Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students
of

Community College of Allegheny County

by

An Evaluation Team Representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after an evaluation of the institution's self-study report

and a visit to the Campus on

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REPORT OF THE MIDDLE STATES EVALUATION TEAM

Context and Nature of the Visit

Institutional Overview

The Community College of Allegheny County (hereinafter referred to as CCAC) is a public two-year institution that was founded in 1963 to serve the citizens of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Today, the College offers over 150 degree programs in over 100 disciplines of study, enrolling more than 32,000 credit and 28,000 non-credit students annually at four campuses:
- Allegheny Campus,
- Boyce Campus,
- North Campus, and
- South Campus.

In addition, students may study at 12 active additional locations. The evaluation team visited four of these locations:
- Braddock Hills Center,
- Carpenters Union Training Center,
- Homewood-Brushton Center, and
- West Hills Center.

The College also conducts instruction at eight locations that were not visited:
- Energy Innovation Center,
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Training Center,
- Iron Worker Union Training Center,
- Operating Engineers Training Center,
- Plumbers Union Training Center,
- Sheetmetal Training Center,
- Stationary Engineers Training Center, and
- Washington County Center.

Distance Education

CCAC has received approval to offer distance learning courses and programs, both fully online and hybrid. According to the College website, it offers 14 degree and 13 certificate programs fully online and 27 degree and 10 certificate programs for which 50-99% of the requirements can be completed online.

Accreditation History

The College was first accredited in 1970, and was last reaffirmed in its accreditation in 2011.

Self-Study Process and Report

The College chose to conduct a comprehensive self-study. The report was organized into seven chapters, plus an Executive Summary. These chapters focused on all fourteen Standards in the *Characteristics of Excellence*, either presented alone or grouped into a cluster of two or three related standards, mapped to the new MSCHE standards that have been recently approved. The fourteen standards were addressed in a structured format, beginning with examples of initiatives that exemplify the College's approach to the standards. This included the fundamental elements of each standard, a review of how the College is in compliance with each standard, an overview of the strengths, and opportunities for improvement.

Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, a review of the certification statements provided by CCAC and other documents, the evaluation team affirms that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation as set forth in the *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*.

Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on an independent review, the evaluation team affirms that the institution meets relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 related to distance education, transfer of credit, Title IV program responsibilities, institutional records of student complaints, required information for students and the public, standing with state and other accrediting agencies, and contractual relationships. The independent review concluded that the College was not in compliance with requirements for assignment of credit hours, namely that recommended out-of-class time requirements were not clearly specified. The evaluation team noted the following update: The institution has addressed this issue by reexamining its practices and creating a comprehensive policy that specifies the minimum out-of-class work expected for courses in each format it offers. For example, lecture courses require 2 hours of out-of-class work for each credit-hour. Therefore, it is the judgment of the team that the College is currently in compliance with all relevant Federal Requirements.

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation team finds CCAC to be an innovative college with a wide range of strategies to advance the success of the student body. Its effectiveness has been recognized by attaining Achieving the Dream "Leader College" status. CCAC is a good citizen closely tied to its local community, offering coursework in four campuses, five centers, and additional locations that meet workforce needs.

The Evaluation Team found a highly credentialed and dedicated faculty who care deeply about teaching and learning and who develop courses and programs of the highest quality. Equally impressive is the professional staff and administration that are united in their commitment to

achieving CCAC's mission of "providing affordable access to high quality career and transfer education delivered in a diverse, caring, and innovative learning environment."

The team bases its report on a review of CCAC's *Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study* dated February 2017 and its supplemental materials. Team members also conducted interviews with individuals and various groups and committees of the campus community. The evaluation team's suggestions (non-binding findings for improvement) also derive from the College's self-study and the onsite visit.

The evaluation team's requirements and recommendations are based on our analysis of the self-study and indicate areas where institutional action is needed for the College to meet or continue to meet the standards in the *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*.

Compliance with Accreditation Standards

<u>Standard 1 - Mission, Goals, and Objectives</u>

The College meets this standard.

<u>Summary of Evidence and Findings</u>

The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose and is articulated in multiple College documents and electronic media and has been shared widely with a broad range of constituencies via presentations to the College-Wide Council and on All-College Day. Additionally, it is communicated to a general audience via the website, catalog, and faculty handbook. The Self Study in its entirety provides ample evidence in documents and analyses that CCAC embraces its mission. It further demonstrates that the College's mission and goals are developed collectively and serve as the foundation for all planning, operational and assessment activities.

