career and technical, academic transfer, and continuing education programs. The institution provides access to multiple educational pathways: Academic Transfer and undeclared students represent 57% of the student body. 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. For students with developmental needs, foundations education courses and refresher services (the Transitions Lab) are available. Students with English language needs can access English as a Second Language courses. Additionally, a Continuing Education Division provides diverse community services and adult education opportunities throughout the 15-county area, all designed to meet educational, occupational, cultural, and recreational needs.

"Student success and completion is maximized through . . . comprehensive student support services . . ."

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Student services at SCC are designed to support the College's [diverse enrollment profile](#). The College offers a complete array of student support services which are discussed in 3.D. The following student support services are identified because of their special connection to the College's mission.

Learn to Dream (LTD) and People Obtaining Prosperity (POP)

The [LTD scholarship](#) was established through a public-private partnership to create an opportunity for economically disadvantaged high school students graduating from a public or private high school in SCC's 15-county district to further their education at SCC. The scholarship began in 2007 and was initially offered to all Lincoln Public School graduates who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Since then, the scholarship program has expanded to the 15-county service area high schools and to a local non-profit for non-traditional students ([POP](#)). Scholarship recipients work with success coaches and are empowered to succeed with resources, such as career and academic advising, academic support services, and financial literacy. To date, 4,074 SCC students have been [awarded a LTD/POP scholarship](#) and 1,490 have graduated from SCC or taken classes at SCC and transferred to another postsecondary institution.

Special Populations Support Project

The goal of this [grant-funded project](#) is to improve the completion outcomes of special populations of students, including students in gender-nontraditional fields, single parents, low-income students, students with disabilities, displaced homemakers, and English language learners. Project objectives include: increase awareness of and participation in support services, financial aid and scholarships; design individual and group activities that encourage student connections; and conduct outreach efforts that include referrals to services, individual and group meetings, activities, events, recognition of accomplishments, and marketing supportive of college completion. Since its inception in 2014, this [program has served](#) more than 200 students and provided over 70 presentations on study skills and support services.

Veterans' Services

SCC has both a college-sponsored and a student-led Veterans' support service for approximately 300 enrolled student military veterans. The student organization provides support to all veterans, active duty members, retirees, reserve, guard, spouses, and dependents attending SCC to further their educational goals and help overcome challenges and barriers of transitioning from military service to the classroom. The College also offers a [Veterans' Connect Center](#), which opened on September 11, 2015 on the Lincoln Campus and provides a one-stop shop for support services. On average, 8 to 12 veteran students and their families use the Veterans' Center on a daily basis. In Fall 2016, the Milford Campus administered a [student survey](#) to further identify needs of student veterans. Based on the results of the survey, the College started a student veterans' organization on the Milford Campus with the goal of developing a dedicated space for peer-to-peer support, making campus a supportive environment, and connecting with other community organizations. The College regularly monitors enrollment of student veterans on the Beatrice Campus and due to low numbers, services are provided as needed by student services staff.

"... Empower and transform its students and the diverse communities it serves."

SCC's [enrollment profile](#) reflects its mission to serve a diverse student population. In the 2016-17 academic year 77% percent of enrolled students (n = 11,198) were residents of the 15-county service

area, 15% (n = 2,215) were residents of Nebraska from outside the service area, and less than 10% (n = 1,392) were out-of-state residents. As an open-access institution, SCC attracts a diverse student body in terms of age, race and ethnicity, economic status, and academic and social background. More than half (57%) [attend part-time](#), and many also have family/work responsibilities. The College monitors the enrollment profile to ensure instructional programs and support services align with student needs.

1.A.3.

The College's [nine strategic goals](#) are derived from the College's mission and core values discussed in 1.A.1., including enrollment and program growth, student success and development, partnerships, financial stability, employee excellence, and organizational environment. Following Board approval of the Strategic Plan, the College developed an [integrated budgeting process](#) that resulted in new positions and capital equipment in [2015](#) and [2016](#). The rationale for those new positions and equipment included links to the College's Strategic Plan. A full discussion of the integrated budget and planning process can be found in 5.C.1.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

1.B.1.

Southeast Community College's mission, core values, and Strategic Plan goals and objectives provide an explicit guide to operations and institutional priorities. The mission is articulated in publicly accessible documents such as the College's [2015-2019 Strategic Plan](#), [College Catalog](#), [marketing materials](#), [class schedules](#), and the [website](#). Examples such as the annual [Graduate report](#) demonstrate SCC's commitment to communicating transfer and employment outcomes of SCC's mission. Continued efforts to integrate the College's mission and goals with operations include embedding the [mission](#) and [employee excellence goals](#) into the 2017-2019 faculty contract.

SCC's mission and core values are actualized through [nine strategic goals and sixty-five strategic objectives](#).

1. *Enrollment and Growth: promote access to career and technical, academic transfer, and continuing education programs through proactive enrollment, student support, and program growth based on student, employer, and community demand.*
2. *Student Success: improve student success, retention, completion, and academic excellence through high-quality academic and career programs and responsive, innovative student services.*
3. *Student Enrichment: promote student lifelong learning and continuous personal growth through comprehensive student development programming.*
4. *Program Development: promote the development of career, academic transfer, and continuing education programs to meet current and future needs.*
5. *Faculty and Staff Excellence: promote excellence, innovation, and creativity among faculty and staff to support a positive and dynamic learning environment.*
6. *Partnerships: develop and maintain community partnerships to promote collaboration and innovation among school districts, institutions of higher education, industry, community organizations, and governing entities.*
7. *Educational Environment: enhance and maintain educational environments that promote learning, engagement, innovation, creativity, and safety.*
8. *Financial Stability: maximize the College's ability to fulfill its mission and accomplish its strategic goals and objectives while maintaining financial stability.*
9. *Organizational Environment: maximize operational efficiency by enhancing policies and*

procedures, staffing, and communication processes and practices.

The Office of Institutional Research prepares an annual [Strategic Plan Progress Report](#) to provide updates to internal and external stakeholders on the strategic and department-level achievements, as well as to measure progress on over [50 metrics](#) related to each Strategic goal. The Strategic Plan Progress Report is also [presented to the Board of Governors](#), whose agendas, minutes, and meetings are made available to the public.

The College's mission is also communicated publicly through the Board of Governors and President. Monthly Board presentations include strategic objectives related to the material being presented. For example, during the January 2017 Board meeting, the [Precision Machining program presented](#) on the local and global impact of their program and graduates.

As one funding option for SCC's new Facilities Master Plan, SCC's Board of Governors voted to put a [bond issue](#) on the local election ballot in November 2016. The College President and other administrative leaders formally [presented to 173 groups](#) to communicate the current mission and Strategic Plan to over 3,600 stakeholders. These presentations provided the opportunity to publicly communicate the College's mission to the service area.

1.B.2.

The College mission and strategic plan is current, having been [revised and approved in April 2015](#). Annual review of the Strategic Plan and progress made towards the College meeting its strategic goals occurs through the [annual unit-level planning process](#) and [annual progress report](#). The College will begin the planning process for the revision of its mission and Strategic Plan in 2017-2018 in preparation for the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

SCC's mission statement emphasizes instruction, economic development, and public service.

*The mission of Southeast Community College (SCC) is to **empower and transform its students and the diverse communities it serves.***

*The College provides accessible, dynamic, and responsive pathways to **career and technical, academic transfer, and continuing education programs.***

*Student success and completion is maximized through **collegiate excellence, exemplary instruction, comprehensive student support services, enrichment programs, and student-centered processes.***

*SCC is committed to a proactive and evidence-based approach that continually **assesses and responds to student, community, and employer demand for higher education.***

The College's [annual Strategic Plan Progress Report](#) demonstrates the institution's emphasis on its mission and goals. The annual report highlights institutional strategic achievements, metrics, and department-level accomplishments. Each strategic goal also includes an analysis on the number of unit-level connections to the strategic objectives by division. For example, in 2015-16, there were [90 unit-level strategies](#) designed to promote student success.

1.B.3.

As a two-year public community college, SCC provides accessible and responsive instructional programming that is based on student need and employer demand in the targeted 15-county service area. The current SCC mission statement, Strategic Plan, and operational processes precisely follow the [Nebraska statutes](#) by providing career and technical training, transfer education, continuing education programming, and comprehensive student support services. Also in alignment with the statutes, the College actively participates in the Nebraska Community College Association and adheres to state and federal regulations.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

1.C.1.

The recognition of diversity in society is present in every aspect of the College's mission, values, and Strategic Plan. The College's mission statement is "to empower and transform its students and the diverse communities it serves." This statement guides the policies and practices of the College, and there is a clear recognition that the College has a role in serving a diverse society. The core values cite "Inclusion—Promotion of opportunities and advancement for a diverse and dynamic student, faculty/staff, and community population through the creation of a positive, compassionate, and reflective culture." The College's Strategic Plan has six objectives specifically related to its role in addressing diversity in society ([1.4](#), [1.7](#), [1.8](#), [3.5](#), [5.1](#), and [9.6](#)).

SCC considers multiple aspects of diversity as it addresses its role in a diverse society and regularly monitors trend data for [first-generation college student status](#), [racial and ethnic identity](#), [gender](#), [academic preparedness](#), [enrollment status](#), [program type](#), and [peer institutions](#). The College has identified enrollment among underserved student populations, including students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, as one of its [strategic metrics](#). The student body at SCC has become more racially and ethnically diverse over the past four years; in fact, SCC has a more diverse population than exists in the service area (diversity index). The percentages of Hispanic and Black SCC students have both increased in each of the past four academic years. Although the number of undergraduate students who were [home-schooled](#) represents a small percentage of the overall undergraduate student body, the number has remained fairly consistent over the past four academic years. In 2015-16 the College began measuring the [student Veteran population](#), identifying 298 students who received Veteran's Administration tuition benefits. To address the College's role in a multicultural society, a total of 31 unit-level [strategies](#) were included in the 2015-16 Strategic Plan to better serve diverse student population groups.

Most recently, in January 2017, SCC's President issued a [college-wide statement](#) reaffirming the College's long-held position of supporting inclusiveness in education. This statement serves as an important reminder to the College that, "the perspectives, experiences and contributions of our students and employees with international ties greatly enrich our community and broaden our educational experiences. We embrace a culture of reflective and transparent communication, and compassion and respect toward the views and ideas of others."

1.C.2.

The College has an established Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity, which oversees policies and

processes that ensure a welcoming and diverse educational environment.

Policies and Processes

The College has inclusive equal opportunity/non-discrimination policies in place that apply to both admissions and employment:

It is the policy of Southeast Community College to provide equal opportunity and non-discrimination in admission and attendance for all qualified persons, attending or seeking admission to the College, without regard to race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, disability, or other factors prohibited by law. This policy applies to every aspect of recruitment, admission, attendance, advancement, financial assistance, and other terms and conditions of participation in all College-administered programs and activities.

It is the policy of Southeast Community College to provide equal opportunity and non-discrimination in employment and advancement for all qualified persons, employed by or seeking employment with the College, without regard to race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, disability, or other factors prohibited by law. This policy applies to every aspect of recruitment, employment, advancement, transfer, demotion, reduction-in-force, termination, rates of pay or other compensation, training opportunities, and other terms and conditions of employment.

Diversity Education

Since 1994, SCC employees have been required to complete [three hours of diversity training](#) annually to further cultural understanding. To support the College's [strategic goal](#) of improving diversity education, the Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity recently contracted with a new vendor, Workplace Answers, to provide an online training program to all staff in a variety of areas including: EEO Laws and Discrimination Prevention for Higher Education; Unlawful Harassment Prevention for Higher Education Staff; and Preventing Discrimination and Sexual Violence: Title IX, Violence Against Women Act and Clery Act.

The Vice President for Access, Equity, and Diversity regularly [presents updates](#) to the Board of Governors on strategic achievements, diversity programming, employee composition data, in addition to the [annual access, equity, and diversity report](#).

Public Information

The Office of Public Information oversees the College's marketing policies and processes. Intentional efforts to include diversity in age, racial and ethnic identity, gender, and geographic area are evident in printed and online materials, like the [Discover SCC Viewbook](#) and [instructional program brochures](#). The [non-discrimination statement](#) is included on marketing materials in English and Spanish. With an [average student age of 24](#), SCC's social media target group is in the 25-45 age range. One engagement initiative includes a weekly "[People of SCC](#)" Facebook post. The College recently started using Snapchat as a means to reach younger students.

Activities

A few examples of the College's activities reflecting attention to human diversity include a defined [plan](#) that focuses on recruitment of diverse student populations in the 15-county service area;

increased staffing to strengthen College support of diverse populations ([Director of Disability and Academic Support Services](#) and [Disability Services Advisor](#)); expansion of programs and services to the service area through Learning Centers; and community and constituent outreach.

Beginning in the 2015-16 academic year, the College expanded its efforts to provide educational services to underserved rural communities within the service area through [Learning Centers](#). Learning Centers have been expanded to Wahoo, York, Hebron, Falls City, Nebraska City and Plattsmouth. Each Learning Center has an established [advisory committee](#) that is in the process of determining community-specific educational and vocational needs. The College is aware of the [CCPE](#) and [HLC](#) regulations on additional locations and as the advisory boards identify specific credit programming, the College will complete the process required by both.

The College is involved in hosting, sponsoring, and promoting numerous community and constituent outreach efforts. One example of such diversity education programming (strategic goal 3.5) is the annual [Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Breakfast](#), which SCC has hosted and co-sponsored in partnership with Lincoln Public Schools, and the University of Nebraska Lincoln for the past 20 years. The Vice President for Access, Equity, and Diversity serves as chair of the event that honors the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in addition to raising scholarship funds for six Lincoln Public School high school graduates.

In 2015, SCC was awarded the [Association of Community College Trustees' Charles Kennedy Equity Award](#) to recognize its leadership in providing access to education through its Learn to Dream Scholarship program. The award validated the College's [commitment to achieve equity](#) in its education programs and services. Other examples of the College's diversity-related processes and activities highlighted in the Assurance Argument include Global Education and International Education week in 3.B.4., and support services for student populations in 3.D. and 1.A.2.

Continuing Progress

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.

Trend data show that only 6 percent (n = 39 in Fall 2016) of the [Milford Campus student population](#) is female. The College has [plans](#) to develop a new multi-purpose classroom building to enhance academic transfer and health sciences course offerings as one initiative to increase gender diversity on the Milford Campus.

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1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.D.1.

SCC's mission statement reflects commitment to the public good, to ". . . empower and transform its students and the diverse communities it serves." SCC is committed to utilizing a pro-active, data-driven approach to decision-making to ensure its goals and strategies are based on public need. Recent examples of actions and decisions meeting its public obligations include the active role College leaders have taken in the community.

As discussed in 1.A.1., during the process of revising the mission and developing the Strategic Plan, representatives from the College held [community forums](#) in all 15 counties to understand county-specific higher education and employer needs, learn how SCC can meet local needs, and receive feedback on what SCC's priorities should be within its new Strategic Plan. The College learned from these meetings that the rural communities felt the gap in physical presence throughout the 15-county area, and that driving more than 30 miles to a campus was not attainable for the community. These meetings also informed the College's development of its Strategic Plan. Also identified was a greater need for information and communication from the College. In 2016, College administrators presented at over [170 meetings](#) to communicate the College's Strategic Plan and the necessary external support needed to enable the College to meet community needs.

The College's obligation to the public is evident in the active role it takes in educating state legislators on the role and public benefit of community colleges. All six of the community colleges in Nebraska rely significantly on [property taxes as a funding source](#). Some of the proposed tax reduction bills introduced in 2017 would have had devastating effects and possibly led to closure of the colleges, which is not in the public's best interest. In collaboration with four other peer institutions that are also members of the Nebraska Community College Association, SCC developed an informational [data sheet](#) that explains the value of Nebraska Community Colleges. The College communicated to legislators through committee testimony that approximately 3,000 students received veterans' benefits, and 92% of students remain in Nebraska after completing their educational goals. The data sheet shows that community colleges receive only 5.4% of property taxes and that for every \$1 invested taxpayers receive a \$3.40 return on investment. The College also had the opportunity to share with legislators the HLC's requirements of financial stability. This information communicated to internal and external stakeholders demonstrates that SCC not only understands, but takes an active role in serving the public.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the Office of Institutional Research in collaboration with instructional deans, conducted [employer demand surveys](#) to identify existing and future needs in the employment sector.

SCC demonstrated commitment to the public through the data-informed and transparent approach taken during the process to complete the Year 4 Assurance Review. The College upheld HLC's Open Pathway philosophy for quality assurance and institutional improvement as a framework for the entire Assurance Review process. Over 30 employees comprehensively reviewed policies, practices, initiatives, and supporting data, which enabled the College to identify key opportunities for improvement.

1.D.2.

SCC's educational responsibilities are at the forefront of its decisions, which is demonstrated through the strategic planning budget process and the percent of operating funds that are dedicated to instruction, academic and student support services, and institutional scholarships.

The College's process for making budget-related decisions derives from identifying institutional needs that align with achieving the College's Strategic Plan. As detailed in 5.C.1., the College follows a data-driven planning and budgeting process. One outcome of this process is the approval of additional funding that provides a [new position](#) for the Continuing Education ESL program, as a result of an increase in service-area demand for ESL programming opportunities. In [2015-16](#), there were more than 400 participants in ESL classes and the institution responded to this identified community need with additional financial resources to help support the community and meet the College's strategic objectives of improving accessibility to programs and services among underserved populations and strengthening partnerships in the 15-county area.

In the past five years, approximately [73-75% of operating funds](#) have been dedicated to providing quality instruction and academic programming, academic support services, student support services, and scholarships to support students' financial needs. In [2015-16](#), 80% of funds for expansions of positions and capital equipment were allocated directly to instruction, academic support, and student services. The remaining operational expenses are distributed to institutional support, and auxiliary enterprises that are directly related to providing a service to students or the community, such as the Child Development Center and campus bookstores. The public has access to the College's financial data through the financial Fact Book on SCC's website. [Monthly financial presentations](#) to the Board of Governors are accessible to the general public through [Novus Agenda](#), and the annual audits are available to the public on [SCC's website](#) (see 2.A.).

1.D.3.

Consistent with the charge by the [state of Nebraska](#), SCC has an extensive record of engaging with external constituencies to serve the community through higher educational opportunities. This engagement is manifested through every aspect of operations including advisory committees (see 3.A.1.), Entrepreneurship Center services (see 3.E.2.), the Learn to Dream and People Obtaining Prosperity partnerships (see 1.A.2.), development of the Strategic and Facilities Master Plans (see

1.A.1.), and the Continuing Education Division.

The Continuing Education Division plays a unique role in serving the 15-county service area. In 2016-17 a total of [27,606 students](#) enrolled in [2,872 sections](#) including customized employer trainings, transportation, health care, personal and leisure activities, and industrial and manufacturing training. The College responded to the service area's needs by providing 1,069 students [adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English as a Second language classes](#). The customized employer [Training Solutions](#) team saw growth in both the number of courses offered (10%) and the number of unique sections offered (21%). The College directly responded to community and constituency needs to offer new courses in: Prezi, OSHA 10, Geometric Dimensioning & Tolerancing, Soldering, Emergenetics, and Simple Steps to Starting Your Business. They also hosted the 10th Annual Cyber Security Conference, which was attended by more than 250 people.

In 2016, the College's admissions and the SENCAP/Dual-credit advantage staff began [outreach efforts](#) to homeschooled students. Efforts have included attendance and presentations at [homeschool conferences](#) and commitment of additional marketing resources to purchase ads in homeschool newsletters and conference sponsorships.

The College recently created a new position, [Vice President of Program Development](#), that provides leadership with external constituency engagement to identify and address community, workforce, and student needs.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

- Southeast Community College's mission is current, accessible, and reflects the constituents of the 15-county service area.
- The College has 53 instructional programs that serve a diverse enrollment profile across rural and urban campuses.
- The College has a comprehensive array of student support services that are unique to the mission, such as the Learn to Dream scholarship program, Veterans' Services, and Special Populations Support Project.
- The College's involvement with the Nebraska Community College Association, responsive credit and non-credit course offerings, and frequent presentations and community forums demonstrate commitment to the public good.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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.

Argument

The College's core values of integrity drives decisions and actions of the institution in its financial, academic, and personnel functions by the continuous pursuit of transparency and ethical practices in all operations. The College complies with federal and state laws that protect the privacy of certain personal financial records, educational records, and personal customer information. The following policy statements are publicly available on the College [website](#):

- Student Code of Conduct (Handbook)
- Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination-Admission
- Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination-Employment
- Equal Opportunity is the Law (29 CFR Part 37.30)
- Title IX Statement
- Access-Employment and Admission
- Privacy Statement
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)
- Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act
- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
- Pregnant and Parenting Students
- Website Privacy
- Computer Security
- Safety and Security

Policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior: Financial Integrity

As stated in [Nebraska law](#) and the [College Handbook](#), the state of Nebraska designates the power and duties to the community college boards, including:

. . . to develop and oversee a budget of revenues and expenditures that reflects the optimum interests of the public, the students, and the College.

The Board of Governors has established [sub-teams](#) (Executive, Equity and Human Resources, Finance and Facilities, and Planning) to make proposals to the full Board, conduct research and assessment in policy development, monitor policy implementation and progress in achieving goals, and facilitate the flow of information to the full Board for its decision-making. See 2.C. for information on Board election, orientation, and training.

The Vice President of Administrative Services, in conjunction with the President, oversee the budget development process. The President presents [monthly financial reports](#) to the Board and financial information is also made available to the public through the [financial Fact Book](#) located on the SCC website which includes (1) statements of net position; (2) statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net assets; and (3) statements of cash flows. Each year an independent accounting firm audits the College's financial statements to ensure compliance and provides a report to the Board of Governors ([2016](#), [2015](#), [2014](#), [2013](#)). These reports are also available for public view on the [College's website](#).