Formal review of the mission is integral to the strategic planning process, and was recently completed as a component of the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. The Board of Trustees led this process by engaging in a thoughtful and in-depth discussion about the mission. It has also been the subject of ongoing discussion among faculty and students. To support this process, the College conducted a climate survey, engaged members of the Leadership Development Institute, and held extensive discussions, which further developed and clarified the Mission Statement (for more information on LDI, see Standard 5). Additionally, the College engaged in a thoughtful and comprehensive process of gathering input to develop statements of vision and values to complement the mission. Administrations of the Climate Survey in 2014 and 2016, which assesses awareness of and adherence to the mission, showed that the College community holds generally positive attitudes towards the Mission Statement. The process by which it was developed had become even more positive by 2016.

Growing directly out of the Mission Review process, strategic directions are reviewed and updated every five years as well, with broad institutional participation. The 2016-2021 Strategic Plan cited four strategic goals, directly connected to the mission, that address academic success and equity, global learning, workforce training, and innovative use of technology to support instruction and services.

When reflecting about how well CCAC achieves its stated mission, the self-study concludes that the College needs to more fully articulate how it shall prepare students for success in a global society, and perhaps more fully develop its assessment of student outcomes in this area.

Strengths: Significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices

- The College's process of systematic mission review integral to the strategic planning process is exemplary. The deep involvement of the Board of Trustees is evidence of their commitment to support this effort.
- The process by which the mission, vision, values, and goals are developed is broadly inclusive and is widely perceived as such.
- The faculty and staff demonstrate their commitment to carrying out the spirit of the institutional mission in their service to students and community.

Suggestion for Improvement

- The team affirms the College's suggestion that it should work to clarify how it will prepare students for success in a global society, and to more fully develop its assessment of student outcomes in this area.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

The College meets this standard.

The self-study provides a comprehensive view of the methods used by the College to plan its growth, how it will meet the needs of students, and how it will obtain and allocate the resources needed to meet its goals.

There is a written plan for periodic renewal of the mission, strategic plan, annual operating plan, and annual budget. There is a strategy to measure the effectiveness of the planning processes as well as the results achieved by adopting the various plans.

Summary of evidence and findings

As noted in the discussion of Standard 1, last year the College adopted an updated core values statement and a revised mission statement that informed the strategic plan that was adopted by the Board of Trustees at the same time. The strategic plan covers a five-year period through 2021.

The self-study suggests that this was only its second comprehensive strategic plan, but the process utilized for the current one seems to have been highly inclusive with opportunities for input from many constituencies. Discussions with faculty and administrators confirmed that there were many opportunities for participation, if not actual involvement in developing the strategic plan. Noting the complexity of its organization and multi-campus structure, technology is being utilized by the College to streamline the planning process and to seek to ensure that all parties have access to the information needed for effective planning. The home-grown strategic management system seems to be an excellent tool for both the gathering of information about the progress towards achieving strategic goals and the ability to generate reports organized in many ways. Those involved in strategic planning are quite skilled and there are periodic training sessions to help others become proficient.

The previous strategic plan was analyzed in advance of the finalization of the 2016-2021 plan and strengths and weakness identified. Those characteristics, at least in part, led to the current plan that focuses on student success through the establishment of four major areas of strategic goals and objectives. The College has completed two quarterly reviews of the progress towards meeting those goals and objectives. Each quarterly review serves the purpose of moving towards the next operating plan and the budgeting required to implement it. The reports are reviewed by the supervisor for each major area of the College. The review documents are quite extensive, though the performance measures are often written in somewhat vague terms and some lack truly measurable standards. The strategic planning process was assessed using a pre- and post-climate survey and utilization of the College's own Leadership Development Institute Fellows.

Using the goals and objectives set out in the strategic plan, CCAC develops an annual operating plan that is tied to the budgeting process, specifically referencing strategic initiatives. It should be noted that the operating plan does not provide any cost estimates or source of funding for the action items included, though there has been no indication that the needed funds were not available. The operating plan provides for the assessment of its effectiveness with each administrative unit developing action plans tied to institutional goals. A review of the 2016-2017 plan shows over 100 pages of action items from units across the institution. Many, though not all, items have performance measures, though some are quite modest, e.g., "10% of the students who participate in the presentation sessions will know the benefits of attending CCAC, the programs/services offered at each campus, and the enrollment steps needed for matriculation."

Strength: Significant accomplishment, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practice

- There are multiple written strategies and protocols for the development and use of plans to allow the College to meet the objectives it has set.

Suggestion for improvement

- The performance standards for the goals and objectives in the strategic plan should be further defined so that the institution can better track its progress in meeting them.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The College meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

The Board of Trustees minutes are very detailed and comprehensive, although they tend to be difficult to maneuver. Board subcommittees meet separately from the full Board with no formal minutes made available on the College website. However, a detailed financial and budget variance report, included as part of the monthly Board of Trustees meetings, allows for tracking of the College's financial position.

A comprehensive and detailed College Policies and Procedures Manual, as well as Fiscal Administrative Regulations, Board Policy Manual, and Administrative Regulations Policy demonstrate rational and consistent policy to determine allocation of assets. As part of its operating budget process, strategic technology initiatives are funded based upon an Information Technology Plan and subsequently assessed.

The College engages in ongoing evaluations of opportunities for revenue enhancements and implementation of cost reduction measures. The College regularly invests in strategic initiatives outside the "regular" operating budget appropriation but within the operating resources projected to be generated.

A comprehensive and ongoing facility master planning process allows for the implementation of many of the initiatives identified with emphasis on students as well as energy conservation matters.

There is very little analysis pertaining to student enrollment trends which has demonstrated significant declines and impacts approximately 45% of total revenues.

Strengths: Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The College annually budgets for facilities, information technology services, and programmatic initiatives separately from general College operations.

- General expenditures are tied to the strategic plan and are tracked and assessed on a quarterly basis.

- The College's financial position is very strong, with its current ratio of assets to liabilities up from 1.49 at June 2015 to 2.07 in June 2016 and the unrestricted fund balance increasing over $8 million after increasing $6.3 million in the previous year. Moody's Investor Service in July 2016 cited CCAC with "sound planning and financial oversight [and] manageable debt burden relative to financial reserves and operations."

- During fiscal year 2016 the College continued to invest in its infrastructure as evidenced by the spending of $17.7 million on construction projects for improvements to academic buildings, the physical plant, and other critical projects.

- The College regularly plans, implements, and assesses its physical resources and information technology with a focus on student success.

Suggestions for Improvement

- CCAC needs to continuously monitor enrollment and its impact on operations and projections. Fall FTE enrollment declined 24% from 2011 to 2015 before a 0.3% increase in Fall 2016. The enrollment decline resumed in Spring 2017 but the College has projected an overall increase of 2.2% for 2017-18. It is critical to project enrollment accurately since a 1% difference equates to an over $500,000 financial impact.

- The Board of Trustees subcommittee on Audit, Finance, and Facilities should formally document its review and discussion of critical financial matters and recommendations as the full Board's minutes documents little substantive discussion on significant financial matters such as approval of budget, financial forecasts, and enrollment reports.

Standard 4 – Leadership and Governance

The College meets this standard.

CCAC is governed by a Board of Trustees that consists of 15 members recommended by the Allegheny County Chief Executive and appointed by the Allegheny County Council for a term of six years, and a non-voting Student Trustee, appointed by the Board for a term of one year.

The President has been at CCAC for three years and appears to be making strides with some needed reforms, including moving the four campuses and multiple additional locations closer to a "One College" concept with a uniform set of policies, procedures, protocols, and practices for the entire College. The internal academic governance committee for the College – College Council – is comprised of representatives from teaching faculty, librarians, counselors, and administrators. The College Council and its subcommittees are responsible for recommendations regarding policy and academic procedure and policy and procedure implementation.

Summary of evidence and findings

- CCAC has an up-to-date (June 2016) set of written policies (CCAC Policy Manual) that includes policies that outline the powers of the Board of Trustees and the President (CCAC

Policy I.02). The Board also has a recently updated (January 2016) set of By-laws that delineates the structure of Board officers (CCAC Board By-laws Article III) and Board committees (CCAC Board By-laws Article V), assigns authority for policy development and decision making (CCAC Board By-laws Article I), and provides for the selection process for Trustees (CCAC Board By-laws Article II). The Board membership now includes a Student Trustee, recommended by the President and approved by the Board, who serves a one-year term as a non-voting member (CCAC Board By-laws Article II.A.3). The Board has adopted policies related to conflicts of interest for Board members (CCAC Policies I.05 and II.04). The President and Trustees affirm compliance on an annual basis with the State Ethics Commission Statement of Financial Interest required under Pennsylvania law.