In addition to Board oversight, each campus business office is under the direction of the Vice President of Administrative Services. This department ensures consistent and transparent financial processes that are outlined in detail in the College's [Purchasing Handbook](#). The College is also a member of the National Association of Education Procurement and subscribes to their code of ethics.

The College follows [guidelines](#) for purchasing quotations and bids for capital construction projects, equipment, and supplies, as [approved](#) by the Board of Governors.

The College has a long record on consecutive unqualified audits, which indicates that financial records and statements are fairly and appropriately presented and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). As discussed in this section, the College has checks and balances in its financial policies and procedures. In October 2016, a result of these procedures led to the discovery of an accounts receivable inconsistency. The College immediately notified authorities and requested an external audit to be conducted. The College has recently implemented additional recommendations made by the auditor.

Policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior: Academic Integrity

See 2.E.3. for a full discussion on policy and processes related to academic integrity. To maintain integrity of content and relevance, all instructional programs at the College follow a seven-year cycle of program reviews and meet annually with program advisory committees (see 3.A.1. and 4.A.1).

Policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior: Personnel Integrity

The College's Office of Human Resources oversees the hiring and orientation process for employees. The following [policy](#) is in place to ensure integrity in hiring practices:

Any person seeking employment at Southeast Community College shall be afforded every consideration provided under equal opportunity, access, and fair employment standards. Application for employment and other personnel matters shall be considered regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, disability, or other factors prohibited by law. Job requirements, including probationary conditions and length of term, as well as required qualifications, performance standards, work schedules, salary and benefit provisions, will be fully communicated to all new employees.

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. The College follows a [procedure](#) outlined in the

College Handbook after the President authorizes the position to be filled. A list of all personnel can be found in the [College Catalog](#).

The College included an objective in its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan specifically designed to create an organizational environment for promoting professionalism and positivity. The focus of Goal 9 (2015-19 Strategic Plan) is to “maximize operational efficiency by enhancing policies and procedures, staffing, and communication processes and practices.” As a result, Goal 9 is also [included](#) in [job descriptions](#), [standard interview questions](#), as well as [performance appraisals](#).

New employees complete an [orientation](#) when they begin their employment at SCC. The College also requires ongoing [training](#) on safety, diversity, and professional development.

Staff in three offices (the Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity, the Instructional Division, and Human Resources) share oversight of the [processes](#) to ensure annual training requirements are met by employees. Adjunct faculty complete an [orientation](#) within their assigned instructional division.

As outlined in the [College Handbook](#), all employees are expected to follow the SCC Code of Ethics:

- Be Accountable and Show Respect for Others.
- Be Honest and Demonstrate Integrity.
- Pursue Excellence in Fulfilling Responsibilities and Job Duties.
- Be Kind and Compassionate.
- Adhere to the Principles of Diversity.

The College has discriminatory harassment and grievance policies and procedures in the [College Handbook](#). The SCC Faculty Association and the Professional Association have each negotiated their own procedures that are communicated to constituents in the [Constitution and Bylaws for the Faculty Association](#) and the [Professional Association agreement](#).

Through the aforementioned policies and processes, it is evident that SCC operates with integrity and follow policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior. The College believes that operating with integrity contributes to a low turnover rate (see 3.C.1.). Another outcome includes over three-quarters of employees [reporting satisfaction](#) with their work environment in a 2015 employee survey.

The College continues to make improvements to policies that promote fair and ethical behavior. The [2017-18 faculty contract](#) recognizes that faculty are professionals who will utilize their best judgment to ensure students receive the best possible learning experience. Consequently, the College removed the long-standing policy that faculty are required to be on campus for a minimum of 35 hours a week.

Policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior: Auxiliary functions

SCC supports and administers several auxiliary functions: The Child Development Center (Lincoln), the cafeterias (Beatrice and Lincoln), student housing (Beatrice and Milford), bookstores (Beatrice, Lincoln, Milford), and the Entrepreneurship Center. All are intended to be at least partially self-supporting, and their [revenue and expenses](#) are included in the College’s accounting system and annual audit. They are staffed with College employees who have all the same rights and responsibilities as other employees and are subject to SCC policies and procedures. Two of the enterprises, the Child Development Center and the Entrepreneurship Center, are designed specifically to provide service to external as well as internal constituents. Their daily activities are supervised by SCC administrators to ensure that activities support the College mission and Strategic Plan.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

Programs and Requirements

The [SCC Catalog](#) provides the public and its students clear information on all programs of study, including requirements, curriculum, prerequisites, and class descriptions for all offered classes. The program pages include information on associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates, which states the requirements for admission and completion for all program areas. An electronic version of the SCC Catalog is available on the [SCC website](#) for public access. Student expectations regarding attendance, assignments, learning outcomes, and integrity of scholarship are outlined in [course syllabi](#) and [course information documents](#). All course information documents and syllabi are accessible to students on the College intranet, The Hub and the Moodle Learning Management System.

Faculty and Staff

SCC faculty and staff names, positions, and credentials are identified in the [College Catalog](#). [Personnel changes](#) are made available to the public at the monthly Board of Governors meetings. Each month, the Vice President for Human Resources presents personnel changes including replacement, resignation, and transfer of employees, as well status updates on position vacancies. Additionally, the College recently added an [online directory](#) feature on its public website.

Costs

Costs to students are stated on the [second page](#) of the College Catalog and easily accessible on the [SCC homepage](#). The College goes through a systematic process to review tuition costs each year that promotes transparency with students and the public. The Vice President for Student Services attends [student senate meetings](#) on each campus to discuss impact of tuition and fees increases. Student recommendations, along with administration recommendations are presented to the [Board](#). The Board reviews the tuition and budget impact information, then [votes on a recommendation](#) each spring. In April 2017, the Board voted to raise tuition and fees by 7% to help address the reduction in state funding, and to support updating facilities (see 3.D.4., 5.A., and 5.D.). All Board of Governors' meeting dates, agendas, and minutes are provided to the public through the College's [website](#) and [NOVUS online meeting agenda](#).

Control

The [SCC website](#), [College Catalog](#), and [Board minutes](#) communicate the College's status as a public institution.

Accreditation Relationships

The [Catalog](#) includes the College's regional accreditation information regarding the Higher Learning Commission as well as information on 24 specialized program-specific accreditations. Accreditation

relationships are also publicly available on [SCC's accreditation page](#) on the website. See 4.A.5. for more information. Accredited programs regularly [present updates](#) to the Board of Governors, promoting transparency across all levels of the College.

Office of Public Information

The Office of Public Information oversees all marketing and communication strategies and ensures the College presents itself accurately to stakeholders. In 2015, as part of a data-driven [expanded budget request](#) process, the College created two new positions in the Public Information Office: Marketing Specialist and Social Media Specialist. The expanded use of social media has resulted in the College's presence on Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, and a significant [increase in interactions](#) with SCC's Facebook page. The College also redesigned the website to reflect modern standards. This has contributed to a low "bounce rate," meaning the users who visit the SCC website spend more time exploring it. In addition, Public Information, Admissions, and instructional programs collaborate to develop marketing materials including [program fact sheets](#) with program information, costs, and contact information for admissions and program faculty.

Student Right-to-Know and Consumer Information

As required by the Clery Act, SCC provides all pertinent Student Right-to-Know and Consumer information on the [SCC website](#). Additionally, students and the public are able to access information regarding the safety and security of all SCC campuses via the safety preventative measures and crime statistics, including an annually updated [brochure](#) and the [SCC Annual Safety, Security, and Crime/Fire Statistics report](#) which provides statistics regarding crime, safety, and pertinent data.

Fact Book

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) provides an interactive [Fact Book](#) available to the public, which includes aggregated data on student and graduate demographics, courses and programs, financial assets and liabilities, and service area census data. IR is also in the process of developing a Fact Book section on faculty and staff demographics. Students and the public also have access to the annual [Graduate Report](#), which provides employment and transfer data.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1.

Southeast Community College's Board of Governors consists of eleven members elected by registered voters in the [five districts](#) of the College's 15-county area, with one at-large member elected. The [Board](#) includes a professionally diverse group who are invested in SCC's best interests. Each board member has the responsibility of representing their constituencies and reporting updates to the Board about the area they represent. See 5.B. for more information on board make-up and governing structure.

[Each January the Board elects](#) from its own members a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson. They also select a Secretary and Treasurer. The Board Chairperson appoints members to serve on the following [teams](#):

- Equity and Human Resources Team
- Finance and Facilities Team
- Planning Team
- Executive Advisory Team

The role of the teams is to conduct research and assessment in policy development, monitor policy implementation and progress, and facilitate the flow of information to the entire Board. The teams provide monthly reports to the Board as documented in the minutes. The Board follows a [standard meeting agenda](#), which is organized by the Executive Advisory Team.

As noted in the Board minutes, each month the Board contributes to the governance of the College, offering a big-picture, long-term view, and making policy decisions for the best interest of the district, the institution, and the students. Board members have access to information necessary for such decision-making through [NovusAgenda](#). For example, the President presents [financial information](#) including fund balances, investments of the College and receipt of revenue from multiple sources. [Detailed expenditures](#) information is also included in the monthly report.

As discussed in 1.B.1. and 5.B.1., one of the standing Board agenda items is a [monthly instructional program presentation](#). These presentations provide an interactive demonstration of what students are

learning in the classroom and serve as an important reminder for Board members as they are deliberating budgetary and policy decisions that impact students.

Examples of the decisions reflecting institutional priorities include the [approval of the College's Strategic Plan](#), involvement in the [facilities master planning process and adoption of the bond resolution](#), and approval of [expanded project requests](#).

In [April 2015 a Board Special Work Session](#) was held to discuss the College's Strategic Plan and budget-related topics including general and capital funds, tax and tuition rates, and expanded projects. The President and Vice President for Administrative Services led this discussion to review trend and comparative data and discuss budget scenarios to support the Strategic Plan goals. Using a data-driven process, the Board approved the expanded project requests in [June 2015](#). More details on these institutional priorities are discussed in Criterion 5.

2.C.2.

Members of the Board of Governors are elected officials representing the [15-county area](#) that take into consideration the needs of internal and external stakeholders. The College Handbook communicates the [responsibilities](#) of the Board of Governors. New Board members participate in an [orientation](#) led by the Board Chairperson outlining their responsibilities. One of the Board [Standards of Conduct](#) is to recognize that the Board's duty is to represent the entire community, while realizing that a need may arise for individual Board members to advocate particular needs of their constituents.

In an effort to understand the external stakeholder interests of those living in the 15-county area, employees traveled to each county in the Fall Quarter of 2014 to share information about the College in an [open forum](#) for area residents. This also gave Dr. Illich, who started his position as College President in July 2014, the opportunity to engage personally with district constituents. The information gathered from the community forums was presented to the [Board for consideration](#) as the Strategic Plan was being developed.

As a result of feedback from these meetings, the Board recognized that the residents outside of the three counties where full campuses are located were underserved. In July 2015, SCC launched a plan to develop six [Learning Centers](#) within the 15 counties. One of the primary goals of the Learning Centers is to bring SCC course offerings within 30 miles of anyone living in the service area. Learning Centers are now being developed in Falls City, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Wahoo, Hebron, and York. Coordinators for Learning Center activities have been hired and facilities have been secured for all but Falls City (where land has been purchased) and Wahoo.

During the Board of Governors meetings one of the standing agenda items is "Public Comment." This provides the opportunity at each board meeting for stakeholders to share their thoughts about any item on the month's meeting agenda. Recently members of the [general public commented in support](#) of the College's work in development of the Falls City Learning Center and [support for the bond issue](#) placed on the November 2016 ballot.

Each monthly meeting agenda includes a general [presentation](#) from an instructional program or student services department. These presentations help the Board to stay in touch with the educational mission of the institution and understand the operational impact of policy decisions on internal constituents.

Another example of the Board considering constituent interests during [deliberations](#) include recent Board presentations on faculty and student surveys on topics such as [employee satisfaction with processes, services, and facilities](#), [student activities](#), and [Information Technology services and training](#).

2.C.3.

The Board believes that it is essential to the proper operation of the College that its members be impartial and independent of personal interest as they address policy issues and other agenda items. The College Handbook outlines [Board conflict of interest policies and procedures](#). It is the policy of the Board that any possible conflict of interest issue is handled through prompt and full disclosure of any such possibility, together with non-participation in any vote on the matter wherein possible conflict of interest may be involved.

2.C.4.

[College policy states](#) that, “It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to appoint, support, and evaluate the President and to delegate the responsibilities for the execution of its policies directly to him or her.” Board [Standards of Conduct](#) state that Board members are to avoid interference in the day-to-day administration of Southeast Community College, and support the President in carrying out the administrative duties of the College, including academic matters. This is practiced each year during the [approval of the President’s annual goals](#), which provide guidance on the [President’s operational priorities](#) for that year. The Board Executive Team and Chairperson meet on a monthly basis with the President to set the Board meeting agenda.

The President provides monthly reports to the Board in the form of a “[President’s Report](#)” to update the Board on pertinent operational and strategic initiatives.

The Board Chair reminds members of the Board of Governors of their role during meetings and outside of the regular meetings. For example, in October 2016 Board members completed a [self-evaluation survey](#) that informed a Board special work session that was held in November 2016. One of the topics was “[Board Practices and Self Evaluation](#).” As part of this training the Board reviewed the [Self-Evaluation Survey results](#) and discussed appropriate Board roles and responsibilities.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

Southeast Community College is committed to truth and integrity in teaching and learning. The College's [core values](#) of Integrity and Innovation drive decisions and actions of the institution:

Integrity: Continuous pursuit of fulfillment of mission and goals through transparency and ethical practices in all College operations.

Innovation: Commitment to inquiry and the respectful challenging of assumptions to promote creativity, alternative points of view, and opportunities for ongoing discovery.

Additionally, [Goal 9.6](#) of the College's Strategic Plan focuses on "maximizing a positive and engaging organizational environment by encouraging input, reflective and transparent communication, and compassion and respect toward the views and ideas of others."

As discussed in 3.A.3., the College has standard syllabi and common learning outcomes across course sections. Even though there is consistency in course expectations, faculty have the latitude and freedom to develop their course lesson plans, unique to their professional backgrounds and interests.

SCC employees' freedom to pursue scholarship, creative expression, and research is demonstrated through policy and practice. The [College Handbook](#) includes policies regarding intellectual property and delineates how the College supports the scholarly work of faculty. SCC's Office of Human Resources and the Instructional Division collaborate to provide faculty with in-person and online [training](#) that supports continuing growth in ethical teaching and learning.

Students and faculty at SCC have numerous ways to exercise their academic freedoms, including the College's award-winning arts journal, [Illuminations](#), which features original art, photography, prose, poetry, and essays. Through the publication of SCC's newspaper, [The Challenge](#), students learn the ethical responsibilities of gathering and reporting news. SCC's student [clubs and organizations](#) also offer students opportunities for practicing free expression.

Another example of the institution's commitment to freedom of expression includes the recent unveiling of an apple sculpture titled, "Potential" that was designed by two female Welding students, in collaboration with the Program Chair. The 13-foot-tall, 1,200-pound sculpture of an [apple with flowers](#) surrounding it was installed on the Lincoln Campus as a creative representation of education and growth.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1.

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) is responsible for creating and implementing guidelines and procedures for research at the College. In response to [HLC's recommendations](#) as an area that needed organizational attention in 2012, IR has formalized its research request guidelines for both faculty and external researchers. All [research and data requests](#) must be made through IR. The guidelines provide consistency for IR in evaluating research requests to ensure that all research is in alignment with federal standards for research involving human subjects, and that student and other data are being used appropriately. Before a research project can proceed, the researcher must demonstrate that methodology involving human subjects has been reviewed and approved (or exempted) by the IRB at the researcher's affiliated institution. These guidelines have already afforded several faculty members pursuing graduate degrees a path to receiving approval to conduct thesis research on SCC's campuses. The new guidelines also streamline processes and ensure integrity of research when SCC receives external requests to conduct research on SCC's campuses, such as [UNL's Project Information Literacy Research Habits Study](#).

2.E.2.

SCC offers students multiple resources for finding, assessing, and using information in an ethical manner.

Staff in the Learning Resource Centers (Library) and Tutoring and Learning Centers (TLC) provide students with guidance in the ethical use of information resources. SCC Library staff offer face-to-face group or individual [orientations](#) for more than 1,000 students annually on library resources for research and citation support. Trained writing tutors in the TLC assist students in source use and ethical citation both on-site and online via [Smarthinking](#).

In addition, the TLC's Hub page provides information on evaluating sources for credibility, appropriate use of citation formats, and ethical use of information. External links to a tutorial on academic applications of copyright law and the U.S. Copyright Office are featured on the [Library Hub site](#).

One of the College's [General Education Learning Outcomes](#) is directly related to ethical use of research: "The student will demonstrate the ability to present original, organized written

ideas/information in diverse genres to varied audiences; use language effectively, including the conventions of standard grammar; and gather and analyze information from a variety of sources.” Students take courses that satisfy the written communications requirement in the general education core that includes instruction on appropriate use and citation of information sources. In particular, [Composition I’s learning outcomes](#) state that students will “learn and use research skills to responsibly evaluate and ethically incorporate information.” The required research-based essay in Composition I is scored with a common [rubric](#) that evaluates responsible integration of sources. In addition, individual disciplines across the College instruct students in appropriate citation formats and types of scholarly sources through a variety of course assignments such as an [annotated bibliography](#), [immunology research paper](#), and [comparative policy paper](#).

To reinforce the ethical use of information, many instructors use Turnitin, an online plagiarism education tool, teaching students to self-check their source use. The [use of Turnitin has steadily increased](#) since its integration into SCC’s Moodle learning management system. Approximately 20,000 submissions were made in 2016, more than four times the number since the College first adopted the software in 2010.

Evidence that students are actively consuming information provided by the College can be seen in CCSSE and institutional surveys. [2015 CCSSE](#) results indicate that 20.5% of CCSSE respondents report using peer or other tutoring at the College, which is a lower participation rate than our peer institutions. In 2016, the [Tutoring Center surveyed](#) the student body on tutoring-related topics to identify needs. About a quarter of respondents (363 students) use the College’s tutoring services, a similar response rate as the CCSSE found. However, the survey identified writing-related topics as the most utilized of any services (60%). Additionally, 39% of students have used Smarthinking writing. Tutoring programming has been changed based on survey results, as discussed in 3.D.1.

2.E.3.

Following HLC’s site visitor 2012 recommendations, the College has strengthened its commitment to academic integrity through implementation of activities and procedures. An [Academic Integrity Team](#) was established to achieve four goals: 1) determine data on number of cheating offenses reported and documented, 2) identify and evaluate current systems of cheating deterrents, 3) identify and implement a data collection system, and 4) inform College employees about policies and procedures.

Between [2014-2016](#), several positive changes were made that strengthened policies and procedures. The [Student Handbook](#) provides definitions of academic integrity and the consequences of academic dishonesty. Academic Integrity information is included in the [College Catalog](#) under Conduct Expectations. As part of its commitment to teach students ethical academic habits, SCC’s academic integrity policy is included in all [syllabi](#), and [ethical responsibility](#) is a stated outcome of general education. Additionally, the College adopted an [internal reporting and data collection system](#) called TIPS, allowing the College to track and respond to instances of academic dishonesty across the College.

The Academic Integrity Team also sponsors an annual [Academic Integrity Week](#) featuring educational sessions for both faculty and students, including a [student poster contest](#). An [Academic Integrity site](#) on The Hub was created to house records of the Academic Integrity Team and provide instructional videos and links for classroom and individual reference.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

- The College operates with integrity and has established policies and processes for ethical behavior in financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions.
- The recently expanded Office of Public Information and Marketing provides infrastructure to ensure the College presents itself clearly and completely through its Catalog and website. An interactive Fact Book is made available to the public and includes aggregated data on student and graduate demographics, courses and programs, financial assets and liabilities, and service area census data.
- A comprehensive review of the Board minutes show monthly presentations from instructional programs, student services, institutional research, and other operational areas that support the Board's consideration of internal constituencies during decision-making deliberations. Board members also engage with the community on behalf of the College and provide regular updates during Board meetings.
- Following discussions with site visitors from the 2012-13 comprehensive evaluation, the College has made significant progress in updating academic integrity-related policies, processes, and activities.
- Noted as an area of organizational need in the 2012-13 comprehensive evaluation team report, the College now has established research guidelines through the Office of Institutional Research.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

A comprehensive review of the evidence indicates that the institution articulates and differentiates learning goals and its program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and locations. In relation to levels of student performance required and appropriateness to degree awarded, there is one area with an opportunity for improvement. Many of the College's programs require a substantially higher number of credit hours for completion relative to comparable programs, as explained below.

3.A.1.

Opportunity for Improvement – Program Length

HLC's policy on program length, which was revised in June 2016, ([FDCA.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 revealed that levels of performance required by students for a number of the College's programs are not comparable to similar programs offered by some colleges. Approximately 70% of SCC's 39 associate degree programs require more than 75 hours, in contrast to 12% of peer institutions' programs. 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.

This past year, the College has been studying how to reduce the length of programs that exceed the program lengths of peer institutions. The College is currently on a quarter calendar system which is practiced by only [4% of institutions](#) in the U.S. In [May 2017](#), the Board of Governors approved the conversion to a semester calendar system. All programs will take the opportunity during the academic calendar transition to strategically and systematically reduce program lengths to ensure they are within the range of comparable programs. During the initial study and review [process](#), all programs submitted [calendar conversions proposals](#) to convert their program offerings to a semester calendar

and reduce total credit hours to more closely align with SCC's peers. It is anticipated that during the 2017-18 academic year, all programs will finalize plans and achieve compliance by 2018-2019. The College contacted its HLC liaison, who confirmed that the College's plan to address the program lengths was consistent with HLC's policies. The College was notified in August 2017 that the calendar change request was approved by the IAC at the July 2017 meeting.

Shifting to a semester calendar system will also ensure the College is in compliance with a past HLC recommendation in 2002 to have only one calendar system. Prior to that recommendation, the College was on both a quarter and semester system. The College again is on two systems with growth in dual-credit courses taught on semesters. Additionally, many transfer students are co-enrolled with institutions on semesters. The move to a semester system will address this issue while simultaneously reducing program lengths.

Courses are Current and Appropriate

SCC consistently follows well-established processes that ensure its courses are current and appropriate to the level of degree or certificate awarded. Those processes include program review, maintaining specialized accreditation, articulation agreements, a systematic curriculum development model (DACUM), program advisory committees, and institutional commitment to maintaining current equipment. In addition, a newly implemented Curriculum Committee is developing a procedure to streamline curriculum changes.

Program review

Each SCC program undergoes a comprehensive [review](#) on a [seven-year cycle](#). This review process is a requirement of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) to ensure continued efficacy of postsecondary programming. The College utilizes the review to determine if programs need to be modified and/or removed. Program reviews must provide evidence of demand, efficiency, need, and monitoring of standardized thresholds, such as number of graduates, student credit hours, student credit hours to faculty FTE, and degree awarded. Over the past five years, this process has led to four programs being merged into two (Computer Information Technology and Design and Drafting), and several programs (Land Surveying, Long Term Care Administration, and Chrysler and Ford Automotive) that are being monitored on a yearly basis. The program review process is discussed in depth in section 4.A.1.

Specialized program accreditation

[Twenty-four programs](#) maintain specialized accreditation with third-party accrediting bodies within the specific industry or professional focus. These standardized accreditation requirements ensure programs are meeting industry and professional standards and thresholds appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Articulation agreements

Since 1995, all community colleges in Nebraska have been involved in the [Nebraska Initiative](#) regarding statewide common courses to assure that lower-division general education courses are comparable in scope, quality, and rigor. SCC maintains articulation agreements that enable students to further their education beyond the associate level through transfer to a baccalaureate institution. Currently the College provides multiple avenues for transfer credits through associate to bachelor's agreements, course by course agreements, and transfer guides. The College's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan (objective [1.5](#) and [4.7](#)) also expresses a commitment to enhance the current level of articulation

of courses to senior institutions. The course learning outcomes must be equivalent for transfer credit and the agreement to be approved. Formal agreements are updated regularly with [28](#) public and private four-year colleges and universities in Nebraska and [nine](#) out-of-state institutions through a [process](#) that ensures continuity between institutions. The interactive [SCC transfer website](#) and four full-time transfer advisors inform students of course and program [transfer options](#) and considerations for [next steps](#) as students prepare to transfer, including issues related to [semester to quarter conversion](#). Representatives from four-year schools also have frequent [on-campus office hours](#) available to students and attend [transfer fairs](#) throughout the year. The strength of SCC's processes is demonstrated by the increase in both the [number of articulations](#) and the number of student transfers over the past five years. Between [2013-2016](#), 55% of students who took a class at SCC transferred or co-enrolled at another institution. In 2015, for example, approximately 74% of academic transfer graduates and 14% of career/technical graduates [continued their education](#) at a four-year institution.

Curriculum development model (DACUM)

To ensure curriculum is current and relevant, SCC utilizes a [DACUM](#) (Developing a Curriculum) [model](#) and annual program advisory committee meetings for all instructional programs. The [DACUM processes](#) are on a five-year cycle and involve a day-long workshop with panel experts in the field who identify necessary skills, worker behaviors, and equipment and materials that graduates need to perform the job well. Field experts also share their thoughts on future trends and concerns of the occupation. Panel recommendations are sent to the program faculty and advisory committee for review. One example of this process is with the Long Term Care Administration program. Through this program's DACUM workshop in 2013, the expert panel developed a list of [duties/tasks](#). Program faculty mapped the duties/tasks to sessions/courses where the learning goals were addressed. Faculty then proposed curriculum changes to the [advisory committee](#), based on the DACUM feedback, and subsequently [made](#) the approved changes. The Long Term Care Administration program will hold its next DACUM workshop during the [2017-18 academic year](#) and will repeat the curriculum review process.

Program advisory committees

The role of the [program advisory committee](#) as outlined in the Instructional Handbook extends beyond reviewing feedback from the DACUM process. The [advisory groups](#) meet annually to provide input regarding workplace competencies required for graduates to be successful in the field, make suggestions on capital equipment requests, and ensure that technology and industry standard updates are specific to the local labor market. The College's Placement offices maintain the [list of advisory committees and members](#), and support the organization of meetings and mailings. The College is in the process of moving to a sector partnership model for advisory committees (see 4.A.4.).

Instructional resources

The College demonstrates commitment to maintain current programs by purchasing equipment that meets industrial and technological standards. During the 2016-17 academic year, more than \$2 million was spent on new [capital equipment](#), as part of the total instructional [budget](#).

Curriculum Committee

SCC adopted a new process in the 2016-17 academic year to streamline course and program modifications. The [faculty-driven](#) Curriculum Committee includes representation from each division and from administration. The [purpose of the committee](#) is to ensure all academic programs comply

with HLC and CCPE requirements, in addition to SCC academic program policies and procedures. The committee evaluates all curriculum additions, modifications, and eliminations and communicates changes to all faculty, programs, and administration. This team adds another level of input and coordination with the [Assessment Team](#), [General Education Team](#), and [master course form & review process](#).

Curriculum and programmatic changes are communicated to students and employees and reflected in the [annual catalog revision](#).

3.A.2.

For each [degree and/or certificate](#), SCC articulates learning outcomes and identifies measurable expectations of performance within course-level learning objectives. SCC's mission statement, core values, and Strategic Plan promote academic excellence through high-quality academic and career programs. Certificates are awarded to students who complete a program of less than 45 quarter credit hours, including one core general education course. Diplomas are awarded to students who complete a program of 45-89 quarter credit hours, including two core general education courses. Associate degrees are awarded to students who complete at least 90 quarter credit hours, including five (minimum of 22.5 credit hours) core general education courses. Requirements for each level of award are communicated in the [College Catalog](#).

SCC recognizes that its graduates need to acquire a level of competence in expression and calculation generally expected of college-educated individuals. The College has established seven [General Education Learning Outcomes](#) (GELOs). [All courses](#) at SCC identify at least one GELO as a learning outcome on all course [syllabi](#) to communicate to students how the required learning outcomes are integrated into the course. Each SCC program measures at least one GELO in its three-year assessment [plan](#). The GELO assessment provides student learning outcome data to the General Education Team and any changes made based on the assessment data in the assessment [report](#). Degrees and certificate programs at SCC articulate the learning goals within [program handbooks](#) and [course syllabi](#). All course syllabi are available to students on the SCC Hub. On a three-year cycle, all programs review learning goals within the syllabi in collaboration with the DACUM report, assessment report, and program advisory committee. Evidence of student learning goals and a full response to the issues identified by HLC for the interim monitoring [progress report](#) are discussed in Criterion 4.

3.A.3.

The College establishes consistency of program quality and learning goals across learning platforms through consistent course documents, policies, instructor qualifications, learning management system, and monitoring of aggregated student performance across modes of delivery.

SCC offers face-to-face classes on its three campuses and at three additional locations, as well as online, hybrid, and dual credit classes. Regardless of delivery format or program location, the quality and learning goals for courses and programs remain consistent through established processes as demonstrated by an analysis of trends in [grade distribution, pass rates, and attrition rates across divisions and course sections](#).

In September 2016 an interactive tool was developed by the Office of Institutional Research (IR) for program chairs, instructional deans, and the Vice President of Instruction to evaluate grade distribution, pass rates, and attrition rates across divisions and course sections. Training on the tool has been offered by IR to support instructional leaders in analyzing [grade distribution](#) across sections and course delivery format to provide valuable baseline data that supports higher-level decision making related to one aspect of student success.

To achieve consistency in processes, the College utilizes a [standard course syllabi template](#) and [course information document](#). The syllabi and course information document requirements include identification of student learning outcomes, course learning objectives, course policies and procedures, and textbook and supply needs. In addition, [standard textbooks](#) are used for all courses at SCC. Program chairs and deans audit the course information documents using various methods. The tools included from [Business](#), [Construction/Electronics and IT/Communications](#), and [Health Sciences](#) are a sampling of the checklists used in the audit process.

Required minimum faculty qualifications are the same across course sections and are provided on [faculty job descriptions](#). The faculty must meet the HLC's requirements for teaching in specific content areas. In 2016, the College conducted a [faculty qualifications audit process](#) and developed a [matrix](#) that defines minimum faculty qualifications for each course offered by the College.

All courses offered by SCC for [dual credit](#) must have an approved, qualified instructor, follow the College's course and grading policies, and use the standard course syllabi and course information document, which includes the same student learning outcomes. Over the past five years there has been consistency in dual credit student [grade distribution, success rates, and attrition rates](#) as enrollment has increased.

The College uses the Moodle learning management system for all courses. Faculty utilize the Moodle gradebook and Moodle course shell to publish course information, grades, and documents for students to access. Moodle has a locked menu, course display and course setup, thus promoting a universal navigation between courses. To ensure consistency with course delivery, all faculty who teach online or hybrid courses are required to complete [Moodle training](#) prior to teaching a distance education course. The [Virtual Learning handbook](#) outlines faculty expectations and course procedures. A Spring 2016 [employee survey](#) identified low levels of satisfaction with Moodle, as compared to other aspects of technology and communication at SCC. See 5.A.1. for a discussion of survey findings and the College's data driven response.

The HLC 2015 multi-campus location report [findings](#) noted that the College utilized common syllabi college-wide, common assessment of student learning, a common student course evaluation system, and common faculty orientation and evaluation processes, ensuring consistency in delivery, course content, and course syllabus regardless of instructional location (p. 3). The [reviewers noted](#) that, "the College has tremendous consistency in curriculum across the College and not specific to a particular location" (p.7). SCC has continued these practices, and has plans to strengthen the curriculum review process through the newly formed Curriculum Committee (see 3.A.1.).

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1.

The general education program at SCC is appropriate to the College's mission of empowering and transforming students and reflects core values of excellence, integrity, and innovation. As a two-year institution providing both technical and academic transfer education, the College provides a [general education core](#) that ensures a common, broad-based, well-rounded education to students appropriate to every program of study. The current core is comprised of 81 courses that fall within one of seven categories: Oral Communication, Written Communication, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Humanities, and Information Literacy.

Each of the seven general education core categories is based upon a [core competency statement and a list of student learning outcomes](#) for each disciplinary area, developed collaboratively by the area representative on the General Education Team, the program chair, and department faculty. The College is in compliance with HLC's Assumed Practices (B.1.H.) policy regarding general education requirements. All degree, diploma, and certificate programs that take a minimum of two quarters to complete, have a minimum general education requirement appropriate to the length, scope, and type of program. Certificate programs require a minimum of one course from one of the seven general education categories. Diploma programs require one course from each of two different general education categories. Students seeking either an Associate of Arts/Science or Associate of Applied Science are required to take at least one Oral Communication and one Written Communication course, plus one course from three of the five other areas for a minimum total of five general education courses, or a minimum of 22.5 quarter credits (see related information in 3.A.2.).

Faculty members may propose courses to be included in the general education core to the [General Education Committee](#), which then makes a recommendation to the Vice President for Instruction. The Committee is chaired by the Dean for Arts & Sciences and made up of faculty representatives from

each instructional division, as well as a representative from each of the general education disciplines.

Continuing Progress

In 2007, the College formally articulated a general education philosophy and core, following HLC recommendations from a focused visit in 2005. Because the general education core and categories have not been significantly revised in 10 years, [this academic year](#), the General Education Committee is researching current trends in general education programs and considering options for revisions to core categories.

3.B.2.

The College Catalog includes an explanation of the general education role, mission, and requirements. The philosophy of general education is made explicit in the [College Catalog](#):

“Students who earn a degree from Southeast Community College should exhibit both breadth and depth of knowledge. Therefore, SCC requires a General Education component in all degree programs. The goal is to provide all students, in both career and transfer curricula, a common, broad-based, well-rounded educational experience.”

The general education categories and courses selected for the core are broad-based and encompass a range of skills and attitudes necessary for a well-educated citizen. For example, the core competencies of the [Oral Communication category](#) demonstrate an intent to broaden students’ behaviors, skills, and habits.

Additionally, SCC has developed seven [General Education Learning Outcomes \(GELOs\)](#), which inform decisions about the general education core and help faculty think in broad terms about how general education infuses transferrable skills into their programs. The GELOs define and measure competency levels in: Oral Communication, Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Ethical Responsibility, Quantitative Reasoning, and Computer Literacy/Technology.

To reinforce the general education behaviors, skills, and habits, all SCC programs are required to list the GELOs on the [master syllabus](#) for each course. All students receive a copy of the master syllabus for each course. By including the GELOs on the syllabus along with the course-level student learning outcomes, general education goals are articulated for both students and faculty.

All programs are also required to assess at least one GELO in each three-year assessment cycle. Program assessment reports demonstrate how broad-based general education outcomes are infused into program-level curriculum, instruction, and student learning. For example, the Respiratory Care program selected GELO #3 Critical Thinking for the 2013-16 three-year cycle and submitted results in the [annual assessment report](#). Details on GELO assessment are discussed in Criterion 4.

3.B.3.

SCC’s [General Education Learning Outcomes](#) (GELOs) articulate the College’s commitment to student collection, analysis, and communication of information. In 2015-16, 42 instructional programs identified assessment measures directly related to [GELOs 1-4](#). Oral Communication (GELO 1) and

Written Communication (GELO 2), both reference these skills directly, while Critical Thinking (GELO 3) and Problem Solving (GELO 4) prioritize developing students' skills in analyzing academic or creative problems and creating strategies for reasonable solutions. GELOs 3 and 4 also highlight the College's priority of positioning students to succeed in a variety of environments.

The following assignments from a variety of programs are included as examples of how programs engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and developing adaptability:

- Assignments for gathering, analyzing and communicating information
 - The [EDUC1700 Professional Practicum I \(Education\) Practicum I Experiences Packet](#) requires Early Childhood Education students to collect, analyze, and communicate about their in-classroom experiences and synthesize conclusions in a final portfolio.
 - The [AUTT Brake Inspection](#) document requires Automotive Technology students to collect pertinent information, culminating in a written record of the vehicle's assessment and recommendations for repair.
 - The [HMRS Guidelines for Group Demonstrations](#) document describes how Human Services students are required to gather and process information on a specific topic and then lead a presentation for other pre-practicum students.
- Assignments for mastering modes of inquiry or creative work:
 - Physical Therapy Assistant students [plan and enact a PTA program](#).
 - [Humanities](#) students juxtapose historical works of art with modern sensibilities of ethics.
 - [English](#) students practice research methods through academic databases in order to produce a research-assisted paper.
- Assignments to develop skills adaptable for changing environments:
 - Speech classes develop students' [public speaking skills](#).
 - [Graphic Design and Media Arts](#) students practice a rigorous creative process from ideation to final visual informative product.
 - [Early Childhood Education](#) students develop versatile, personalized curriculum plans that account for the nuanced needs of individual students and classrooms.

3.B.4.

SCC is committed to recognizing human and cultural diversity, as reflected in institutional policies and practices and curricular/co-curricular opportunities. In January 2017, SCC's President issued a college-wide [statement](#) reaffirming the College's long-held position of supporting inclusiveness in education. Since 1994, SCC employees have been required to complete three hours of [diversity training](#) annually to further cultural understanding. College resources have increased to support students of all abilities; for example, in the past academic year, the Office of Disability Services was [restructured](#) to add two positions: [Director of Disability and Academic Support Services](#) and [Disability Services Advisor](#). In 2016, the College responded to the needs of the substantial immigrant population and added a directory of all [employees who speak a language other than English](#), so that students have the ability to contact a faculty or staff member who speaks their native language. This pertinent information is available to all current students on the home page of the College's intranet portal.

Global education at SCC is student- and curriculum-focused, and helps fulfill the institutional mission by providing "educational experiences and opportunities that enhance a student's chance for success and gainful employment." At a minimum, both the [Associate of Arts](#) and Associate [of Science](#)

degrees in the Academic Transfer program require students to take at least one course from a category encompassing [Culture and Gender Studies](#).

The global education focus seeks to equip students for a global economy and an increasingly multicultural society. As stated on the [Global Education](#) page of the SCC website, Global Education offers students the opportunity to bridge cultural differences between people from diverse backgrounds and increase awareness of global issues.

Over the last 14 years of its existence at SCC, Global Education has offered educational opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to travel to Greece, Italy, France, and Kenya and service-learning experiences in Haiti and Guatemala. [Upcoming trips](#) include a second trip to Guatemala, Brazil, Italy, China, Spain, and Austria.

[Interest and participation in global education](#) has increased over the past two years. All students and staff who participate in the study abroad trips must register for a [course](#) one term prior to the trip. The course, taught by faculty leading the trip, focuses on the culture of the country to be visited and practical preparations for the trip.

For the past four years, the SCC Global Education Initiative has sponsored SCC's participation in [International Education Week](#). Activities range from performances to poster sessions, displays, and panel presentations related to the arts, health/science, immigration, culture, food, and other areas.

SCC has received [certificates](#) from the [Midwest Institute for Intercultural/International Education \(MIIE\)](#) acknowledging the College's participation in International Education Week. Faculty and staff have also attended the MIIE annual conference and curriculum workshops to prepare modules that incorporate international/intercultural/gender education into SCC courses. The "[Spanish Language and Latino\(a\) Identity Under Globalization](#)" module, which was designed by a Humanities instructor, is used in a Latino/a & Latin American Literature class and a conversational Spanish class.

3.B.5.

Evidence demonstrates that both faculty and students at SCC are engaged in a variety of activities that enhance scholarship, creativity, and cultural diversity.

The Humanities Club, based on the Beatrice Campus, engages students and faculty in creative exhibits, fundraisers, and community activities, including a faculty and student [exhibit](#) in partnership with the public library, an "Art in the Park" fundraiser, an "Orange Owl Painting Studio" event, a Sugar Skull Workshop for "[El Dia de los Muertos](#)", an SCC Faculty and Student Art Exhibition, and an "[Art/Venture](#)" collaborative art workshop/fundraiser with Girl Scouts of America.

The newly formed student chapter of the [American Chemical Society](#) will afford students the opportunity for undergraduate research and publication in the field of chemistry, and the Psychology/Sociology Club offers students opportunities for research in areas like the use of [therapy dogs](#) to alleviate stress during finals week. In addition, students joined faculty to administer a [survey](#), compile and analyze survey results, and [present the research](#) findings at the [League for Innovation in the Community College Conference in 2015](#).

[Illuminations](#), SCC's student and staff creative works publication, has consistently had [strong contributions](#) from faculty, staff, and students alike, and has received national recognition from the Community College Humanities Association. In 2016, a student from the

Electrical/Electromechanical program won [first place](#) in the competition for his artwork.

The theatre faculty are highly active in creative work at the institution and in the community. Dr. Ken Hoppmann secured an internal SCC “Opportunity Grant” to allow SCC to co-sponsor, with Lincoln’s Hildegard Center for the Arts, the commission of an original composition with famed composer Jerod Tate, entitled [Standing Bear: A Ponca Indian Cantata](#). An accomplished pianist, [Hoppmann](#) performed in the world premiere performance. In 2016, the College added a full-time theatre/music instructor, who has planned a year’s worth of [theatre and music events](#) designed to engage staff, students, and the community. Theatre production courses are offered as both credit and non-credit classes for students, staff, and community members, encouraging additional contributions to and participation in SCC’s creative performances.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1.

The most recent [IPEDS](#) data available for SCC indicate that it employs 1,087 instructors and staff, including 674 full time and 413 part time. To support the implementation of the College's strategic goals related to program growth, student success, employee excellence, and organizational environment, [68 new full-time positions](#) were approved through a data-driven, expanded-budget request process (discussed in Criterion 5.A.1.), for an 11% full-time staffing increase in 2015-16.

SCC employs a sufficient number of faculty to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty. As documented with IPEDS, the [student-faculty ratio](#) for the most recent reporting year was 12:1. This low ratio allows faculty members to develop close relationships with their students and focus on both classroom and non-classroom relationships. Of the six Nebraska community colleges, SCC employs the most [full-time instructional staff](#) and the lowest percentage of adjuncts (51.44%), with the exception of one rural community college, which reported zero part-time faculty.

The number of full-time faculty remained stable with slight decreases from 2011-12 through 2014-15 (324, 320, 313, 310, respectively) and then increased to 338 in 2015-16. The change over time in the number of full-time staff shows a similar pattern. Both are documented as strategic [metrics](#) in the Strategic Plan Progress Report. Not only is the employment pattern for full-time faculty and staff similar, but very little [turnover](#) exists for these positions. In 2016, only 21 of 338 faculty positions resigned or retired over the course of the fiscal year. In 2015, there was turnover in 22 of 337 positions. A look at average years of service also shows strength in the continuity of SCC faculty. The [average years of service](#) for SCC faculty members is 12.2 years with a range of 0 to 41 years.