- There is an informal process of orientation for new Board members. The College shared the Board Self-Evaluation assessment tool, and from conversations with members of the Board, it appears that the Trustees engage in an annual process of self-assessment.

- Notification of Board meetings (including agendas) are posted to the College website in advance of meetings, along with an annual meeting schedule. Minutes of Board meetings are also posted on the College website. Currently, minutes are archived from 2005 to the present (https://www.ccac.edu/Board_Meeting_Minutes.aspx).

- The Board appoints the President and fixes his/her compensation (CCAC Board By-laws Article I.B.10). The College appears to be in a period of stable presidential leadership under Dr. Quintin Bullock, who is entering his fourth year as the College's President. The Board evaluates the President on an annual basis and supports his efforts to effect needed change.

- The President indicates that he maintains regular communication with the Board via weekly reports.

- Trustees assist in generating resources for the College in a number of ways, including identification of potential new resource-generating initiatives (such as new academic programs to meet specifically identified industry needs), connecting the College with grant opportunities, and making personal contributions to endowed scholarships for students.

- The AFT Collective Bargaining Agreement (2014-2017) outlines the membership, structure, and responsibilities of the College Council (CCAC AFT CBA Article XXVIII). While the membership of the College Council includes only teaching faculty, librarians, counselors, and administrators, the meetings are open to all employees, and any employee may submit a proposal to the Council for consideration. The Council makes recommendations to the President regarding academic policies and procedures.

Suggestions for improvement

- The College should explore development of additional avenues (other than a student

trustee on the Board) for student input in College governance, especially on College Council.

- The Board might consider publishing the minutes from Board subcommittee meetings to be more transparent about deliberations about key College operations, including approval of the College budget.

Standard 5: Administration

The College meets this standard.

The College presents a structure both similar to many community colleges, with a Board of Trustees, president, executive leadership, a full complement of administrators, and a wide range of full- and part-time faculty and support staff, and one that differs from most in that there are four campuses, each having once been independent of the others. This results in a complex administrative structure, with many functions having four administrators, including a president for each campus.

The self-study and supporting documents reveal an institution that largely meets the challenges it faces but also recognizes that it needs to continue to work to achieve its goal of a completely unified college.

The human resource processes seem to be especially robust with well-defined steps in the hiring process to ensure equity, with multiple checks for the adequacy and accuracy of credentials claimed by candidates for employment.

Summary of evidence and findings

Dr. Quintin Bullock is the ninth President of CCAC and continues a line of distinguished leaders. Dr. Bullock arrived in March 2014 and has bachelor's and master's degrees from Prairie View A&M University and a D.D.S. degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center. He has taken part in many higher education leadership programs including those offered by the League for Innovation in the Community College, the Wharton School, and Harvard University. He previously served as provost for Tidewater Community College and as President of Schenectady County Community College.

While the College strives to achieve what it refers to as its One College Concept, tying together the four component campuses that make up the institution, it recognizes that each them have individual needs and different cultures. In 2014, it commissioned the Association of Community College Trustees Board Leadership Services to prepare the *Comprehensive Review of the Leadership and Administrative Structure* that was delivered in early 2015. The report found:

- CCAC gives its individual campuses a much greater degree of autonomy than most other large, multi-campus community colleges.

- This form of organization is appropriate given the College's unique history: less than 20 years ago, each campus was a separately accredited institution.
- Most employees, including senior administrators, serve their entire careers at one campus, or in the Office of College Services (OCS).

The report found that the structure allowed the College to serve four disparate constituencies and a highly diverse student body very well and that within each campus employees worked effectively as teams and achieved needed cost savings. However, the history of autonomy and differences in procedures resulted in:

- employees often struggling to cooperate with their peers at other campuses and in the OCS.
- the administration finding it difficult to provide students with a uniform experience across campuses.
- despite the high level of campus autonomy, the involvement of the OCS creates decision-making processes that are at times slow and unwieldy.
- over the past two decades, the separate histories and cultures of each campus, combined with competition for scarce resources, have produced an environment where uncertainty sometimes wins out over the desire to adopt and put into practice seemingly sensible rules that would benefit all the campuses, their students, and their communities.