Oversight of Curriculum, Expectations for Student Performance, and Assessment of Student

Learning

As detailed in the [Instructional Handbook](#), each instructor is expected to:

- Provide instruction in assigned area, advise students, maintain competencies in accordance with established program expectations, maintain a safe and orderly work space, complete a periodic review of one's position description and provide input on possible changes to supervisor;
- Post and maintain a minimum of 5 office hours per week;
- Post and maintain required advising hours as determined by each program; and
- Advise students as assigned.

In addition, instructors adhere to [standards of good practice](#) to enhance the quality and success of student learning at SCC. Best practice standards have been identified for the following areas: curriculum development and revision, classroom management, student assessment and professionalism.

Faculty have oversight of curriculum and evaluation of student performance. The [expectations of instructors](#) as related to curriculum include:

- Developing, reviewing, revising, and following the course syllabus;
- Developing, reviewing, revising, and following the course information document for each course; and
- Periodically reviewing, revising and developing new course curriculum to reflect new curricular innovations and/or professional/industry standards.

In addition to faculty responsibilities for the courses they teach, in Fall 2016, the College established a faculty-driven Curriculum Committee to coordinate processes related to curriculum review, as discussed in 3.A.1.

Expectations for student performance and assignments are communicated with students via standardized syllabi and in assignment descriptions. Faculty oversee student learning and have developed student learning outcomes for each course. Evaluations of course-level student learning outcomes are part of the program assessment process, which is coordinated by the Director of Assessment, in collaboration with a faculty team of peer-reviewers.

3.C.2

To ensure compliance with HLC as set forth in [Assumed Practice B.2](#), the Office of Human Resources and the Vice President for Instruction analyzed SCC's peer institutions to ensure continuity among community college minimum faculty credentials. They also reviewed all SCC faculty transcripts and proof of work experience, including those who teach dual-credit, contractual and consortial courses, against the [minimum faculty credentials](#). This audit concluded that 5 full-time faculty and 6 adjunct faculty did not meet the minimum credentialing requirements.

Two of those full-time faculty are retiring by December 2017, and the other three signed letters of intent to complete the required coursework, which is stored in their personnel file. The adjunct faculty members completed a [plan of action](#) form. The College submitted a request for [extension](#) and it was [approved](#) on January 25, 2017. The Dean of Instructional Assessment, Evaluation, and Training is monitoring the faculty credentialing progress in order to ensure all faculty are in compliance by

September 1, 2022.

[Credentials are established college-wide](#) and implemented at a program level. Faculty play an important role in determining both academic and work experience credentials that are critical to specific disciplines. This process is documented and described in the College Handbook. With the exception of five instructors noted in the audit findings, all instructors are [appropriately qualified](#), including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs. Faculty employed by the College to teach credit courses to high school students at approved locations must have credentials consistent with full-time faculty employed to teach similar courses by SCC. The College is committed to employ faculty with credentials consistent with the standards set forth by HLC. Instructors teaching applicable general education and transfer-eligible courses (including those in the Nebraska Transfer Agreement), have a minimum of a master's degree, or a minimum of 18 semester hours at the graduate level, appropriate to the academic field in which they are teaching. Additionally, in order for high school students to receive dual-credit (high school and college credit) for an SCC course, the instructor is required to have current Nebraska Department of Education teaching credentials or a Dual-Credit teaching certificate. See Criterion 4.A.4. for additional information on faculty qualifications.

In order to teach distance education, faculty must complete an [online course training](#) and adhere to [standards of course design](#) developed and overseen by the Virtual Learning Division of the College. Courses are reviewed and modified based on [instructional designers'](#) expertise.

The list of faculty and their credentials are updated annually as part of the College Catalog review process, and can be found at the end of the [Catalog](#).

3.C.3.

Faculty members are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures. During their two-year probationary period, faculty have a full [appraisal](#) from their program chair each year with a minimum of one classroom observation conducted each term. After their probationary period, faculty should have a [performance review](#) every three years and a minimum of one classroom observation each year. The appraisal is designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the areas of accessibility, workload, interpersonal relations, job-related skills, and initiative. The process includes self-assessment from the faculty member, evaluation from the program chair, classroom observation, and a professional development plan.

During their probationary period, faculty members are expected to participate in a series of standard instructional training modules and then collaborate with their supervisors to identify appropriate activities, goals, and training opportunities and the timeline for completion. These modules and activities are documented in the [Individual Development Plans](#) (IDP), which are tracked by the faculty member and reviewed by the supervisor.

At the end of each term, students are asked to evaluate their faculty in the ["What do you think" \(WDYT\) process](#). Student feedback is obtained during weeks 8-10 of each quarter on SCC courses through WDYT, which provides input on courses and teaching methods. Faculty and program chairs review the instructor/course evaluation completed by students at the end of each quarter, and course modifications are made when applicable. For the past four years, the average [student response rate](#) was 28%. Instructors have developed various ways to encourage students to participate in this evaluation (e.g., a reminder included in many Moodle shells).

As part of data-driven [expanded budget](#) request process in 2015-16, a new position was created to oversee the assessment and evaluation of all full- and part-time faculty. The [Dean of Instructional Assessment/Evaluation and Training](#) began in July 2016 and collaborates with Institutional Research and Virtual Learning to collect and analyze data to enhance course delivery and training opportunities for faculty to maintain quality instruction.

3.C.4.

The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and supports their professional development.

- College-wide policy requires that faculty complete at least three [professional development activities](#) annually. Successful completion of these activities by faculty is documented and tracked by Human Resources.
- College-wide policy requires that faculty and staff must complete requirements for [diversity and safety](#).
- The [performance appraisal process](#) includes a section on goal setting and professional development.
- Programs have budget lines for conference registration, travel and lodging, and registrations and affiliations.
- [Professional Development Fridays](#): A [2015 employee survey](#) showed approximately half of employees were not satisfied with professional development opportunities. In response to the low satisfaction reported, ProDev Fridays were established and piloted starting in July 2016. A total of 81 sessions were offered and a combined 739 faculty and staff members participated during Summer and Fall quarters of 2016. Topics included safety, engaged learning, Moodle, Learning Resource Center, technology, diversity, wellness, benefits, workplace etiquette, and student presentations.
- [Tuition reimbursement benefit](#): A regular employee .75 FTE or more has the opportunity to be reimbursed for costs incurred for successful completion of undergraduate or graduate credit course(s) from colleges or universities. The College identified tuition reimbursement as one of its [strategic metrics](#) to promote excellence among faculty and staff by increasing participation in this benefit.

The institution has processes and resources for assuring all instructors are adept in their teaching roles.

- All new instructors complete training modules as part of the [IDP](#) (includes course setup, etc.).
- College policies are provided to adjunct instructions in the [Adjunct Faculty Handbook](#).
- Faculty have mandated [professional development and diversity requirements](#), which are documented and tracked.
- Ongoing [distance learning and Moodle training](#) and additional resources are presented in the [Virtual Learning](#) handbook.
- More than 100 faculty participate in the College's [Engaged Learning Experience initiatives](#).

3.C.5.

As documented in the [Instructional Handbook](#), instructors are expected to be accessible for student

inquiry by posting and maintaining a minimum of five office hours per week. The same requirements for [instructor contact information and office hours](#) apply to online courses. In the 2015 administration of the [Community College Survey on Student Engagement](#) (CCSSE), SCC scored in the second decile for the benchmark on Student-Faculty Interaction. Deciles are percentile scores that divide the frequency of benchmark scores into ten equal groups. SCC scored lower on the overall benchmark than other Nebraska community colleges, and lower than 80-90% of the full nationwide cohort. Of the items in this CCSSE benchmark, those that indicated the highest levels of student-faculty interaction were “How often have you received prompt feedback from instructors on your performance?” (59.0% often or very often); “How often have you used email to communicate with an instructor?” (56.5% often or very often); and “How often have you discussed grades or assignments with an instructor?” (47.3% often or very often). The CCSSE was administered again in the Winter Quarter of 2017. When the results become available, the Office of Institutional Research and Director of Assessment will analyze results for measureable changes, and an action plan will be put in place by instructional and non-instructional employees.

3.C.6.

Staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development. Student Services hires and trains staff to support the College's goals to maximize student enrollment, growth, and success. Qualified applicants go through the [human resources process](#) for hiring, as documented in Criteria 5A. After attending the College's [new hire orientation](#) and completing the [checklist procedures](#), job training and orientation vary by office. The College is reorganizing the Student Services Division to provide additional supervision and oversight on each campus, as well as developing a Standard Operating Procedures manual to assist in training. SCC's Office of Human Resources offers [training and support](#), and has a student services representative on the [Professional Development Team](#).

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

3.D.1.

With an average student age of 24, many students have been away from formal education for several years and exhibit deficient academic skills. Institutional data indicate that more than half (51.6%) of first-time SCC students test into at least one [developmental course](#) (math, English, or reading). More SCC students experience income stress in comparison with peer schools. Forty-three percent receive Pell grants as compared with 36% at peer institutions, according to recent [IPEDS data](#). In the [2015 CCSSE](#), 40% of students reported that they worked part-time and 25% of students reported that they worked full time while going to college, allowing less time for concentrating on studies. Some special populations are also known to experience more academic risk. The College has a significantly higher [diversity index](#) than the SCC service area, and a [number of students](#) have received accommodations through the Office of Disability services.

To fulfill its mission and meet the needs of the College's student population, SCC has a [comprehensive student support service system](#) in place including an active admissions department, career advising, financial aid, placement, registration and records, student activities, bookstores, academic advising and academic support, library resource centers, disability services, health and wellness centers, and [mental health counseling](#). A childcare center is available on Lincoln Campus, and student housing is available on the Beatrice and Milford campuses. SCC offers several initiatives designed to support underserved populations. These include [Learn to Dream](#), [Special Populations Support project](#), and [Veteran's Services](#) (addressed in 1.A.2.).

The College informs prospective and current students about the available student support services in multiple ways. The SCC website is accessible 24 hours a day. The Hub, a central resource accessible to all students, contains information on student support service options, including contact information, hours, and locations for each campus. An SCC mobile application is currently being developed and will be available for student use in the 2017-18 academic year.

Six full-time admissions representatives travel to high schools in the 15-county service area and across Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri to meet with high school students and high school

counselors to provide them with information about SCC's [admissions policies](#), [available academic programs](#), and student support services. Students also learn about available support services during required in-person and online new student orientations and through the student handbook section of the [College Catalog](#).

Continuing Progress

The College is committed to further responding to student needs. For example, during the 2016-17 academic year, students were surveyed about tutoring services awareness, accessibility, and usage. The [survey results](#) indicated that many students were unaware of the College's free tutoring services. Several process changes were implemented, including: updating posters every quarter with the current tutor schedule, having tutoring staff visit classrooms and instructors, and bringing students through the Tutoring Center during prospective student tours so students are introduced early on to academic support options available to them. SCC is also exploring ways to offer live, synchronous tutoring to online students, students at Learning Centers, and dual-credit students via videoconferencing technology.

Additionally, the Student Services Division has several strategies as part of its [2017-18 annual goals](#), including redesigning the new student orientation experience, and enhancing student success initiatives, student activities, and mental health services.

3.D.2.

For prospective or current students there are several opportunities to access learning support, including the Transitions Lab, student success programs, and advisors. Recent progress has been made in developmental education at the College. However, the College's process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which they are prepared is an identified opportunity for improvement.

Transitions Lab

The Transitions Lab was developed with funding from a U.S. Department of Labor TAACCCT grant in 2011. Transition Advisors meet with new and existing students to review current college-entrance test scores and identify academic needs. Over the past five years, advisors have worked with over [2,100 students](#) to help them gain entrance into college and/or their program by providing resources, support, and advising to improve academic skills. In the Lab, students are encouraged to review basic math and English through an online program and then retake the entrance assessment. As a result, 87% percent of students who have retaken the entrance assessment have attained improved course placement scores. Transitions students have tested out of approximately 1,500 courses in writing, reading, and math, saving both time and money. Additionally, 172 Transitions students have graduated from SCC so far, and others have transferred to four-year schools.

Student Success

Support services encompass mentoring, academic advising, and the development of academic, time management, and study skills, and referrals to community agencies. Some students seek support directly, others are referred to the Success Center through the [Retention Alert](#) system. This electronic [system](#) helps identify academically at-risk students and provide information to student success coaches who respond promptly. The success coaches worked on 1,559 retention cases in 2016.

Additional learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of the College's service area population include: Adult Basic Skills, Citizenship, ESL and GED courses, and dual credit. Special support services such as TRIO Student Support Services, Upward Bound, and Learn to Dream (LTD)/People Obtaining Prosperity (POP), also provide academic and financial support to students who qualify for them.

The TRIO Student Support Services and LTD/POP support services support academically at-risk low-income and first generation students, and students with disabilities. Both programs monitor [academic standing, retention, and graduation/transfer rates](#) among these identified underserved student populations.

Developmental Education

Following recommendations by the peer reviewers during the 2012-13 HLC reaffirmation, a [Developmental Education Team](#) was formed to help disseminate information to the College about developmental education courses options and updates, related data, and to gather input from other programs.

Significant improvements in developmental education have been made in the areas of developmental math and developmental reading and writing within the last 5 years. Historically, success rates in developmental math, particularly in the very lowest level course (MATH0900 Math Fundamentals) had been very low. Many students were re-taking the course repeatedly, often because they found themselves struggling with the material in the latter portion of the course or they found the pace too fast. The same was true for many students in the early algebra sequence. The Math Department, using Pearson's MyMathLab software, divided the MATH900 course into three 1.5 credit modules that allow students to work at their own pace and re-test as needed until mastery. The curriculum for MATH0950 Beginning Algebra and MATH11100 Intermediate Algebra were also developed into a modular format so that students could move through all three courses (nine modules) as quickly or slowly as needed. The College's Office of Institutional Research conducted a [comparative analysis](#) of success rates associated with students who enrolled in a module course versus traditional course. The results will be used to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of module courses.

Another significant change has been the redesign of the College's developmental English sequence. Reading and writing had been taught as two separate courses, with two courses in each sequence prior to college-level composition. The redesign resulted in integrated reading and writing courses—ENGL0960 Beginning Reading and Writing and ENGL0985 Intermediate Reading and Writing—thereby cutting in half the number of courses a dual-deficient student would need to take in the two related disciplines. Also created were a 1.5 credit reading workshop, for students who need additional support with reading skills, and a writing workshop for those who need additional concurrent support with basic writing skills.

Advising Processes

SCC's process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared begins with the student completing an accepted college entrance exam. If the student does not test into the program's designated placement score benchmark, the Testing Center staff and College's advising staff use the [developmental education diagram](#) to ensure students enroll in classes or services needed to prepare them to be successful in the reading, writing, and computation required in their intended program. Students may be directed to work with the Transitions Lab, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language classes, or other student support services, depending on the kind of preparation needed.

Opportunity for Improvement - Enrollment Process

At present, the College's admission practice is that students are accepted into a program of study, not the overall college. Programs do not have standard entry scores and the [minimum test scores for entry vary](#) considerably across the College. After students have completed an [accepted college entrance exam](#), there is inconsistency in processes to direct students into developmental education, Adult Basic Education, or other academic support services. Recently, the Dean of Student Enrollment began monitoring [trends in admission application related outcomes](#) (applicant yield rates, minimum placement scores, and overall program enrollment). Findings include inconsistency in minimum placement scores and admission processes, which contribute to [low acceptance rates](#) in select programs, barriers in student enrollment opportunities, and unmet local demand for skilled workforce. The College is reviewing this practice and considering standard entry scores to simplify acceptance to the College as opposed to direct entry into a program. A move to this model would remove enrollment barriers by building on the progress made in improving access to developmental education and ensure the College has a standard process to direct entering students to courses and programs. One step the College has taken to improve its process for entering students is to offer additional developmental education courses on the Milford Campus, modeled after the Lincoln Campus Automotive Technology preparatory studies program. Prior to this pilot, because the Milford Campus operates primarily on a block schedule, developmental math or English courses were available only at 7:00 a.m. through an independent study model.

3.D.3.

SCC has multiple systems in place to ensure access to the advising services that students need to enter into courses and programs for which they are adequately prepared. [Advising services](#) available at SCC include admissions, academic transfer, and program. Academic transfer advising is available to help students understand associate degree requirements and bachelor's degree requirements for their intended major at their transfer institutions. Full-time academic advisors and faculty advisors provide services to help students achieve academic and career goals by helping them to: understand prerequisites and degree requirements, develop an academic plan, understand College policies, access appropriate campus resources, and adopt strategies for success. The Transitions Lab and student success programs also offer academic advising support. All students have anytime access to interactive [curriculum guides and degree requirements](#) for all programs of study on the SCC website.

[2015 CCSSE results](#) indicated that over 71% of students agreed the College provides the support they need to succeed, and over half of students responding indicated they used the College's academic advising services.

3.D.4.

SCC provides to students and instructors technological infrastructure, libraries, clinical practice sites and simulation experiences to support teaching and learning. One area of opportunity is the condition of instructional space across all three campuses and satellite locations, which was recently identified through the College's first facilities master planning process.

Opportunity for Improvement - Infrastructure

In January 2015, the College engaged Clark Enersen Partners, who evaluated the existing SCC facilities on the three main campuses in [Beatrice](#), [Milford](#) and [Lincoln](#), and the two Lincoln satellite locations, [Education Square](#) and [Jack J. Huck Continuing Education Center](#). [SCC's Facilities Master Plan](#) was released in February 2016, after a year-long process of consultation and study. As part of the analysis, a tour of [peer institutions](#) confirmed the initial physical assessment; i.e., that most of SCC's facilities were dated and inadequate with respect to current educational trends, market demand, and student needs. More details on the facilities master planning process and plans to address concerns related to providing instructors and students the infrastructure necessary to support teaching and learning are discussed in depth in 5.A.1. and 5.D.2.

Resources

As the College pursues sources of funding to modernize campus facilities outlined in the Facilities Master Plan, the [Engaged Learning Experience](#) (ELE) initiative has already begun to improve the educational environment. More than [100 faculty](#) have participated in an ongoing ELE initiative to improve student success at SCC by engaging students in the application of knowledge and skills through interactive learning experiences. To provide more flexibility for ELE activities in the classroom, SCC remodeled 14 classrooms across the campuses, so that all surfaces and aspects of the classroom could be used for active learning.

Simulated Learning and Clinical Practice Sites

In addition to campus-based labs, the Health Sciences Division maintains affiliation agreements with local hospitals, physician offices, healthcare-focused businesses, rehabilitation facilities, and regional organizations to offer students opportunities for site-based clinical practice. In 2010 SCC began partnering with Bryan College of Health Sciences and Bryan Medical Center to share life-like mannequins and advanced audio and visual technology, offering realistic training scenarios for students and medical professionals throughout the state. To date, the Simulation Center [facility](#) has trained approximately 20,000 students, nurses and other health care professionals through hands-on instruction. Since 2013, more than 120 health science students have participated in Interprofessional Education (IPE) simulations twice a year. Students meet simulation [objectives](#) and connect theory to practice through collaboration with other disciplines in health professions. In 2015 SCC faculty presented on IPE simulations at [The International Meeting for Simulation in Healthcare](#).

The [Energy Generation Operations](#) program offers a unique Control Room Simulator, which replicates the control room of a power plant, the only one of its kind at any college in the country. The goal of the simulator is to better prepare students for real-life experiences in a control room at two different types of power plants currently operating in North America, including several in SCC's region.

Libraries

The Library Resource Center (LRC) budgets more than [\\$1 million](#) each fiscal year to provide students and employees with research support, online film resources, and online library databases. The LRC provides access to [68 online databases](#) and [monitors usage](#) for responsive and data-driven decision making. SCC is a member of a group of Nebraska postsecondary institutions, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, that participates in [reciprocal borrowing programs](#) with other libraries, significantly expanding access to the academic resource base.

Information Technology (IT)

To provide technical support to students and staff, the College's IT Division maintains a help desk available via phone, email, and online. IT recently added two new positions to help improve customer support to students and instructors in 2015. The percent of faculty and staff survey respondents who indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the IT customer service/help desk survey [increased](#) from 67% to 79% between 2014 and 2016.

IT currently has [more than 1,000 laptops](#) that are used on mobile carts in classrooms or available for checkout. IT recently added a new information services technician to support hardware/software technology. A survey administered in 2014 and replicated in 2016 showed an [increase](#) in satisfaction (from 62% to 67% "satisfied" or "very satisfied") with hardware/software support of classroom and lab technology and a slight increase (from 73% to 74%) in satisfaction with hardware/software support of PCs in workspaces.

SCC offers distance courses in a variety of delivery modes. SCC currently offers [12 programs](#) entirely online. During the 2016-17 academic year, SCC delivered [1,379 web-based course](#) sections and 348 hybrid sections. The [student help resources](#) site is available 24/7 to students to provide assistance with the College's learning management system (Moodle), as well as other types of classroom technologies. The site includes information for Moodle support and the help desk, logging in and accessing SCC email, and software support. Tutorials are included to help students navigate and complete activities in Moodle.

3.D.5.

SCC's [institutional-level learning outcomes](#) (GELOs) focus on students' ability to gather and analyze information from a variety of sources, to present research effectively in a logical and ethical manner using sources, and to think critically in order to solve problems and evaluate results. [Students report](#) that their coursework at SCC emphasizes analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory; synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways; and making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods. To support the College's learning outcomes related to research and information resources, the College offers access to free tutoring, in-person and online through [Smarthinking](#). The Library Resource Center provides guidance in the use of research and information resources through [presentations](#) and individual consultations. The College has a subscription to a web-based software system ([Turnitin](#)) that helps educators evaluate student work and provide feedback to promote the effective use of research and information resources. Usage and evaluation of Turnitin are discussed in 2.E.2.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

3.E.1.

The College's co-curricular enrichment programs are a key component in the educational experience, as articulated in its [mission statement](#). SCC provides opportunities for global education, service learning, partnerships with industry-sponsored events, student organizations, and prevention and awareness activities. Students learn about enrichment programs through [new student orientations](#) and [weekly campus communication](#).

As discussed in 3.B., SCC's global education opportunities promote a deeper understanding of human and cultural diversity. For example, students and faculty from Business, Computer Information Technology, Arts & Sciences, and Medical Laboratory Technology programs traveled to Kenya to learn about sustainability, education, sociology, economics, and culture. In addition to observing and participating in Kenyan culture, the [trip](#) featured a service-learning project in which the group planted blue gum trees on a local farm. Afterwards, both faculty and students [presented](#) findings and experiences, in conjunction with Dr. Danvas Mabeya's research on refugee camps in Kenya and the role of refugees in American society.

SCC has strong relationships with community/industry members, which result in many opportunities for students to enhance their learning experience through active participation.

- The Building Construction and Design and Drafting programs have worked closely for many years with the [Associated General Contractors \(AGC\)](#) to offer students the opportunity to attend conferences, sponsored dinners, and field trips. These two programs have also worked with the Home Builders Association of Lincoln (HBAL) to attend the annual [International Builders Show](#), attend monthly [association](#) meetings with industry leaders, and support the HBAL annual [Santa Cops project](#).
- The Surgical Technology program is actively involved with the [Association of Surgical Technologists](#). This organization works closely with government leaders to promote recognition and advocate for further professionalization of the Surgical Technology field.
- Diesel Technology instructors are very involved with the [Skills USA competition](#) and serve as judges and support staff. More than 200 students and advisors from Nebraska, including SCC, attended the National Leadership and Skills Conference in 2016.
- In April 2017 two Career Academy students earned the organization's highest recognition at the [International DECA Conference](#).

SCC also has [37 student organizations](#) across the three main campuses. These organizations are often

student-led and serve diverse student populations and interests. Many of SCC's student organizations involve service learning as part of their core mission, especially those associated with a program of study.

- The Society for Manufacturing Engineering (SME) promotes involvement on campus, provide [community service](#), [compete in competitions](#), and participate in nationwide SME activities. The student chapter adopted 2 miles of highway for the state of Nebraska highway clean-up. In addition to fulfilling this obligation, the group also provides leadership to help keep the campus and city clean and attractive. SME members have planted flowers in downtown Milford, reroofed the picnic shelter at the Milford City Park, and hosted community service projects assisting people in the community with odd jobs.
- The [Future Operators of America](#) (FOA) student group has adopted a section of Highway 6 west of Milford, which it cleans every six months.
- Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) student officers are elected and learn to lead teams, monitor fiscal expenditures, and recruit new members. Members compete in state and national business [leadership competitions](#). The Milford chapter of PBL has visited [Sunrise Country Manor](#) several times to play cards with the residents and deliver homemade Christmas cards and Valentine gifts.

During 2016-17, student activities coordinators on each campus began developing monthly prevention and awareness social events. Most events were piloted on the Milford Campus and will be fully implemented on the Beatrice and Lincoln campuses throughout the 2017-18 academic year. [Examples of awareness events](#) held on the Milford Campus include: Campus Safety; Suicide Prevention; Traumatic Brain Injury; Hunger Awareness Month; Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention; and Alcohol Awareness.

Continuing Progress

Despite multiple opportunities for co-curricular involvement, a recent survey identified specific areas of improvement in the types of co-curricular activities offered, when and where they are offered, and how activities and service opportunities are communicated to students. The [student survey](#), administered in Spring 2016, found that there is a pattern of non-participation among the 717 SCC student respondents: 48% have not attended an SCC-sponsored activity; 69% never utilized an SCC gym/wellness center; and 93% have not participated in intramural sports. The primary reasons students reported non-participation included being too busy with homework and classes, lack of awareness of activities, and scheduling conflicts. These data are consistent with [CCSSE results](#), with approximately 80% of students reporting that they have never participated in a college-sponsored activity. Student services employees have utilized these results to improve programmatic offerings during the 2016-17 academic year, and a follow-up student survey will be administered in 2017-18 to assess the potential impact of these improvements. The College believes that its facilities may also contribute to the low student utilization of the wellness centers and has plans to address these needs through its Facilities Master Plan (see 5.A.1. and 5.D.1.).

3.E.2.

Aspects of the College's mission, such as community engagement, service learning, and economic development are reinforced through co-curricular activities that enrich the educational experience. The Food Service/Hospitality program at SCC provides restaurant style luncheons and dinners, lunch and dinner banquets, and themed buffets on an alternating quarterly basis. The

quarterly events enhance the program's three focuses (Culinary, Baking/Pastry, and Food Service Management), with students responsible for all meal planning, preparation, and serving. The [meals](#) provide an educational experience not only in food service and hospitality, but also in proprieties of culture and diversity. Recently the Food Service program completed a [service-learning project](#) with the Cornhusker Kiwanis Club to support local non-profits.

Students also have the opportunity for co-curricular participation in creative works such as the SCC newspaper, [The Challenge](#), the award-winning [Illuminations](#) literary magazine, and [SCC theatre performances](#).

Since 1961, the Milford Campus has auctioned off a [house](#) constructed by Building Construction students, in collaboration with the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration and Electrical Technology programs. The Fall 2016 house was the 106th auctioned as part of this community-engagement program.

One of the ways in which SCC demonstrates an enriched educational environment that aligns with economic development is through the [Entrepreneurship Center](#). The Center works directly with entrepreneurs, offering business coaching, business planning assistance, funding preparation assistance, business incubation, and entrepreneurial educational opportunities for individuals and small businesses across the 15-county service area. The Center has averaged about 1,300 coaching meetings with potential and existing entrepreneurs per year; 75% of those coaching sessions were free sessions offered to the community. During 2015-2016, the Center conducted successful workshops on the "Business of Art" and the "Business of Food," and hosted 17 nascent businesses in the business incubator within its Lincoln facility, with an average of 11 businesses in residence each month. The Center also works in partnership with economic development organizations in the region to promote entrepreneurial opportunities and was recently recognized in the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development's [Economic Dashboard](#) for the innovative services provided by the Entrepreneurship Center.

The College benefits the region in significant economic measures: its most recent [economic analysis](#) was conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists International of Idaho (EMSI) in 2012-2013. Key findings include the following:

- In FY 2012-13, SCC and its students added \$741.4 million in income to the SCC service area economy, approximately 3.6 percent of the region's Gross Regional Product. That included an employee payroll of \$62.4 million, much of which was spent in SCC's service area. The College spent another \$48.2 million to support its day-to-day operations.
- In FY 2012-2013, state and local taxpayers in Nebraska paid \$50.7 million to support the operations of SCC. The report estimated that for every dollar of public money spent, taxpayers will receive a cumulative return of \$4.10 over the course of students' working lives in the form of higher tax receipts and public sector savings, and society will receive a cumulative value of \$50.10 in benefits for every dollar spent for as long as SCC's 2012-2013 students remain active in the state workforce.
- Taxpayers see an annual return of 12.3 percent on their investment in SCC.

In 2016, SCC graduates achieved a [95% success rate](#) in obtaining employment or continuing their education upon graduation. Eighty-four percent of SCC graduates work in Nebraska; 69% of those graduates work in the 15-county service area.

As detailed in 3.A., the College fulfills its mission of providing [transfer](#) education through articulation agreements with more than 40 institutions of higher education, resulting in seamless transfer options

for students.

Additionally, in the past several years, the College has increased offerings of dual-credit courses and decreased cost of tuition through [The Career Academy](#) and [Southeast Nebraska Career Academy Partnerships](#) (SENCAP). These strategies have contributed to a [78% growth](#) in dual-credit enrollment in the past four academic years.

Part of the [2015-19 Strategic Plan](#) targets developing new student learning initiatives and expanding undergraduate research at the College. The College's first Research Methods course was offered in 2016 to help students and faculty in all disciplines develop expertise in methods of academic research. [2015 CCSSE results](#) show that 81.9% of students have never participated in a community-based project as part of a course, which is 10% higher than our peer institutions. In response, four faculty were trained in 2015-16 with [Rural Futures Service Learning initiatives](#) to improve service learning opportunities that promote enrichment and discovery.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

- The College has many established processes that ensure courses are current including a consistent program review cycle, 24 programs with current specialized accreditation, 37 articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities, a systematic curriculum development model (DACUM), program advisory committees, and demonstrated institutional financial commitment to maintaining current equipment.
- There is consistency in program quality and learning goals across face-to-face, hybrid, online, and dual-credit course offerings. Processes that ensure ongoing attention to achieving consistency include the standard course syllabi, master course form, and course information documents. A new Curriculum Committee helps streamline program and course modifications.
- One indicator of the College's commitment to high-quality programs and services is its employment of the most full-time faculty and one of the lowest percentages of adjuncts of any community college in Nebraska.
- The College offers a comprehensive array of student support services and has unique offerings, such as the Transitions Lab, that provides learning support and preparatory instruction to students with academic need.
- Areas identified as opportunities for improvement include:
 - Addressing program lengths to ensure SCC programs have similar expectations of student performance as peer institutions;
 - Providing students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning through the implementation of the College's Facilities Master Plan; and
 - Ensuring college-wide enrollment processes are streamlined to consistently direct entering students to courses and programs for which they are adequately prepared.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

4.A.1.

SCC utilizes both internal and external processes for regular program reviews. Internally, SCC employs a curriculum review process known as [DACUM](#) (Developing a Curriculum). SCC programs are reviewed every five years, using a DACUM workshop to help ensure that curricula include current, relevant knowledge and skill development. Each DACUM workshop requires a panel of six to twelve professionals who meet with trained DACUM facilitators to discuss and review the duties and responsibilities of their job. The DACUM process helps programs answer the fundamental question, “Are we teaching what should be taught?” One of SCC’s Strategic Plan metrics is the [number of DACUMs conducted](#). Typically, between 10 and 12 programs are reviewed each year.

For 25 years, SCC has participated in an external [program review process](#) through the state of Nebraska. Annual program reviews are required to be submitted to Nebraska’s [Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education](#) (CCPE). CCPE reviews all programs on a [seven-year cycle](#) to document the number of student graduates and faculty resources. All of Nebraska’s

community colleges follow the seven-year cycle and use the CCPE's [Program Review Template](#) to determine if the program meets the two thresholds required:

- Number of Graduates (the 5-year average must be 10 or more)
- Ratio of Student Credit Hours/Faculty FTE (the 5-year average must be 275 semester hours per faculty FTE)

SCC programs and instructional administrators monitor the data required for the seven-year program review on an annual basis through the [Low Enrollment report](#). SCC's internal standards include a 12-to-1 ratio of Student FTE/Faculty FTE as well CCPE's threshold of 10 graduates. The [Instructional Handbook](#) outlines the categories and process for programs that do not meet internal standards.

Each year, the Vice President for Instruction reports program review results to the SCC Board of Governors for action. During the [May 2016 Board meeting](#), the results of 12 program reviews were reported, with seven programs meeting all thresholds. The five that did not meet the thresholds were recommended to be continued with monitoring. This list included Architectural Engineering Technology and Computer Aided Design Drafting. As a result of the program review process, as well as SCC's Low Enrollment report and analysis, these two programs were merged into one program, Design Drafting Technology.

In addition to the CCPE and DACUM reviews, [24 programs](#) at SCC undergo varying degrees of program review and testing by related accrediting bodies and workforce organizations.

The combination of the internal (DACUM and Low Enrollment report review) and external (CCPE and specialized accrediting bodies) program review processes demonstrate SCC is responsible for the quality of its educational programs.

Continuing Progress

SCC has made improvements to the DACUM internal program review process based on best practices. One example is gathering [DACUM-related data](#) prior to the DACUM workshop, allowing a more efficient use of participants' time for the one-day DACUM workshop. In 2013, programs also began [mapping their curriculum](#) following the DACUM workshop and submitting the results of the program map to the Director of Assessment and program advisory committees for analysis, as discussed in 3.A.1.

4.A.2.

The College follows a specific process for evaluating and awarding transfer credit from regionally accredited postsecondary institutions. Degree-seeking students send official transcripts to SCC, and registration staff ensure the student earned a 'C' or better. The Registrar oversees the evaluation process to determine course equivalencies. Program chairs evaluate the transfer course based on course descriptions, syllabus, and institutional accreditation status to determine equivalency. Students may appeal credit transfer decisions to the program chair. Any significant changes made to the policy or process are approved by the Registrar and instructional administrators and made publicly available in the College Catalog.

To help serve approximately 300 veteran students, the Registrar uses [The Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services](#) to evaluate military coursework for transfer. The

[Electronic Systems](#) and [Energy Generation](#) programs both have specific military-focused emphasis in their degrees.

Regarding experiential and other forms of prior learning, the College offers students the opportunity to obtain [credit by waiver](#), [examination](#), or CLEP testing. A full description of the policies and practices is available in the [College Catalog](#). Per College policy, credit granted by waiver or examination cannot exceed one-third of the total credits required for a program degree.

4.A.3.

Institutional policies for transfer of credit are specified in the [College Catalog](#). As explained in 4.A.2., SCC carefully scrutinizes transfer credit from regionally accredited institutions to ensure quality. Transfer equivalences are based on course descriptions, syllabi, grade level, course grade, instructor qualifications, and the date the course was completed.

Since 1995, SCC has participated with all other Nebraska community colleges in the [Transfer Nebraska](#) Initiative to ensure that statewide common [courses](#), are comparable in scope, quality, and intellectual rigor. Over the years, the community colleges have increased the number of common statewide courses approved for transfer. Transfer Nebraska utilizes a standard process for updating and assuring students that the transfer information is current and accurate. Registration staff and program chairs implement this process, using Transfer Nebraska, college websites, and course syllabi to determine equivalencies.

4.A.4.

Course Prerequisites

The College reviews all prerequisite courses to ensure that they are in line with SCC's required learning outcomes, by using a [curriculum review process](#) and the DACUM process. This review process involves program chairs, faculty members, division deans, and the Vice President for Instruction.

All course syllabi are reviewed at a minimum of every three years to ascertain whether course objectives are current and relevant. If a change is needed or requested, a faculty member, continuing education director, or program chair must complete a [master course form](#). The master course form is evaluated by the program chair or division dean, and final approval is made by the Vice President for Instruction.

The master course form and syllabus are forwarded to the Registrar for processing and uploaded into Ellucian. The new course syllabus is placed in the electronic master file, and the changes are included in the annual update to the College Catalog.

Rigor of Course and Expectations for Student learning

Opportunity for Improvement - Assignment of Credit Hours

In 2016-17, the College established a [team](#) to oversee compliance with the HLC's recently revised [assignment of credit hours policy](#). The team has begun [reviewing practices](#) utilized at other

institutions of higher education to establish guidelines to have consistent standards for student learning for a lecture hour, academic lab hour, and career/technical hour. The team plans to build on the current [course information document](#) process as a method for faculty to identify homework expectations and demonstrate how homework is connected to grades computation. The team is following a [timeline](#) to ensure full compliance by 2018-19.

The College establishes and maintains course rigor through the use of a [Curriculum Committee](#) and [program advisory committees](#). The Curriculum Committee is a standing committee that includes [faculty members and instructional administration](#). The Committee evaluates and approves courses and programs that lead to lifelong learning, employability, and transferability.

Program advisory committees are comprised of [representatives](#) from business, industry, and educational institutions within the 15-county area. The objective of the advisory committee is to help SCC understand trends and needs within industry, business, and education that inform curriculum development or revision. See 3.A.1. for more information on the program advisory and curriculum committees.

As explained in previous sections, the College utilizes a curriculum review process to evaluate course and program requirements to help maintain the quality of programs and educational materials. This process includes input from faculty members, administrators, advisory team members, DACUM workshop participants and other entities.

Tools routinely used by the College to assist in controlling curriculum quality are a standard [course syllabi template](#) and a [course information document](#). Information required on these forms includes: student learning outcomes, course learning objectives, course policies and procedures, and textbook and supply needs. To help ensure a similar scope and rigor across sections of the same course, [standard textbooks](#) are also used at SCC. The Vice President for Instruction, in collaboration with instructional deans and program chairs, oversees this process.

SCC uses a [credit hour computation chart](#) to help determine the rigor of the course and grants credit based on the ratio of hours spent in class, lab, clinical settings, practicum hours, and internships.

Access to Learning Resources

SCC makes learning resources available for students through the Learning Resource Center/Media Center, Tutoring Center, and Transitions Lab. Online students have easy access to the Learning Resource Center through The Hub. Online tutoring is provided as well through [Smarthinking](#). See 3.D. for more information.

Faculty Qualifications

The College ensures appropriate [faculty qualifications](#) by: 1) implementing the Higher Learning Commissions standards by program; 2) working with SCC's Nebraska community college peers; 3) identifying and complying with state and local statute requirements for some health programs; and 4) working with local trade organizations to identify required faculty qualifications in SCC's technical programs. The entire College-led process is outlined in detail in 3.C.2.

Standards are equally applied to all instructors, whether they teach in classrooms or online. The College follows a standard [process](#) to ensure that all courses offered by SCC for dual credit have an approved, qualified instructor, follow the College's course and grading policies, and use the standard course syllabi and course information document, which includes the same student learning outcomes.

SCC utilizes qualified full-time and adjunct faculty to teach dual-credit courses to high school students at various approved [locations](#). Faculty must meet the same [standards](#) set forth by HLC. In addition, to teach dual-credit courses and have students receive dual credit, all instructors must have a current Nebraska Department of Education teaching credential or Dual-Credit teaching certificate.

The College offers three unique opportunities for high school students to take dual-credit courses: The Career Academy, Southeast Nebraska Career Academic Partnership (SENCAP), and dual-credit advantage. SCC employs a total of [127 dual-credit instructors](#). An [annual meeting](#) is held to help dual-credit instructors understand College expectations and policies. In response to the increasing enrollment and guidelines set by HLC, SCC has been [proactive](#) in its approach to meet [student demand](#) by recruiting and developing a [plan of action](#) with high school teachers to increase the number of qualified instructors.

During the past five years, there has been consistency in dual credit [student performance](#) as enrollment has increased.

4.A.5.

Southeast Community College has [24](#) programs that maintain specialized accreditation. [Program chairs](#) lead the accreditation process for their respective programs.

A few examples of the accrediting bodies are [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing](#), [Accreditation Council for Business Schools & Programs](#), and [National Automotive Technician's Education Foundation](#). All 24 programs that have applied for external accreditation have achieved accredited status over the past 10 years and are currently in good standing.

Some programs achieve accreditation to enable graduates to become licensed or certified in their career field. For example, graduates of the Automotive Collision, Automotive Technology, Ford, GM, or MOPAR training programs all have one year of work experience satisfied as a result of completing an accredited training program toward the two years of experience required for becoming ASE certified. In several health programs, graduates are eligible to sit for industry licensure exams. Other programs, such as Business Administration, maintain accreditation to ensure high-quality standards for the program and to help their graduates to be more competitive in the job market.

4.A.6.

SCC uses the annual Graduate Report, the annual Strategic Plan Report, and Employer/Program Demand Surveys to evaluate the success of its graduates through employment and transfer rates.

SCC values feedback from its graduates and systematically surveys graduates through a process administered by the Placement Office, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research. Graduates complete a [graduate information sheet](#) with information about employment status and future education plans. Information provided by graduates is aggregated and summarized in the [2016 Employment & Transfer Statistics Graduate Report](#). The graduate report has consistently high response rates. In 2016, 93.5% of the 1,497 graduates provided employment data and transfer data.

While there is not a college-wide requirement on program-specific graduate evaluation, many programs survey their graduates and employers to receive specific feedback about their program.

[Graduates](#) and [employers](#) are asked to identify skills that they are using in their positions, additional skills that would be helpful, or skills learned that they are not using. The surveys are an important tool to assure graduates are adequately prepared for their chosen career.

In 2015-16 the Office of Institutional Research developed the College's first [Strategic Plan Progress Report](#). In this report, more than 75 quantitative and qualitative metrics were established with several that include factors related to graduate success including course success rate, CCSSE benchmarks, degrees awarded, graduate and transfer rate, and participation in co-curricular opportunities. Since the College has had its first Strategic Plan for only one year, and the first progress report was published during the 2016-17 academic year, the College does not have data on how programs, divisions, and departments have utilized this data. However, there are plans to link unit-level initiatives and Strategic Plan metrics through the purchase of a software solution.

In 2015, the Instructional Division and IR collaborated to develop and administer [Employer Demand Surveys](#) across 12 instructional areas for local businesses and organizations. Survey participants responded to questions related to business needs, starting salary, and plans for future hire. Survey results provided the College data to inform curricular offerings and begin exploring other opportunities for program growth. For example, the College used the survey results combined with EMSI economic modeling analysis and comparative program information from peer institutions to support a decision to [explore](#) creating a Plumbing program within the Construction & Electronics Division.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

RESPONSE TO [INTERIM MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT](#)

As noted in the [2013 HLC Evaluation Team Report](#), at the time of the College's most recent reaffirmation, a new assessment process had just been developed and piloted. Four concerns, listed below, were identified by the HLC team of peer reviewers, and the College was asked to develop a report that addresses them as part of the Assurance Argument:

1. Evidence of changes which have been implemented due to the implementation of program learning outcomes. (4.B.3.)
2. Evidence of a plan in place which will ensure that all of the GELOs will be addressed. (4.B.1.)
3. Evidence that program learning outcomes as well as the GELOs are inculcated into both the traditional courses and the online courses. (4.B.2.)
4. Samples of methods of measurement for evaluating GELOs for faculty to use if they need assistance on determining how to implement these outcomes. (4.B.4.)