Meetings with campus presidents, deans, faculty, and students led to the conclusion that the institution has made considerable progress towards achieving its goal of eliminating these areas of conflict but has not yet done so completely. There has been improvement in the scheduling of classes and the provision of equal services to the four campuses. Communication has been improved among the campus presidents and the deans, though not in all cases from level to level. Some faculty stated that they are not adequately informed of the "why" of decision making. It was pointed out that enrollment is reported by campus, which leads to competition that makes it less likely that attempts to make course offerings more efficient are likely to be well received.

For the past six years, the College has operated a Leadership Development Institute as part of its plan to develop future leaders. It is open to all full-time faculty and staff and seems to provide excellent opportunities for participants to implement leadership skills while learning about building relationships and the College's organization. After meeting with this year's cohort (15 participants from across the College), it is clear that they recognize that they are being given a wonderful opportunity. The College should be commended for supporting the program with many hours of monthly release time and providing speakers and activities for the Fellows. Many of the participants were encouraged by their supervisors to apply and all had to be nominated, complete an application, and write an essay before being accepted.

Human Resources is responsible for the hiring of new employees, maintaining all records, managing benefits, participating in the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements, working with the payroll department, and handling union grievances. Because of past issues, the

department has instituted strict controls on the checking of references and the inspection of credentials of both new and current employees. Search committees are structured to achieve diversity and the members are trained in correct interview procedures.

Strength: Significant accomplishment, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practice

- The Leadership Development Institute is an exemplary program to develop and retain future leaders.

Suggestion for improvement

- The College should continue to move to the One College Concept that was recommended in the ACCT report and that the institution desires. It may be useful to survey those who are affected by changes made by mid- and executive-level management.

Standard 6 - Integrity

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

The College demonstrates a responsibility to the students, employees, and external stakeholders through its conveyance of accessible information. Policies and procedures are accessible to both employees and students and provide a fair-minded workplace and learning environment.

The policies of the Board of Trustees are complete, have been recently updated, and include clear guidelines regarding conflicts of interest, fiscal control, and sound ethical practices.

Students are informed of policies through the Catalog, Student Handbook, portal, and a mandatory online orientation. The Student Handbook clearly defines the expectations that the student should have of the College as well as those that the College has of the student. For example, academic misconduct is clearly defined along with the actions and timeframe to be followed in case of an incident. To ensure student access to the administration, the College has developed an *Online Dean* service that students may use to communicate with the Deans of Student Development.

To assist students in following an appropriate timeline for course completion and graduation, the College strives to offer sufficient numbers of courses and sections so that they may appropriately progress toward graduation, and maintains a course substitution or waiver process in the event that appropriate courses have not been made available. It also offers advisement services, including faculty and professional advisors and technological supports to help students progress through the degree and certificate programs. The self-study presents survey evidence that

students perceive that courses are available in sufficient variety, at convenient times, and with few conflicts.

The website, through its Consumer Information page, provides a collection of sites available to students, parents, and employees. The page supplies links to information regarding academics, financial matters, student support services, and health and safety, as well as the College's strategic plans. The web page is essential to the consumer and CCAC has provided ample opportunity for both internal and external stakeholders to have access to key information about the institution.

CCAC demonstrates its commitment to diversity in its core values statement and further voices this goal via the strategic plan. Through its policies and procedures, the College shows its commitment to diversity among students, employees, and vendors. In addition, the team's investigation provided evidence of numerous student activities that enrich the social environment of the campus.

The Employee Manual provides all employees the detailed steps to follow to file a complaint or grievance. All complaints are entertained, and the College has an especially detailed and well thought out Civil Rights Complaint Procedure. Records of civil rights complaints, as well as grievances, academic complaints, and student conduct actions are maintained in the appropriate offices. A number of employees have felt the need to lodge complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission after being dissatisfied with the handling of their concerns by the College.

Detailed hiring guidelines are reviewed regularly, and are clearly communicated to all relevant constituencies. The College engages in collective bargaining with both faculty and staff, and has established adequate procedures and mechanisms for the equitable application of the contracts. Collective bargaining agreements and College policies codify a commitment to academic freedom and to intellectual property rights.

Survey data show that students express a broad perception that they are treated equitably, that information is available to them, and that they are treated with respect by College personnel. However, the level of student satisfaction with their ability to express complaints fell below national norms. The self-study acknowledges a perception on the part of students that they may not be well represented at early stages of the academic complaint process, in that peers may not be present until later stages. The self-study recommended that the policies be amended so that students may, at their discretion, have a peer present at all stages.

Strength: Significant accomplishment, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practice

- The College demonstrates a commitment to provide accessible information about all aspects of the institution and should be commended for the abundance of material available to both internal and external audiences.