The College's response to the concerns is found embedded in sub-component responses and at the end of the Argument.

4.B.1.

SCC has both general education and program-specific learning goals. Seven institution-wide student learning goals in the form of General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) were updated to address Concern #2 stated above: evidence of a plan to assess all GELOs. GELOs are included on each course syllabus, which are available to all students and employees on The Hub. The College's general education student learning goals, in the form of GELOs, are listed below.

GELO 1: Oral Communication. Students will demonstrate effective research and presentation skills (verbal and nonverbal) by compiling and presenting logically organized information in an ethical and confident manner for a specific audience, while using and acknowledging sources when appropriate.

GELO 2: Written Communication. The student will demonstrate the ability to present original, organized written ideas/information in diverse genres to varied audiences; use language effectively, including the conventions of standard grammar; and gather and analyze information from a variety of sources.

GELO 3: Critical Thinking. The student will demonstrate the ability to design, implement, evaluate, and reflect on a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a specified outcome.

GELO 4: Problem Solving. The student will demonstrate the ability to define a problem, develop a plan to solve the problem, collect and analyze information, solve the problem, evaluate results, and define any need for further work.

GELO 5: Ethical Responsibility. The student will demonstrate awareness of personal responsibility in one's academic, civic, social, and vocational/professional life.

GELO 6: Quantitative Reasoning. The student will demonstrate the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems using mathematical applications such as formulas, data sets, graphs, tables, etc.

GELO 7: Computer/Technology Literacy. The student will demonstrate the ability to use technology responsibly as a tool for productivity and communication academically, personally, and professionally.

Program and course-level learning goals are also included in the institutional assessment process. These goals are unique to individual programs and courses and are found on each [course syllabus](#). SCC follows an assessment model that is centered on measuring student learning at the program level. Program faculty, in conjunction with the program chair and division dean, identify student learning goals that are connected to each program's mission statement. The three-year assessment cycle [process](#) collects and measures assessment data at the program level.

Following a common template, program [assessment plans](#) provide faculty and administrators with the means to address pertinent issues in student learning within the context of the program's mission. Programs identify 4-6 major program student learning goals, with each goal being further defined by 2-3 specific student learning outcomes. Each program also includes at least one GELO appropriate to the curriculum in the assessment plan. Programs then determine how these outcomes will be measured and to what level (the measurement tool and benchmark or criteria of success). Programs may choose to keep their assessment plan for the duration of the three-year cycle or may change part of the plan during the cycle as the need arises.

The role of the Assessment Team is to provide training and feedback for the programs at every step in the assessment process. This team is comprised of faculty from across the College, representing every instructional division and campus location and led by the Dean of Arts & Sciences and the Director of Assessment. Assessment plans and reports are reviewed annually by the Assessment Team and detailed feedback is provided back to the programs. Once the assessment plans are approved by the Team, programs then collect assessment data during the academic year using a variety of direct and indirect assessment measures (as shown in the assessment table in 4.B.2.). [Assessment plans](#), [reports](#), and Assessment Team feedback ([plans](#) and [reports](#)) are posted on the assessment site of the College's intranet portal, The Hub.

4.B.2.

Evidence that the institution assesses learning outcomes is documented in the annual [assessment report](#). All programs complete an assessment report each year; these reports are then compiled into an institutional report reflecting assessment data collected during the yearly cycle for the program and GELO outcomes being measured, providing a complete institutional view of learning outcomes. Programs track their results from year to year in the assessment report template. At the end of the three-year assessment cycle, programs complete a summary section as part of the report. To close the assessment loop, the process to analyze and use the assessment data includes the following components:

- Assessment results for the General Education Learning Outcome(s)
- Assessment results for program learning outcomes (2-3 outcomes per report)
- Analysis of the results
- Recommendations for changes in the next academic year
- Results of those changes
- A summary of results/trends/lessons learned at the end of a 3-year cycle
- Connection to program's Strategic Plan and budget

This table provides evidence of the most recent assessment plan, report, and Assessment Team feedback for 10 instructional programs.

Program	Assessment Plan	Plan Feedback	Assessment Report	Report Feedback
Medical Assisting	MEDA Plan	MEDA Plan Feedback	MEDA Report	MEDA Report Feedback
Physical Therapist Assistant	PTAS Plan	PTAS Plan Feedback	PTAS Report	PTAS Report Feedback
Graphic Design	GDMA Plan	GDMA Plan Feedback	GDMA Report	GDMA Report Feedback
Math	MATH Plan	MATH Plan Feedback	MATH Report	MATH Report Feedback
Oral Communication	ORAL Plan	ORAL Plan Feedback	ORAL Report	ORAL Report Feedback
Criminal Justice	CRIM Plan	CRIM Plan Feedback	CRIM Report	CRIM Report Feedback
Electrical-Electromechanical	ELEM Plan	ELEM Plan Feedback	ELEM Report	ELEM Report Feedback
Office Professional	OFFT Plan	OFFT Plan Feedback	OFFT Report	OFFT Report Feedback

Diesel-Truck	DESL Plan	DESL Plan Feedback	DESL Report	DESL Report Feedback
Precision Machining and Automation Technology	MACH Plan	MACH Plan Feedback	MACH Report	MACH Report Feedback

Continuing Progress

The College is seeking to enhance its assessment process by collecting and analyzing course level assessment data to complement its program level assessment plan. The College is also developing institution-wide benchmarks to allow the College to compare data across programs. The College is exploring software solutions that would help support systematically assessing course and institutional-level data. An expanded request to purchase an assessment and planning software was approved by the Board of Governors on June 20, 2017. The College is also exploring adopting a standardized general education outcomes assessment tool, such as the College Assessment of Academic Proficiency.

Opportunity for Improvement - Co-curricular Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The College utilizes an informal and decentralized assessment process for its co-curricular activities. The [co-curricular programs engage students in activities](#) that are in alignment with the College's seven general education learning outcomes. However, the College recognizes it has an opportunity to strengthen its assessment of co-curricular activities by centralizing and formalizing its process. At present, the College is developing co-curricular outcomes and an assessment plan. In [July 2016](#), the Vice President for Student Services established a small planning team to begin the process of developing a formal co-curricular assessment model for the Student Services Division. To date, the planning team has met three times--[July 8](#), [July 21](#), and [December 5, 2016](#). The planning team consists of representatives from Admissions, Disability Services, Student Activities, Registration, and Student Success with assistance from the Director of Assessment. These offices agreed to develop a department mission statement, create department annual goals, and create a co-curricular student learning assessment plan.

The Student Services Planning Team will work with the pilot departments to:

- Determine the length of the pilot (tentatively 12-24 months);
- Provide training on assessment including principles; terms; best practices; how to write, measure, and analyze student learning outcomes; and how to report assessment results;
- Help pilot departments to develop and implement assessment plans and reports; and
- Refine and revise processes, forms, and templates, before implementing throughout the entire division in all departments.

The College has allocated fiscal and personnel resources to develop co-curricular outcomes and a comprehensive assessment plan. In May 2017, the College sponsored three student services staff to attend a [regional assessment conference](#). The [Associate Dean of Student Affairs](#) was recently tasked to oversee the co-curricular assessment implementation.

Fall 2016	Develop a department mission statement (COMPLETE)
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Winter 2017	Create department annual goals (COMPLETE)
Spring 2017	Send student services employees to assessment conference (COMPLETE) Identify an employee to oversee process (COMPLETE)
Summer 2017	Training on principles; terms; best practices; how to write, measure, and analyze student learning outcomes; and how to report assessment results Develop draft of co-curricular assessment process
Fall 2017	Develop Assessment Reports for pilot programs
Winter 2018	Implement Assessment Plan
Spring 2018	Implement Assessment Plan
Summer 2018	Submit Assessment Reports Assess and revise process
Fall 2018	Training and roll-out plan to all departments
Winter 2019	Implement Assessment Plan
Spring 2019	Implement Assessment Plan
Summer 2019	Submit Assessment Reports Assess and revise process

4.B.3.

Through the aforementioned assessment processes, SCC instructional programs indicate (on the annual assessment report and at the end of their three-year assessment cycle) how they use information gained from the assessment process to improve student learning. In 2015-16, 75% of instructional programs across the College [met their GELO benchmarks](#). Program assessment reports indicate that when assessment data indicates performance is below goal changes are being made to improve student learning.

4.B.4.

A positive outcome of the monitoring issue is that the culture has changed with regard to assessment. The College has 100% participation in the assessment process across all instructional divisions. The use of an Assessment Team model ensures that all programs submit both assessment plans and annual outcome reports. The Director of Assessment provides [training](#) to new Assessment Team members to strengthen the level of quality in feedback provided to instructional programs. The assessment reports confirm that faculty use multiple methods to assess student performance.

Since the 2013 assessment process and cycle, leadership of these processes has remained constant. This consistency has helped programs to complete a cycle and fully assess student learning at the program level. Thus, processes are in place for programs to not only collect and analyze assessment results, but also to document how those results have led to changes in curriculum and pedagogy, and the results of those changes. This represents a significant step forward in “closing the loop.”

Response to Concern #1. Evidence of changes which have been implemented due to the implementation of program learning outcomes.

Two examples of changes implemented based on assessment of student learning are included below, as described in the assessment cycle processes in 4.B.2. More examples are found in the assessment reports linked in 4.B.2.

[Polysomnography Technician \(PSGT\)](#): One of the outcomes for the Polysomnographic program was “The student will recognize an artifact for a given epoch and specify the cause.” (Outcome 2.1) In the first year of the cycle (2013-14), students were given a quiz to assess their competency. Instead of achieving the desired result of 80% passing with a grade of at least 80% or higher, it was almost the exact opposite: 80% scored *below* 80%. For year 2 of the cycle, the program changed the assessment tool to help students visualize the artifact. This only slightly improved the results (11% scored higher than 80%). So for year 3 of the cycle, an additional clinical competency for artifact recognition and troubleshooting was added. The results were better: 67% met the benchmark for year 3. In their summary of the assessment cycle, the program commented:

Outcome 2.1 was far below benchmark for years 1 and 2 of the current cycle. The assessment results encouraged us to take a second look at the curriculum and reflect on the students' experiences/opportunities up to that point in the program. It was recognized that students had very little opportunity to interact with the material on which they were being assessed, prior to the assessment. ... By adding a competency for this skill, which must be passed at a specified level, the student's investment in learning the material appears to have been enhanced.

[Radiologic Technology \(RADT\)](#): Throughout the 3-year cycle for Radiologic Technology, the program faculty indicated that, based on the results of the assessment process, changes would be made in the curriculum for the following 3-year cycle. Specifically, Outcomes 2.1 and 3.2 will use different assessment tools to ensure students are learning the material and are able to demonstrate competency in the various skill requirements of the program. As stated by the program in their summary, “By changing the tools, the program is looking at the goal from a different angle to ensure appropriate education is being provided to students.”

Continuing Progress

Some programs choose to review assessment results with the program's advisory committee. Presently, the College does not require all programs to review student learning outcome data at program advisory committee meetings. This policy is anticipated to change in 2018-2019 with the future adoption of a new program advisory model that will include standard agenda items for all programs.

Response to Concern #2. Evidence of a plan in place which will ensure that all of the GELOs will be addressed.

In 2013, the College continued implementation of its plan to ensure all GELOs were addressed at both the course and program level. The plan was implemented by the Director of Assessment and included comprehensive training for programs on how to establish benchmarks and measures of student learning. For the [2016-17 academic year](#), each GELO was included in a minimum of 190 courses (GELO 6) and a maximum of 692 courses (GELO 3). All GELOs have been assessed at the program level. [Recent analysis](#) shows that approximately 75% of programs met total achievement benchmarks.

To ensure the College continues to assess GELOs in a comprehensive manner, the Director of Assessment and the Dean of Arts & Sciences will be responsible for documenting which GELOs are being assessed by the programs and when they are being assessed. Beginning with the 2017-18 academic year, all courses will also identify the GELO on the [master course form](#), which is reviewed by the Curriculum Committee (see 3.A.1.).

Response to Concern #3: Program learning outcomes as well as the GELOs are inculcated into both the traditional courses and the online courses.

As outlined in both the [College's Instructional](#) and [Virtual Learning](#) handbooks, program learning outcomes as well as GELOs are inculcated into both traditional and online courses, including dual credit courses. Evidence of compliance to this requirement can be found in College syllabi.

At SCC, every course must have an approved [syllabus](#) on file with the Vice President for Instruction. Regardless of the mode of delivery (traditional or online), the syllabus and learning outcomes in a given course are identical. Faculty must use the same template for all courses. Every syllabus must include the following elements:

- Catalog Description (course number/title, credit hours, etc.)
- Course Objectives
- Student Learning Outcomes and General Education Learning Outcomes
- Content/Topical Outline
- Instructional Materials (required texts, etc.)
- Methods of Presentation/Instruction
- Methods of Evaluation

Response to Concern #4. Samples of methods of measurement for evaluating GELOs for faculty to use if they need assistance on determining how to implement these outcomes.

In 2015, the Assessment Team developed new tools ([rubrics](#) and [handbook](#)) to support faculty in

evaluating the GELOs in their courses. The rubrics are accessible to faculty on the Assessment page of The Hub. Programs are encouraged to adapt the common rubrics to the needs of their program (e.g. [Energy Generation](#) and [Medical Assisting](#)). See 4.B.2. for additional information on how GELOs are measured at the program-level.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4.C.1.

The College shows strong commitment to student success at every level of the institution, from the Board of Governors to the administration, and at the unit level, where faculty and staff are committed to helping students attain their educational goals. In 2015, the College adopted a new mission statement and Strategic Plan. Identifying goals for retention, persistence, and completion were prioritized as part of that process. An excerpt from the College's mission statement demonstrates that student success is an institutional priority: *Student success and completion is maximized through collegiate excellence, exemplary instruction, comprehensive student support services, enrichment programs, and student-centered processes.*

The mission statement informs the College's nine institutional goals. [Goal 2](#) of the 2015-19 Strategic Plan directly emphasizes the importance of student success: *Improve student success, retention, completion, and academic excellence through high-quality academic and career programs, and responsible, innovative student services.*

The College developed over 75 quantitative and qualitative metrics to measure Strategic Plan progress. Goal 2 [metrics](#) include [fall to fall retention rate](#), [overall success rate](#), [overall course withdrawal rate](#), and [graduation and transfer rate](#). In 2015-16, every division, program, and department formally aligned their operational efforts with the institution's priorities. This effort resulted in more than 100 unit-level strategies (such as the Engaged Learning Experience strategy discussed in 3.D.4.) aimed at improving retention, completion, and academic excellence (Strategic Plan [2015-16](#) and [2016-17](#)).

In addition to the College-wide goals on retention, persistence, and completion goals, some academic programs, such as the [Surgical Technology program](#), have specific retention and attrition thresholds and goals based on requirements of accrediting bodies.

The next step the College will take during the 2017-18 academic year is to analyze Strategic Plan metric trend data and develop Key Performance Indicators related to student retention, persistence, and completion.

4.C.2.

As noted in [2013 reaffirmation team response](#) recommendations, the creation of the Institutional Research Office (IR) in January 2013 has helped the College collect, analyze, and use data to inform decision making at all levels. Since that time, IR has grown from one employee to six. For the past few years the College has invested significant time and resources in developing a centralized research capacity to ensure that data collection methodologies are valid (measure what they are supposed to measure), reliable (are representational and can be replicated), and triangulate multiple appropriate data sources.

The expansion of IR has enabled the College to collect retention, persistence, and completion data for both internal and external reporting, such as IPEDS and the recently developed Voluntary Framework for Accountability (VFA), a collection tool specifically designed for two-year colleges. These and other institutional data are stored in a data warehouse, analyzed, and developed into reports throughout the year as needed. In 2015-16, IR in conjunction with the Information Technology Division, key staff within the College, and the third-party vendor ZogoTech, implemented the College's first data warehouse. Since full implementation in [June 2016](#), the ZogoTech data warehouse has been used as a primary source for data analysis, data visualizations, and the creation of standardized reports. Some examples of the reports include a [quarterly grade distribution report](#), [course utilization](#), and *ad hoc* reports (discussed in 4.C.3.). An interactive [Fact Book](#), [VFA reports](#), [annual profile summary](#), and other reports are available on the College's public website.

By using several collection methodologies (IPEDS, VFA, CCSSE and institution-specific resources), the ability to analyze and compare data is enhanced. IPEDS affords data that is comparable to both four-year and two-year institutions, focusing on first-time, full-time students. VFA gives greater insight into the full range of student outcomes in two-year institutions. The CCSSE instrument, administered for the fourth time in the Spring of 2017, provides actionable information on programming and services. When the 2017 survey is finalized, SCC will begin analyzing trend data focusing on student learning and persistence. The administration of the [2015 CCSSE](#) allowed for a summary report comparing SCC to other institutions using five benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges. On an institutional level, SCC's Placement Office collects annual graduate data through the [graduate information sheet](#) to track student job placement and continued education. This information is used to produce the annual [Graduate Report](#).

IPEDS [retention rates](#) for first-time students who began their studies in Fall 2014 and returned in Fall 2015 were 60% for full-time students and 45% for part-time students. On average, between 25-30% of SCC's undergraduate students have taken at least one course at another institution before attending SCC and 50% are attending on a part-time basis. Two-year VFA [persistence/attainment outcomes](#) for students entering SCC for the first time in Fall 2013 show that two years later (Fall 2015), 35% of students were still enrolled, 15% had completed a certificate or degree, and 22% had transferred to another institution. Graduation rates are provided in the IPEDS report and in the annual Graduate Report. The [IPEDS](#) graduation rates are calculated only for first-time, full-time students. For IPEDS reporting year 2016, this protocol applied to only about 27% of incoming SCC students. Out of this small sub-group, the overall graduation rate was 27% and the transfer-out rate was 21%.

The College also uses IPEDS to compare itself to other peer institutions in the areas of [graduation and transfer-out rates](#). In the most recent IPEDS Data Feedback report, SCC was comparable to or above national trends among peer institutions.

Definitions and data collection processes regarding student retention, persistence, and completion continue to evolve as the College becomes more sophisticated in data collection methods and sources. For example, tracking term-to-term retention data can be a challenge due to variation in student goals, which range from completing a program of study, to taking a few courses to meet employment training or improve skills in a particular academic area, or completing the prerequisite requirements for another institution. Other challenges include the varied intake cycles of community college programs (quarterly, semi-annually, annually) and the varied length of programs, ranging from 10 weeks to 24 months.

For the past three years ([2015](#), [2016](#), and [2017](#)), the President has presented retention, persistence, and completion data to the Board of Governors to support their ability to make informed budgetary decisions that are directly related to the College's Strategic Plan goals. The budgetary decisions are directly reflected in the institutional improvements identified in 4.C.3.

4.C.3.

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.

New Student Orientation

The Student Services Division has implemented strategies to enhance new student orientation and increasing [Welcome Week programming](#). Student Services staff and a team of faculty collaborated to design a new student orientation success course to help students better acclimate to the College, gain information necessary for success at SCC, and persist to graduation. The [Success @ SCC](#) course will be piloted during the Summer and Fall quarters of 2017. The [course](#) will also provide an opportunity to gather student assessment data based on identified learning outcomes in relation to student success and persistence.

Technology

SCC has also invested significant resources into services from Ellucian, a higher education technology company, helping faculty, staff, and students to gain access to technological tools for tracking student progress and achievement. Specifically, the College has engaged consulting services to improve the institution's degree audit within Colleague, the institution's student information database. Consultants will also help to fully implement the Student Planning Module in the Summer Quarter of 2017. This module will help enhance persistence in several ways: by facilitating increased communication about degree requirements; helping students plan course load for future terms; and allowing advisors to communicate more readily with students. The College has invested extensive [financial](#) and human resources into work with Ellucian to address issues and implement the module. Specific issues related to the degree audit process and implementation of the Student Planning Module are outlined in the SCC [Business Process Management Admissions and Registration Report](#)

of [Recommendations and Findings](#), which was collaboratively developed by Ellucian and SCC during an [onsite review](#) of current business practices.

Personnel

A number of positions focusing on student retention, persistence, and completion were added as part of [Goal 9](#) of SCC's Strategic Plan through a data-driven planning and budgeting process. Specifically, a [Director of Student Success](#) position was [created](#) and filled in Fall 2016. This position is responsible for the supervision, [training, development](#), and guidance of the College's Student Success Coach Team, and the [evaluation](#) of student success outcomes and data. To assist in the process of data collection, analysis, and use of data to make improvements, the Student Services Division, with the addition of the Director of Student Success and college-wide coordination of retention and success services, is currently engaged with IR staff in reviewing services and data, defining data collection needs, and designing processes to collect the data.

Registration

A newly-created position, [Dean of Student Enrollment](#), works collaboratively with the Instructional Division to study enrollment and course registration trends to eliminate barriers to academic program and course enrollment for both new and returning students, leading to better course utilization and availability of courses at times, places, and modalities that meet student needs. The following [registration changes](#) represent the data-driven, retention-orientated decisions implemented as a result of collaboration between the Dean of Student Enrollment, IR, and the Instructional Division.

- [New registration model](#): The previous registration model allowed students who were continuing in a program of study to register first, with new, declared students next, and undeclared/visiting students registering last. After analyzing course registration trends, the decision was made to remove priority registration. Now the new registration model allows for a single open registration for all students regardless of status or program of study.
- [Change in withdrawal date](#): A review of the College's withdrawal policy revealed that the deadline to withdraw was at 56% of the completion of the quarter. This gave the students approximately five weeks to determine whether to drop a course. The College changed the deadline to withdrawal to 75% of the completion of a course to ensure students had sufficient time to determine whether dropping a course was the appropriate action. An [analysis of withdrawal rates](#) before (2015-16) and after (2016-17) the change in policy, found that the withdrawal rate increased from 5.8% to 7.3%. In contrast, the D and F rate decreased from 15% to 13.4%. The change in the withdrawal date deadline was associated with the expected changes in withdrawals and failures.

Instruction

As part of the program review process detailed in 4.A.1., all academic programs review enrollment and graduation data. In addition to the [retention and graduation data](#) reported as a part of the Transitions Lab discussion in 3.D.2., the following two noteworthy program-specific examples are a direct result of data analysis. This academic year, both the Associate Degree Nursing and the Physical Therapist Assistant programs are moving from the traditional first-come-first-served approach to a selective admissions process to improve retention, persistence, and completion rates. This strategy was based on enrollment opportunity lists from [2013](#), [2014](#), [2015](#), and [2016](#) showing that students who were admitted to both programs waited an average of two years to begin the program. Both programs followed similar data-driven processes that ultimately led to developing selective admission intakes.

- The [Associate Degree Nursing \(ADN\)](#) program tracks retention and attrition information as part of the [Nebraska State Board of Nursing Annual Attrition and Retention Report](#). In the 2014-15 academic year, the program enrolled 45 students between Summer 2014 (22 students) and Winter 2015 (23 students), near its enrollment capacity of 48 students. The combined cohort graduated 30 students for a retention rate of 67%. As a result of the data related to the retention, completion, and persistence of students, Associate Degree Nursing program staff studied a variety of data, processes, and common practices at peer institutions that resulted in developing the [selective admissions process](#) that will be implemented in Summer 2017 and Winter 2018 intakes.
- The [Physical Therapist Assistant](#) program has the capability to enroll 26 students one time per year. In 2013, the program enrolled 23 students. The cohort graduated 12 students for a completion rate of 52%. In 2014, the program enrolled 24 new students, and one student that had previously attempted the program. That cohort graduated 16 students in 2015 (students that graduated in their first attempt of the program); one student graduated on their second attempt of the program for a completion rate of 66%. In 2015, the program enrolled 25 new students and graduated 16 students in 2016 (first attempt of the program) for a completion rate of 69%. In 2016, the program enrolled 22 new students and 2 students who previously attempted the program and to date six students have withdrawn from the program resulting in 18 anticipated graduates in 2017 or an expected retention of 75%. To develop a selective admissions process, the Physical Therapist Assistant program staff reviewed [student scenarios](#) through a rubric and researched other colleges' PTA and PT programs with selective processes. The PTA [selective admissions process](#) was implemented at SCC in January 2017.

Institutional Research (IR)

IR has developed standard enrollment reports that impact the ability of students to make progress toward their educational goals. For example, the [term comparison course utilization](#) report drives decisions about course scheduling by identifying courses with a utilization rate over 80% in the prior year's corresponding term, allowing administrators to determine a need for additional sections. During the registration period, a [weekly course utilization](#) report can be used to identify courses that are filling up so additional sections can be added to meet student demand and facilitate their progress. Additionally, IR regularly receives *ad hoc* requests from College employees to collect and analyze data.

- During the 2014-15 academic year, the structure of the developmental Math courses was changed to a modular, progressive model, and the developmental English courses integrated reading and writing. Two years later in 2016-17, these course structure changes are fully implemented, and an analytical review was done to evaluate course-taking behavior and level of student success in the new structure. IR received a request to evaluate student performance in developmental [math](#) and [English](#) following the change in structure. The English and Math departments continue to review the data and will gather additional data to inform future decisions.
- The Electrical Systems Technician program recently studied [retention outcomes](#) in four math-intensive program courses. The results of the study led SCC to submit a NSF/S-STEM grant proposal due to the demonstrated opportunity for a potential increase in retention outcomes in the program.

4.C.4.

The IR staff is trained in expert data-collection methodologies and has access to software and tools to provide internal and external stakeholders with meaningful data to use in understanding student outcomes and in making decisions to increase retention, completion, and persistence. IR staff lead the College's processes and methodologies for internal and external sources.

Internal Data Sources

SCC's primary data collection instrument is its own integrated student information system (Colleague UI), which collects data on student demographics, enrollment information, grades, and course information. The data from Colleague is then used by other information systems, such as Informer to generate reports, ZogoTech data warehouse to analyze data, and Tableau software to create interactive data visualizations.

External Data Sources

The Voluntary Framework of Accountability is a relatively new (2013) national model for defining and measuring student outcomes (including adult education and workforce outcomes) in the community college environment. By using both IPEDS and VFA data, the College is able to provide performance comparisons that are useful to different audiences for different purposes. The National Student Clearinghouse offers additional detail on term to term retention, graduation, and transfer outcomes to supplement IPEDS and VFA data. SCC data submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) can be requested as reports, imported into the ZogoTech data warehouse, and used to identify and analyze the [transfer in, transfer out and cyclical nature](#) of SCC students to better inform the College's transfer articulation efforts.

Continuing Progress

In 2017-18, IR has [plans](#) to further support data-driven decision making by development of:

- Enrollment reports aimed at identifying potential barriers for students;
- Additional course utilization reports aimed at identifying areas of potential growth and potential attrition to better align resources with student demand;
- Student population reports to get a more comprehensive understanding of SCC student demographics; and
- Reports specifically targeting the differing and specialized needs of continuing education in both course offerings and student population.

The College is also in the process of developing a data governance plan, which includes scope, priorities and committee structure, as well as a policies and procedures manual that document best practices in data collection and data visualization.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

- The College has participated in Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education program review process for the past 25 years. The Vice President for Instruction presents program review outcomes and recommendations annually for the Board's review and approval.
- The College evaluates graduate success through multiple avenues including the annual Graduate Report, annual Strategic Plan Progress Report, and employer and program demand surveys.
- There is evidence of the College's collection, analysis, and use of valid and reliable retention, persistence, and completion data to make improvements in new student orientation, the addition of student services personnel, use of technology, registration processes, and instructional programs.
- The College's response to the interim monitoring progress report on assessment of student learning includes:
 - Consistency in assessment processes over the past four years;
 - 100% participation in the three-year assessment cycle;
 - Annual reports that document assessment results, changes made based on the results, and results of those changes to close the assessment loop;
 - Use of an Assessment Team model which provides training, regular feedback, and rubrics to faculty; and
 - Plans to continue strengthening the program-level assessment of student learning through the implementation of a software solution tool that evaluates student learning achievement of the College's learning outcomes on a course and institutional level.
- Areas identified as opportunities for improvement include:
 - A plan to ensure compliance with HLC's recently revised assignment of credit hours policy; and
 - The continued development of a centralized co-curricular assessment plan to assess achievement of co-curricular student learning outcomes.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

5.A.1.

Fiscal Resources

Adequate, diversified funding sources ensure continued College operations

SCC has the fiscal resources to support its operations across the three main campuses, three additional approved locations, and new learning centers. Goal 8 of SCC's Strategic Plan is to "maximize the College's ability to fulfill its mission and accomplish its strategic goals and objectives while maintaining financial stability." SCC relies on [revenues](#) from property taxes, state aid, and tuition as its primary revenue sources. The College [monitors trend analysis](#) and future forecasts of these three funding sources to support plans for maintaining and strengthening program quality. The property tax levy is set annually by the Board of Governors and, together with property valuations in the 15-county area, determines the College's property tax revenue. The [amount collected from tuition](#) over the past five academic years has decreased, but the percent of decline for 2014-15 was the smallest in four years. The overall decline in tuition dollars is the result of decreased enrollment during the same five-year timeframe.

The College recently analyzed [revenue distributions](#) across all six Nebraska community colleges. The findings showed that SCC has the second lowest property tax levy in Nebraska and that other colleges have maximized their capital property tax levy to modernize their facilities, while SCC has not. During the [June 2017 meeting](#), the Board of Governors explored four budget scenarios and voted to approve a capital increase levy fund to 2 cents, up from 1.05 cents and the general fund levy to 7.07

cents, up from 6.47 cents. The increase in the capital levy will generate approximately \$6 million in additional revenue, which will be used to fund Phase I of the College's new Facilities Master Plan (see 5.A.1. and 5.D.2.).

State funding challenges

The College faces some challenges with the current Nebraska legislative climate. For the past three years there have been a number of bills that would have significantly reduced, or removed altogether, state aid and property tax revenues. Due to lower than expected agricultural income, the [state implemented a mid-year 4% cut to state aid](#). In addition, the 2017-19 biennial budget included an additional .5% cut to community college state aid. During the 2017 legislative session SCC's President was active in meeting with state legislators and providing testimony at the following committee hearings.

- Education Committee opposing a bill that would have removed community colleges' authority to levy property taxes.
- Government Affairs committee opposing a bill that would have taken away the college's ability to maintain cash reserves necessary for financial stability.
- Government Affairs committee opposing a bill that would have severely reduced the College's ability to borrow money in the form of installment payment obligations or bonds secured by such payments.

The College is being proactive in working with senators to understand the importance and impact of community colleges. SCC's Office of Institutional Research developed a [factsheet](#) that includes demographic, employment, and economic impact data for all Nebraska community colleges. SCC's President utilizes this information to inform senators, policy makers, and community leaders.

Annual audits

As described in 2.A., the College contracts with an external auditor to conduct a financial audit on an annual basis. The [auditor's reports](#), in addition to the [Financial Fact Book](#), provide public access to the College's assets and liabilities, revenues, and expenses. The President and the Vice President for Administrative Services present financial information to the Board of Governors each month. All Board documents, including detailed financial revenue and expenditures, are publicly available through Novus Agenda. To promote financial transparency SCC also prepares an annual profile report ([2015](#) and [2016](#)) which includes revenue and expenses.

Operating budget

Prior to 2014, the College's general fund end-of-year net position was typically between \$5 and \$7 million underspent. During the 2015-16 academic year the operating budget was reorganized to ensure a more balanced operating budget. The President and the Vice President for Administrative Services developed a predictive funding model to allocate underspent funds. The goal of the model was to track the underspending and apply it to critical operating maintenance projects such as a roof replacement, HVAC replacements, and technological infrastructure.

In order to launch funding the 2015-19 Strategic Plan, the Board approved a one cent increase in general tax levy to support over 80 [expanded projects](#). This raised the general tax levy from 4.98 cents to 5.94 cents. The Board also approved [increases in tuition](#) to support the Strategic Plan funding.

In 2016 the College added a new [analysis](#) to its monthly financial report that includes monthly

tracking data on revenue, expenditures, and net position. For 2016-17, the President and Vice President for Administrative Services used the predictive funding model to establish an estimate of the year-end net position of between \$2 and \$2.5 million. As of June 30, 2017 the net position was \$2.1 million. Approximately \$1.1 million of these underspent funds were used to cover the unexpected 4% cut in state aid. Proactive application of the College's predictive funding model ensures financial stability while maximizing its ability to invest in its operations. The current budget also includes expanded projects to support the 2015-19 Strategic Plan.

In [May 2017](#) the Board of Governors reviewed the 2017-18 budget proposal and approved the budget on [June 20, 2017](#).

Foundation

The College is fortunate to have the support of the Southeast Community College Educational Foundation. Its mission is to offer the financial support necessary to help students reach their educational goals. The Foundation has an active Board that oversees an [endowment](#) that has grown from \$12.9 million to \$21.3 million over the past six fiscal years. Its primary activity is awarding [student scholarships](#); in 2015-16, the Foundation awarded 3,973 scholarships for a total of \$1.58 million.

Continuing Progress

SCC demonstrates a commitment to continuously improve its fiscal resources in order to strengthen the College's capacity to meet its strategic goals. In an effort to strengthen its capacity to pursue funding from external entities, the Resource Development Office expanded its staff to be able to increase its pursuit of [grant funding](#) and expand the types of grants it can pursue. A part-time grant assistant position was expanded to a full-time resource development specialist position, allowing SCC to write more grant applications for external funding opportunities than was possible previously. The College has also [allocated funds](#) in 2017-18 to hire an Advancement Director to strengthen the financial capacity of the institution to further the College's ability to meet its strategic goals.

Human Resources

Staffing levels

The College has made significant progress towards its goal of enhancing staffing to meet its current needs and to position itself for growth as [prioritized in the Strategic Plan](#). In 2015-16 there were 68 expanded positions hired—more than four times the number in the previous year—and 145 total hires. In the 2016-17 academic year, the College employed 712 full-time employees (370 instructional and 342 non-instructional). For the past five years, the ratio of full-time instructional to non-instructional staff has been maintained at about 1:1. Each month, the Vice President for Human Resources [reports to the Board](#) all employee resignations, terminations, retirements, and transfers, as well as current employee demographics.

HR positions

In 2015-16, the College expanded its human resources programs and services, with the creation and hiring of three new positions: Human Resources Coordinator; Training, Policy, and Resources Specialist; and Benefits and Compensation Analyst. With these new positions the College is able to hire talented faculty and staff through a more in-depth approach to the recruiting and analysis of applicants. The College also will be able to develop a systematic and formal approach to employee

training and new employee orientation. The expansion of Human Resources staffing was essential for providing the time, resources, and expertise necessary for the college-wide personnel expansion that took place in 2015-16.

Safety and security

SCC continues to invest resources in improving safety and security at all locations. The 2015 employee survey showed employees reporting [high levels of dissatisfaction with personal safety/security](#) at the College. As one response to this finding, in September 2015, the position of part-time Security Coordinator was converted to full-time. Additionally, in January 2016, two full-time Safety and Security Specialists were hired. In 2015-16, Safety and Security staff improved safety, security, and emergency readiness across the College in a variety of ways, including the addition of new security cameras and software at Milford Campus, The Career Academy, and Education Square, and undergoing an emergency preparedness/safety audit of the Beatrice Campus. The College has plans to conduct additional audits of Milford and Lincoln campuses in the near future. Further efforts to improve safety and security across campuses include the establishment of a [CARE Team](#), and increased training on the [standard response protocol](#). While significant progress has been made, there is still room for improvement in ensuring the safety of students and employees across all campuses.

Opportunity for Improvement - Physical Infrastructure

Findings from the 2015 Employee Survey showed improvements in facilities are a top [priority](#) for SCC employees. This finding, along with results from the 2014 Student Satisfaction Inventory, led the Institutional Strategic Planning Committee to a [strategic goal](#) specifically targeting SCC's educational environment. Until recently, the College had not gone through a facilities master planning process, although many of the buildings were already beyond their life expectancies. In January 2015, the College engaged Clark Enersen Partners, whose team of architects, engineers, landscape architects, and interior designers evaluated the existing SCC facilities on the three main campuses in [Beatrice](#), [Milford](#), and [Lincoln](#), and the two Lincoln satellite locations, [Jack J. Huck Continuing Education Center](#) and [Education Square](#). SCC's [Facilities Master Plan](#) was released in February 2016, after a year-long process of consultation and study. As part of the analysis, a tour of [peer institutions](#) confirmed the initial physical assessment, that most of SCC's facilities were out-of-date and inadequate with respect to current educational trends, market demand, and student needs.

All but two buildings on the [Beatrice Campus](#) were determined to be in poor condition, and the Clark Enersen [team determined](#) that none the original buildings, including the gymnasium and physical plant which were added between 1965 and 2004, would fit with the long term projections and vision of growth for the campus. A [needs analysis](#) indicated a significant space deficit on the Beatrice Campus, especially for classrooms, laboratories, and other departmental space. The current campus structures cannot meet the needs of anticipated future growth.

Most buildings on the [Milford Campus](#) were determined to be in poor or moderate condition. The [team found](#) that the conditions of all residence halls, the recreation center, placement/assessment center and several other academic buildings and campus services buildings were either in the poor category due to condition or were not suitable to meet the demands of projected growth in enrollment. [Needs analysis](#) determined space deficiencies for classrooms, laboratories, and other departmental space on the Milford Campus, especially among those technical programs working with large equipment. Building a new classroom building would allow existing classroom space to be converted into additional laboratory space for technical programs and address urgent [needs identified by external accrediting bodies](#), like the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation. The

lack of gender balance on the Milford Campus is an emerging concern and the growth of academic transfer, business, and health science programs would help alleviate this concern.

Buildings on the [Lincoln Campus](#) were found to be in slightly better condition, but [not able to accommodate projected growth](#) in high demand professions and in need of major upgrades and maintenance. All Lincoln locations have inadequate spaces for students to study. There is also a lack of private spaces (offices) for faculty to meet with students. Classrooms are in need of updating to meet current standards.

See 5.D.2. for additional information on the facilities master planning process and the steps the College has taken to address its facilities needs.

Technological Infrastructure

The College demonstrates commitment to support its operations by purchasing equipment that meets industrial and technological standards. During the 2016-17 academic year, more than \$2 million was spent on new [capital equipment](#), as part of the total [instructional budget](#). Additionally, the Information Technology (IT) Division stays abreast of technical products and services, to analyze new software, and to provide the most appropriate and [updated solutions](#) to both employees and students.

The College surveyed faculty and staff in [2015](#) and [2016](#) regarding satisfaction with hardware/software support of classroom and lab technology and PCs in workspaces. After the 2015 survey, the College invested resources in strengthening personnel and equipment technology infrastructure. In the follow-up survey there has been some improvement noted in satisfaction with classroom and lab support and helpdesk responses in the most recent survey.

The College uses Moodle for its learning management system and has a team of [instructional designers](#) who provide support to faculty in adapting course content for online delivery. The instructional designers also provide support for students with Moodle access. Based on lower levels of satisfaction with Moodle, the instructional designers [surveyed faculty](#) in Fall 2016 and gathered valuable data on desired training topics, which were then offered in professional development trainings.

In 2016, the College contracted with its student information system provider, Ellucian, for on-site consulting on business processes related to admissions and registration. Ellucian made [several recommendations](#) including addressing siloed processes, improving communication, using the software's potential to reduce duplication in processes, and developing formal training and continuing education. The College has begun addressing some of these recommendations through improvements in Degree Audits and Student Planning modules.

Other examples of strengthened technological infrastructure include the validation of the [Zogotech data warehouse](#) (see 4.C.2.) and a new [data center](#) capital project.

5.A.2.

Southeast Community College is a nonprofit, publicly-supported college and does not have a superordinate body to which they electively disburse revenue. The majority of resources are committed to instruction, academic support, and student services. For over 20 years, the College operated in a manner that kept the immediate cost to the taxpayer low. SCC's tax levy has been much

[lower than other community colleges](#) the past 10 years. Consequently, the College had fewer funds to allocate toward operational maintenance of buildings, human resources, safety, and other personnel costs.

In 2013, the Board underwent a presidential search process to replace its out-going president, who retired in June 2014. As a part of the search process, the College developed specific criteria and goals to facilitate the selection of a new president. The [primary selection themes](#) included transformational leadership, calculated risk-taking, and strategic thinking. The Board recognized that the College needed to modernize its facilities and operations and that the new president needed to be capable of achieving this transformation. The College hired Dr. Paul Illich in July 2014 as the College's fourth president. Dr. Illich has extensive experience in strategic planning, institutional research, applied statistics, and higher education administration. One of the initial goals of the new President was the development of the 2015-19 Strategic Plan, which was implemented in July 2015.

In 2015 the Board voted to support the 2015-19 Strategic Plan by increasing its tax levy to fund approximately \$6 million in expanded projects. To address its facilities needs, the Board recently approved a budget scenario that maximizes the capital levy to support the initial phase of the College's Facilities Master Plan (see 5.A.1. and 5.D.2.).

The College is committed to effectively securing and allocating its resources to support educational operations as it moves forward with its transformational strategic goals and objectives.

5.A.3.

During the development of its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, the College went through an environmental scanning process to closely assess opportunities such as [enrollment capacity](#), [infrastructure](#) (resources), and [student enrollment demand](#) (organization). The College has tremendous opportunities because of the strong local economy, low unemployment, the proximity to the state's flagship university (University of Nebraska - Lincoln), and the region's skilled workforce needs. Through this analysis and extensive feedback (discussed in 1.A.1.), the current Strategic Plan was [approved](#) by the Board of Governors, who represent the [15-county service area](#).

5.A.4.

Hiring Policies and Procedures

The College adheres to policies and procedures to recruit the most highly qualified and trained faculty and staff possible. The College utilizes PeopleAdmin, a web-based system, to maintain job descriptions and process all potential employees. Human Resources staff screen candidates and direct qualified candidates to interview teams. The interview teams use standardized questions that are specific to the position to help ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected. All full-time employees are required to submit to a [criminal background check](#). As discussed in 3.C., the College has established policies and procedures to ensure faculty and staff are qualified to administer effective, high-quality programs and services.

Professional Development

SCC provides professional development and educational opportunities for all employees. Faculty are

required to complete three hours of professional development on an annual basis. Professional development activities range from training, webinars, and podcasts, to continuing education and conferences. All full-time faculty and staff are required to participate in two hours of safety training and three hours of diversity training each year. Due to the cut in state funding for the 2017-18 year, all departments reduced travel by 50%, which may affect professional development opportunities. All full-time employees are eligible for continuing education through SCC's tuition remission and tuition reimbursement programs. Historically, [participation in tuition reimbursement has been low](#). In 2015-16, 43 employees received tuition reimbursement for external courses and 17 for internal courses. The College anticipates that transitioning from a quarter to a semester calendar system will allow for more employee participation due to a decreased operational pace.

5.A.5.