<u>Suggestion for Improvement</u>

- The team affirms the desire expressed in the self-study that the academic complaint process be amended to allow the possibility for peers to be present at all stages, at the discretion of the involved student.

Standard 7 – Institutional Assessment

The College meets this standard.

<u>Summary of Evidence and Findings</u>

The Plan for Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning covers all academic and administrative areas of the College. It is made up of ten elements which describe the institutional assessment process. The College's strategic plan is reflected in an annual operating plan aligned with the resource allocation process. These three elements are assessed systematically through the Strategic Scorecard, program reviews, and student services assessment. As the results of these assessment protocols are analyzed, the strategic plan, the operating plan and the budget are modified accordingly to address the findings.

The Assessment Plan provides ample evidence that the College's mission, vision, and strategic goals are meaningfully aligned and that assessable objectives have been thoughtfully articulated at appropriate levels. The indicators and measures designed to assess key priorities of the Strategic Plan are well defined and documented. However, there is little information about improvement based on evidence derived from this process.

There is a comprehensive protocol for the periodic assessment of program goals as well as annual student development services assessments. The annual operating plan outlines the assessment structure for administrative units. These assessments are conducted in all branch campuses and neighborhood centers. Broad campus-wide participation in institutional assessment is conveyed by the multitude of assessment protocols and structures.

The program review process is comprehensive. Each program and discipline conducts an extensive review at least every five years, or more often if required by external accreditors. The program review process involves faculty, administrators and community stakeholders, and findings and recommendations are advanced through the college governance process.

Student feedback has been obtained via participation in the Noel-Levitz and CCSSE surveys. Results of these assessments and surveys are posted on the College's website and updated periodically. Insights from these results are shared with the College community via newsletters and many are embedded in the Strategic Scorecard.

Strength: Significant accomplishment, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practice

- Alignment of the mission, core values, and strategic plans with academic and administrative assessments is clear.

Recommendations

- It is critical for assessment efforts to be sustainable. Though assessment protocols are comprehensive and well-aligned, the sheer volume of efforts is unwieldy and is likely to provide an overwhelming amount of information. These assessments include:
  o the Plan for Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning,
  o the Strategic Scorecard,
  o the annual operating plan,
  o the Student Development Services Assessment, and
  o the Student Success Matrix.

  The College's recognition of the challenge in efficiently communicating assessment data can be addressed more effectively by simplifying the process to make it more accessible. As such, the College might benefit from determining the most important indicators to report regularly, and consider creating a sustainable rotation of the ancillary assessments.

- The College should maintain a comprehensive document that aligns assessment of objectives with consequent actions taken based on findings.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The College meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

Admission policies have been implemented which reflect the mission of the institution. All new students, as well as those returning after a one-year absence, receive the College's "Red Folder" which contains information that is critical to helping the new student navigate the array of Student Services available to help them succeed and make informed decisions, thus addressing retention. While all new students and those returning to CCAC after a one-year absence or more are required to take an online orientation to the College, face to face orientations are voluntary. During campus interviews between visiting team members and CCAC students there was still a concern that many students did not understand the array of services available to them, indicating there may be opportunities to improve communication between Student Services and the student body.

CCAC provides accurate and comprehensive information regarding academic programs, including required placement testing in both print and online sources. The 2016-2017 Student Handbook clearly outlines the Placement Testing Policy. CCAC utilizes many of the best practices of an Achieving the Dream institution to serve various at-risk populations including Math Cafes, Learning Commons, Learning Assistance Centers and the web-based tutoring service, Smarthinking.

Interviews with Library and Learning Services staff revealed a culture of robust data collection and analysis, as evidenced by review of the 2015-2016 Library and Learning Services Annual Report and Learning Commons Annual Performance Report. These data are used to support new initiatives, direct staffing decisions, and provide evidence that tutoring services greatly increase students' chances of success.

Program check sheets describing eligibility and course requirements are available for each degree, certificate, and diploma awarded at the College. Policies and procedures regarding transfer credit and credit for extra-institutional college-level learning have been implemented and may easily be found under the "Registration" tab on the College website as well as the Student Handbook. Additionally, current and prospective students may also learn of a multitude of prior learning assessments and advanced standing scenarios to help them with their goal of completion. The "Essentials of Transcript Evaluation" guide serves to help staff make appropriate and consistent recommendations.