SCC has a well-developed [process](#) in place for budgeting and monitoring expenses. SCC's Administrative Services Division uses a software called Synoptix to monitor revenue and expenditures. Following the Board of Governors' budget approval, College cost center managers monitor their expenses through WebAdvisor and make purchases through the College's purchasing department using outlined policies and procedures. SCC's Business Manager/Director of Finance is responsible for financial reporting to the Board of Governors, monthly bank reconciling on multiple accounts, and state and federal regulatory reports (taxes) on a monthly and quarterly basis. The Vice President for Administrative Services and the President make [monthly financial reports](#) to the Board of Governors and follow procedures outlined in 2.A.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

5.B.1.

Board Philosophy and Functions

Southeast Community College affirms that local control by an elected [Board of Governors](#) best enables the College to serve the community's diverse educational needs, to be accessible and affordable, to meet a deep commitment to diversity, and to be fiscally accountable. The Board is responsible for overseeing College [compliance](#) with the rules and regulations as set forth by the Coordinating Commission of Postsecondary Education, Nebraska statutes, and the Higher Learning Commission's policies and practices. The Board of Governors functions as the policy-forming and legislative body of the College and conducts itself at all times to ensure the welfare of the College and its service area. It performs its legal and fiduciary roles and accepts full responsibility for the general control and direction of two-year postsecondary education in the Southeast Community College service area.

Membership

The Board represents the constituents of SCC's service area with 11 [publicly-elected members](#)-- two members from each of the five election districts comprising the 15-county service area and one at-large member. All members serve a four-year term. One member of the full-time faculty and one member of the student body also sit with the Board as [non-voting board participants](#). [SCC Board members](#) represent a wide range of professional and educational backgrounds including secondary and higher education, accounting, farming, law, research, and faith leadership. The [College website](#) identifies each board member's educational background, years of professional experience, and community involvement.

Board Orientation and Meetings

Each newly elected Board member receives an [orientation](#) led by the Board Chairperson to ensure understanding of appropriate Board [roles and responsibilities](#). The Board meets in regular sessions on the third Tuesday of each month. All [Board meetings](#) are open to the public and advertised through local media outlets. Several standing agenda items provide opportunities for the Board to understand

various facets of College operations and community involvement. The [agenda](#) includes monthly reports from the Student Senate, Faculty Association, Budget and Finance, and the President. A unique part of the Board meeting is a monthly [presentation](#) by at least one instructional program, providing an opportunity to gain an understanding of what students are learning in the classroom, as well as the strengths and challenges of instructional programs. Annual reports from other areas of the institution, such as [Resource Development](#), [Veteran's Center](#), [diversity education](#), and [Career Academies](#), provide insight into the breadth of college-wide initiatives. Board members regularly maintain a personal connection to internal and external constituents through participation in College and community events and provide [reports](#) about their monthly meetings, conferences, and events attended on behalf of the College. In 2015 the Board began using electronic tablets to share supporting documentation for agenda items, eliminating monthly copying expenses for the College and encouraging a more interactive meeting experience for Board members.

Additional opportunities for Board members to gain knowledge about SCC include periodic work sessions that have most recently included [strategic planning](#), [calendar/operational pace](#), [Higher Learning Commission requirements](#), [Facilities Master Plan](#), and [financial needs and opportunities](#).

5.B.2.

Governing Board Roles and Responsibilities

Nebraska Statutes 85-1511 outlines the [powers and duties of community college boards](#). The College handbook also outlines the specific [roles and responsibilities](#) of the Board, including representing the College at public events throughout the 15-county area; establishing, monitoring, and revising Board policy; and participating in the President's evaluation process.

Organizational Structure that Facilitates Shared Governance

The College believes in a shared systematic approach to drive the decisions and actions in alignment with the SCC Board policy, the College mission and the SCC Strategic Plan. The College is in the process of updating its [organizational structure](#) in response to personnel and operational needs. The President meets weekly with the Administrative Team, which includes the Vice President for Access, Equity, and Diversity; Vice President for Administrative Services/Resource Development; Vice President for Human Resources; Vice President for Instruction; Vice President for Student Services/Lincoln Campus Director; Vice President for Technology/Milford Campus Director; Vice President for Program Development/Beatrice Campus Director; Administrative Director for Institutional Research; and Administrative Director for Public Information/Marketing. The Administrative Team regularly gathers information from faculty and staff to consider during budget, planning, and policy deliberations.

In the Instructional Division, the Vice President for Instruction has 11 deans and administrative directors who report directly to him. Those deans and directors regularly consult with program chairs, who in turn listen to faculty, students, advisory committees, and other stakeholders to make program-level decisions. On the student services and administrative side, a similar structure is used with directors and co-workers to determine practical solutions and initiatives with internal and external stakeholders at the forefront of their decision-making.

Beyond their immediate work area, administrators, faculty, and staff also have the opportunity to influence governance by serving on college-wide teams (5.B.3.) and participation in frequent

[employee surveys](#). In 2015 the employees had the opportunity to formally express levels of satisfaction with the organizational structure through an employee survey. This survey had a [strong participation rate](#) with approximately half of all SCC employees completing the survey. About two-thirds of respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the [organizational structure](#) within their division. Three-quarters of respondents reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the work environment at SCC.

[Student Senate](#) members represent students from every program offered at SCC. The Senate provides a unified voice for students on issues of interest to both students and administration. For example, the [Student Senate](#) receives the same rationale on proposed tuition increases as does the CEO Advisory Team and is asked to give their recommendation. Senate meetings are scheduled on a regular basis on all campuses and open to all enrolled students. One Senate member attends Board of Governor meetings each month to [relay information](#) from the student body. Student Senate minutes are made available on the College's intranet, The Hub.

Other examples of procedures that promote communication and shared governance include the President's [monthly updates](#) and annual [State of the College address](#), open [Campus Coffee meetings](#) with the Lincoln Campus Director/Vice President for Student Services, and [campus-specific update meetings](#).

5.B.3.

Administrators, faculty, staff and students are also involved in setting academic policy and processes through committees and teams throughout the College. Major policy changes that affect students, staff, and faculty are evaluated through a team process. SCC encourages shared governance to address college-wide and focused issues through [standing and single purpose teams](#). Composed of faculty, staff, administrators, and students, these teams promote and improve student learning, and review and evaluate new or amended College policies. [Guidelines](#) and [process](#) for forming College teams are available to the employees on The Hub. Examples of teams that impact academic policies and procedures include:

[CEO Advisory Team](#)

[Curriculum Committee](#)

[Assessment Team](#)

[Academic Integrity Team](#)

[Safety Team](#)

[Student Senate](#)

[Professional Development Team](#)

One example of the College's structures in place that promote college-wide contribution and collaborative effort is the Calendar Team. The [Calendar Team](#) was formed in May 2016 to study the impact of transitioning from a quarter calendar to a semester calendar system. The Calendar Team consisted of administrators, staff, and faculty who represent the College as a whole to review the current calendar and trends in statewide and nationwide calendar systems utilized in higher education.

After a year of [research, discussion, and analysis](#) of advantages and challenges, plus a [student survey](#) and [Board discussion](#), the Team recommended conversion to semesters. After further administrative review, the semester conversion proposal was [approved by the Board](#) on May 16, 2017.

The [master course form process](#) represents another example of administration, faculty, and staff involvement in academic processes. The master course form is required for all course changes including additions, modifications, deletions, and course description changes. Master course forms and a revised syllabus are submitted by faculty to their program chair. The curriculum changes are reviewed by the respective division dean, student services personnel, the Vice President for Instruction, and Curriculum Committee. This process engages multiple internal stakeholders and promotes continuous quality improvement and communication in curricular changes across the College.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

The following subcomponents have been reorganized in order to better align with SCC's planning process. All subcomponents have been addressed.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

Prior to the adoption of the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, the College used a long-range planning model. Noted in HLC's 2012-13 team report as an area that needed [organizational attention](#), the long-range planning process was decentralized, and though there were high levels of participation among employees (departments, programs, and divisions), approximately a third of employees indicated in a survey that the "college has failed to develop a clear vision of the future through the planning process."

As noted in 1.A.1., in 2013 the College contracted with Noel-Levitz to develop a Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP). However, 2014 marked the arrival of the new president, who recognized the urgent need for SCC to develop and adopt a comprehensive College-wide Strategic Plan. Subsequently, work begun under the SEP was [integrated](#) into a newly formed Institutional Strategic Planning Team's process. During the 2014-2015 academic year, SCC's first Strategic Plan was developed following a comprehensive environmental scanning process and extensive feedback from [internal](#) and [external](#) stakeholders.

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

The College went through an extensive environmental scanning process that considered [enrollment trends and projections](#), and [financial, academic programming](#), and [infrastructure trends](#) in higher education. Through surveys and discussions, the College gained valuable feedback from internal stakeholders about perceptions regarding institutional processes, strengths, and challenges. Employees

reported low satisfaction with [human resources policies, procedures, and assistance in hiring personnel](#). The [appearance and condition of buildings](#) also surfaced as an area of concern. Employees reported very low satisfaction rates with the [College's learning management system](#) and intranet portal. SCC's greatest [opportunities](#) for improvement were identified in the areas of facilities, enrollment, and staffing levels.

Externally, through a series of [public forums](#), the College learned that [constituents felt underserved](#) due to a lack of SCC's physical presence outside the three main campuses. Community members desired opportunities for partnerships with programs and for the College to be more responsive to employer demand and need for a skilled workforce.

SCC's President and Institutional Strategic Planning Team used feedback from the environmental scan and internal and external stakeholders to develop the College's first Strategic Plan. Drafts of the Plan were presented to the Board and other campus groups over several months. In [April 2015](#), the Board approved the final [2015-2019 Strategic Plan](#) with nine goals and 65 objectives.

The goals and objectives have themes that reflect environmental scanning feedback, including program growth and development; strengthening partnerships with businesses, organizations, institutions of higher education, and secondary schools; expanding the use and support of technology; improving the College's educational environment; and investing in employees.

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

As a result of discussions related to the Strategic Plan, the Board recognized the need for additional fiscal and human resources in order to achieve the Strategic Plan goals and objectives. As part of the budgeting and planning process, unit-level plans included requests for [expanded projects](#), such as positions, capital equipment, and other resources needed. The expanded projects and unit-level plans showed [direct connections](#) to the College's Strategic Plan goals and objectives. In the first year of the Strategic Plan, more than 1,000 [unit-level strategies](#) were entered into a central database.

Beginning with the [2015-16 budget](#), all expanded project requests were required to include a rationale for how the request would support the Strategic Plan. In February of each year, a list of expanded budget requests is presented to the Administrative Team for review and prioritization. The budget request list is reviewed over several meetings, and the President makes the [final recommendation](#) of what to include in the final budget proposal ultimately presented to the Board of Governors.

Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, departments, programs, and divisions aligned each unit-level goal with the College's Strategic Plan. Unit-level plans were compiled in a database, and [follow-up](#) was reported in August 2016.

In July 2016, a [Coordinator of Planning and Accreditation](#) was added to the Office of Institutional Research (IR) to coordinate the college-wide planning process. Shortly thereafter, the budget calendar and planning calendars were fully aligned so that unit-level planning directly informed the College's budgeting process.

Another significant planning milestone was the completion of the first annual [Strategic Plan Progress Report](#). The Progress Report highlighted strategic achievements for each of the nine college-wide goals and included examples of the accomplishments made at the program/department/division level. The report also included the number of connections between unit-level activities and the 2015-2019

Strategic Plan to communicate the work being done at all levels of the institution. As part of the Progress Report, IR was charged with developing metrics to measure aspects of the nine strategic goals and 65 objectives. A total of [52 quantitative and 24 qualitative metrics](#) were identified, and data were collected. Using the unit-level plan updates and strategic achievements on the quantitative and qualitative metrics, the first annual Strategic Plan Report was compiled and presented to the Board of Governors in [November 2016](#). This process will be completed on an annual basis. Areas across the College have reviewed the report and have used it in developing their 2017-18 annual plans.

In the past two years, the College has made significant improvements in its planning process. For the [2017-18 planning process](#), more than 100 divisions, departments, and programs have developed a unit-level mission statement, at least three annual goals, strategies to achieve the goals, measurements of success, and connections to the College's Strategic Plan. A database was developed in-house to provide a centralized location for unit plans, which allows for updates to be made by administrators.

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

The [budget and planning calendars were aligned](#) in the 2016-17 academic year while planning for 2017-18. The Director of Assessment and the Coordinator of Planning are also improving coordination of assessment of student learning with planning processes. Currently, at the completion of the 3-year assessment cycle, programs report findings, which are taken into consideration during the annual unit-level planning and budgeting process. Most programs make general statements about the impact of assessment data on planning and budgeting, and the College is pursuing opportunities to more closely align planning and assessment.

The College is evaluating software that would better align student learning assessment, planning, and budget processes. Vendors have demonstrated software options to Instructional, IR, and IT employees. Next steps include scheduling demonstrations with deans and the Administrative Team. An expanded request was added to the 2017-18 budget, and the Board of Governors voted in approval of this request in [June 2017](#). As the planning process has evolved, it became apparent that some components of the plans were duplicated in program assessment plans, such as the unit-level mission statement. In some cases, employees were confused about both processes, thinking they had already done their annual planning when they had actually completed their assessment planning. The software solution should address some of this confusion and promote a stronger integration of assessment, evaluation and planning, and budgeting processes.

Continuing Progress

In Fall 2016 IR [surveyed](#) College employees on their perceptions of and involvement in the planning process. Over three-fourths of employees reported that their 2016-17 strategies were connected to their department's budget and assessment plans/results. The areas of improvement include: identifying appropriate ways to measure progress toward goals (metrics), how to engage and involve all members of the department in progress toward strategic goals; and identifying department-level strategies to meet goals. Informed by these results, one of the Coordinator of Planning's [2017-18 unit-level goals](#) is to hold workshops to address the unit-level planning needs.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic

shifts, and globalization.

Planning at SCC takes into consideration expected changes in technology and marketplace needs, with information garnered from sources with close ties to employers and advisors who are active in career fields and government entities such as the Department of Labor. Likewise, SCC maintains close ties with other secondary and postsecondary institutions through meetings, conferences, committees, and advisory committees in order to anticipate changes in enrollment, requirements, global trends and consumer/marketplace demand. In 2016, the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education released a [Higher Education Progress Report](#) identifying specific priorities for Nebraska's institutions of higher education:

- Increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska.
- Increase the percentage of students who persist and successfully complete a degree.
- Reduce, eliminate and then reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment.

SCC's [strategic goals](#) closely align with the statewide priorities in the areas of enrollment growth, student success and enrichment programs, and community partnerships (Goal 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6).

Government engagement is an integral part of educational planning. The College President meets regularly with the Executive Director of the Nebraska Community College Association and the other Nebraska community college presidents to discuss how legislation will affect the colleges, the community colleges' position on legislation that affects the College, and testimony strategies to support or oppose legislative actions. A document containing information on the [economic impact of all Nebraska Community Colleges](#) was coordinated through the SCC Office of Institutional Research and used during legislative testimony during the 2017 legislative session.

In addition to the environmental scanning that took place in 2014-15, the College has also invested resources in a new position with the primary focus of researching emerging factors that affect SCC. In 2016, a [Qualitative Research Analyst](#) was added to IR. During the winter/spring legislative session in Nebraska, one of the primary roles of this position includes a constant review of legislative bills, committee hearings, and debates.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. 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.

Argument

5.D.1.

Southeast Community College develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations in a variety of areas including but not limited to Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) reports, an interactive enrollment and financial Fact Book, Graduate Report, academic program review, and the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. This comprehensive review of operations guides the College to make improvements in effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability on an institutional and unit-level. All of the aforementioned documents are regularly reported to the Board to guide decision making.

Annual financial audits are completed by an independent accounting firm and then [presented to the Board](#) for approval, in addition to [monthly financial presentations](#). The [Fact Book](#) also has an interactive finance section to ensure public transparency.

In 2014, the College adopted a new [enrollment management model](#), led by the [Dean of Student Enrollment](#). The enrollment management model provides a detailed look at course enrollment trends over a three-year period to determine utilization by campus, mode of delivery, and time of day. This allows the College to determine where resources should be directed to meet the needs/demands of students. An interactive dashboard is in the development process and will be soon available to instructional deans.

The College biennially administers the CCSSE, in conjunction with a state-wide consortium. The Office of Institutional Research (IR) evaluates CCSSE results and prepares a [summary](#) for College staff and the Board.

Since 2013, the College has also participated annually in the [VFA](#) reporting. All of the community colleges in Nebraska have participated, and some discussion about the results has occurred at the state level. VFA makes benchmarking information available so colleges can compare results. VFA information has been especially helpful in understanding developmental education data as it enables SCC to track students who take developmental courses through their college-level coursework in the same content area.

The College documents and compiles information about graduates related to employment and four-year transfer education in its annual [Graduate Report](#). Summary numbers from the Graduate Report are available on the College website. Also available to program staff is an [interactive version of the Graduate Report](#) with more detail—providing information such as graduate numbers by location, employment position titles, and employers. Such data allows program staff to document where graduates choose to work or pursue further education when they first leave SCC. It also provides contact information for the graduates' employers, enabling SCC to communicate with them about

graduates' preparation and performance. The Graduate Report is also useful in addressing one of the [statewide priorities](#), i.e., to decrease net out-migration of students.

An interactive [grade distribution tool](#) is available to instructional staff, allowing them to view success rates, failure rates, withdrawal rates, and GPA by course level or student with filtering by subject, location, instructional mode, course level, time of day, mode of delivery, year, and term.

The academic program review process is detailed in Criterion 4.A.1. and is one method that documents and reviews instructional program performance through an external body—the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

Recently, the College has begun to collect data around Strategic Plan metrics (discussed in 5.C.1.). This data will be integral in evaluating institutional performance and planning for the future.

One opportunity for improvement is to begin documenting SCC's performance in co-curricular operations through a non-academic program review process, as discussed in Criterion 4.B.2.

5.D.2.

Since 2013 with the establishment of the Office of Institutional Research (IR), major decisions in the College are supported by validated data. One recent example of how the College has improved its performance in institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability is through the planning process for its first Facilities Master Plan, which was released in 2016.

Facilities Master Plan

Under the leadership of the College's new President, SCC began consulting with Clark Enersen Partners for the College's first Facilities Master Plan in January 2015. The master planning process included workshops, data analysis, assessment of current facilities, and tours of peer institutions.

IR collected and analyzed several data sets including: [course utilization data](#), [staffing data](#), [facilities inventory](#), [floor plans of existing buildings](#), [library data](#), [student enrollment](#), and [current and potential instructional programs](#).

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.

Funding

In February of 2016, the College conducted a [study](#) across the 15-county area to explore the support of registered voters for a bond issue. The researchers found that community members indicated strong support of the College and recognized the need to modernize facilities. The SCC Board of Governors [formally adopted](#) the Facilities Master Plan in July 2016 authorized the College's President to place a [general obligation bond](#) on the November 2016 ballot to pay for the renovation and construction components of the Facilities Master Plan. The bond issue failed on November 8, 2016. However, the College immediately began exploring other funding options including existing capital budget authority, revenue bonds, and public-private partnerships. A [special work session](#) with the

Board was held in March 2017 and additional [listening sessions](#) across all campuses in the Winter Quarter of 2017. The Board acknowledged during its June meeting that by not utilizing the available capital tax levy for many years, SCC's physical infrastructure was dated and in need of modernization. In [June 2017](#) the Board voted unanimously to raise the tax levy to secure funding within the existing budget authority.

Phase I

For the first phase, the College plans to identify funds within existing budget authority to support one significant project on each campus and some of the learning center locations. The proposed projects include two new multi-purpose classroom buildings, a new health sciences building, and a new facility for Diesel Tech/Diesel Agriculture.

Next Steps

At present, the College has involved a number of stakeholders to define the scope of the work prior to the design effort. It has established teams to gather and analyze data early in the process so that the design is based on sound data-driven decisions. Teams have been meeting since April 2017 to interview stakeholders, further analyze impact of the projects, and develop program statements that will be submitted to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education in Fall 2017 and Winter 2018.

Based on the data-driven process used to inform its facilities decisions, the College anticipates that new buildings on its campuses will convey a sense of permanence and long-term value. The design and implementation of the new buildings will demonstrate best practices in sustainability, design, quality construction and educational excellence. Furthermore, the College will be able to meet its mission to use a “proactive and evidence-based approach that continually assesses and responds to student, community, and employer demand for higher education.”

Learning From Experience to Improve

Below are three additional recent examples of how the College has used data to make institutional and unit-level operational improvements. It is anticipated that one or more of these opportunities for improvement will be identified as the College's Quality Initiative.

[Program Length](#)

[Semester Calendar Conversion](#)

[Enrollment Model](#)

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Summary

- The College has improved its use of fiscal resources to support and expand operations.
- A data-driven planning and budgeting process has resulted in expanded projects including increased staffing levels and human-resources infrastructure.
- The College's technological infrastructure has been strengthened through regular updates of capital equipment, a new data center, and the validation of a data warehouse.
- The College's organizational structure, use of teams for collaborative processes, and quarterly surveys provide processes to engage internal constituencies in the institution's governance.
- Noted as an area of organizational need in the 2012-13 comprehensive evaluation team report, the College created its first Strategic Plan, which was approved in 2015. Operational areas have aligned unit-level planning and an annual progress report is presented to the Board.
- The College works systemically to improve performance in operations through annual audits and financial reports, an annual Graduate Report, an interactive Fact Book, an academic program review process, and participation in the Voluntary Framework for Accountability and Community College Survey of Student Engagement. Recent examples of how the College has used the information to make institutional and unit-level improvements include the Facilities Master Plan, semester calendar conversion, a process to address program lengths, and implementation of an enrollment management model.
- One area identified as an opportunity for improvement includes strengthening the physical infrastructure to support operations through the implementation of the College's Facilities Master Plan.

Sources

There are no sources.