The Director of Financial Aid and Financial Aid Specialists available at each campus ensure current information is regularly updated. The college-wide Colleague software system allows for more automation and quicker review of materials. Interviews with Student Services staff affirmed document imaging of student records has increased the efficiency of various Student Services areas as well as improved inter-campus communication among colleagues. Refund, grant, loan, and scholarship information is readily available to the student on the College website and in various print locations, including the Student Handbook. Satisfactory academic progress for financial aid recipients is also clearly defined.

The 2016 Student Success Matrix chronicles various student success and retention metrics over a five year span. The number of full-time developmental program completers within two years has been increasing since 2011 while the three-year completion rate for full-time, first-time students has steadily increased from 2010 to 2012 cohorts. There remains a consistent achievement gap between white and African-American students from all cohorts in all measured areas; including two-year developmental completion, fall and spring retention, GPA at second year, credits completed in two years, and the three-year graduation rate.

Faculty members are encouraged to refer struggling students for assistance via CCAC's web-based Early Intervention System. Alerts are received by various student support staff who then connect the struggling student with the appropriate college resources before providing faculty with electronic feedback regarding the referred student's status. A review of Early Intervention data from 2015-2016 reflects 63% of academic challenge referrals had a recorded intervention with the student. Employees are anticipating the adoption of CRM Advise will make reporting and tracking

of future early alerts and interventions more efficient. The Fall 2016 implementation of the mandatory contact of students with a reported midterm grade of D or F is a prudent method to ensure increased personal engagement with at-risk students.

Strength: Significant accomplishment, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practice

- The areas of Student Services and Library and Learning Services across the College are to be commended for embracing the "One College Concept" as a united group of colleagues; making exceptional efforts to communicate, coordinate, plan, and execute assessment efforts as well as student success strategies aimed at improving retention and completion rates across all campuses of CCAC.

Suggestions for improvement

- Continue to explore opportunities to disseminate critical information to students and educate them as to the roles of various student services offices and services available to aid their success.

- Continue to monitor the achievement gap among African-American students, exploring avenues for narrowing the gap, consistent with the College's four Strategic Goals as outlined in the 2016-2021 CCAC Strategic Plan. Opportunities exist for a more robust commitment to early intervention although staffing needs in the LLS areas of the independent campuses may affect the degree to which students can receive individualized attention.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The College meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

There is an abundance of evidence that CCAC has a program of student support services reflective of the institutional mission and consistent with student learning expectations. There are qualified professionals who supervise and provide the necessary student support services and programs at all four locations, as well as some college-wide positions which oversee consistency throughout the campuses.

Assessment permeates the Student Development Services departments as each of the areas undergo program review cyclically over a five-year period, the most recent of which was approved by the College President in December of 2015. The results of the assessments are used in decision making processes and reflect a commitment of the College to make data-driven changes. An example was the creation of the Advising Syllabus in the spring of 2016 to help students understand what to expect from advising and how to prepare in advance for each advising session.

The "Red Folder Program" provides critical information to the first-semester student to help them navigate Academic Advising and make informed decisions about available student services. Interviews with students revealed a desire for the College to look for additional methods of disseminating student development services information. Students mentioned there may be a lack of understanding of the roles of some of the services designed to help them succeed in the classroom and navigate the resources at their disposal.

CCAC has 32 intercollegiate sports teams across all four campuses in addition to several intramural teams. Students and staff interviewed by members of the visiting team expressed concern regarding eligibility to participate on certain teams based on which campus hosted the team and at which campus the students were taking classes. The "One College Concept" is blurred in instances where students at one campus may be prevented from participating on the same team with classmates from another campus.

There is also a wide variety of clubs and organizations to engage the student outside of the classroom as well as fitness centers available at all four campuses. The most recent "Student Engagement Report" highlights evidence, via a robust list of student engagement activities since the last self-study process, underscoring the talents, service, and benefits of CCAC students to their respective communities. Student veterans and officers of the SGA report that the administration, all the way up to the College President, is caring, visible and responsive to their needs.

In 2015, representatives from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) provided a consultation to CCAC. Their findings noted the use of Student Success Coaches and South Campus's annual Campus Strategic Enrollment Management Day as "best practices." Academic advisors were also commended for their dedication to student success. Mandatory Academic Advisor in-service training is required each semester and new advisors are only allowed to work independently after a period of shadowing an experienced provider with subsequent approval of the Director of Registration.

Student satisfaction with several key areas of advising has improved since 2013, as evidenced by the results of the 2015 Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory. As noted by NACADA, the move to focus on developmental advising rather than prescriptive advising is yielding positive results. Interviewees felt directors worked hard to train advisors in the developmental model of advising and noted that advisors are cross-trained with several working at multiple campuses.

In 2010 the College hired a representative from the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management (NCHERM) to provide advice on the processing of student conduct cases as well as compliance issues related to student complaints or grievances. Each year NCHERM representatives continue to provide training to the student development staff about related topics. There is evidence of widely distributed reasonable procedures for addressing student complaints or grievances, both in print and electronically on the College website. Examples in the 2016-2017 Student Handbook outline the "Student Academic Complaint Procedure" and highlight the "Civil

Rights Complaint Procedure." In addition to the formal procedures for registering a complaint, the institution also allows for online communication with the Deans of Student Development (through the "Online Dean"), and the College President (via the "Ask the President") tools located on the College website.

FERPA policies and information regarding the release of student records may be found in multiple locations online and in print, including the Student Handbook. Employee training through the Information Technology Services department helps ensure the security and protection of sensitive student data.

Suggestions for improvement

- Consistent with CCAC's own articulated need to evaluate, redesign, and expand student use of support services, the College should leverage the implementation of the CRM Advise system, allowing for the incorporation of an innovative use of technology to advance the delivery of services.

- Following NACADA's recommendation, the College should increase opportunities for faculty and staff to develop a more thorough understanding of intrusive and developmental advising.

Standard 10: Faculty

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

The faculty and other qualified professionals are responsible for developing the institution's academic programs consistent with the College's mission and goals. The College has a well-defined curriculum process, initiated by full-time faculty members.

Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) are in place for both full-time and credit adjunct faculty. The number of credit hours taught by full-time faculty does not differ significantly from the benchmark established by the National Community College Benchmark Project.

The College clearly defines the minimal qualifications for faculty and adjunct positions, as well as the process used for hiring. Credentials are verified prior to hire, and faculty, along with their credentials, are listed in the College Catalog. Although the College has well-defined procedures for faculty appointment, promotion, tenure, grievance, discipline, and dismissal in the CBAs for the full-time and adjunct faculty, tracking information for adjuncts was incomplete. However, this was addressed by the recently reached CBA for adjunct faculty, which specifies the process for evaluation of adjuncts, and the College is working toward a consistent procedure for implementing these evaluations.

The tenure process is also being updated. All faculty hired before July 1, 2014 were eligible for tenure after satisfactorily serving for four years. All those hired after July 1, 2014 will be eligible for tenure after five years and a formal review conducted by the Tenure Committee. This new system will be implemented in 2019 when those hired after 2014 will become eligible to apply for tenure.

The College supports advancement and development of faculty in the form of sabbaticals, in-house professional development and a Summer Faculty Institute. The Leadership Development Institute has been offered for the past six years and offers faculty and staff an excellent opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Academic freedom is affirmed by the CBA, which states that "academic freedom and its attendant responsibilities are essential to the fulfillment of the purposes of the College."

Recommendation

- Further develop procedures for evaluating adjunct faculty so they can be implemented more consistently. Improve the recordkeeping associated with this process.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The College meets this standard.

The College provides an array of educational offerings characteristic of the mission of a community college, which include associate degree programs leading to transfer to a baccalaureate program or directly to employment, as well as a variety of shorter term certificates and diplomas. Student learning goals setting expectations of knowledge and skill attainment are evident in almost all programs and on all master syllabi. Revised in 2010, the five-year Comprehensive Program/Discipline Review Process template establishes requirements to include annual assessment of student learning and mapping of program-level outcomes to the General Education Learning Goals. The College adheres to standards for transfer credit and practices that reflect the needs of adult students.

Summary of evidence and findings

The educational offerings of the College are comprised of 154 degree and certificate programs, including 23 designed for transfer to a baccalaureate institution, as well as noncredit offerings.

Student learning outcomes adhering to the principles of Bloom's Taxonomy are visible for almost all programs of study as stated in the print catalog and online presentation of programs of study. However, five degree programs do not have program learning outcomes: General Studies A.S., Liberal Arts & Sciences A.S., and Mathematics & Sciences A.S. are advertised as "university parallel programs." The Culinary Arts A.A.S. and the Business A.S./B.S. in partnership with the Indiana

University of Pennsylvania do not have program learning outcomes. General Studies and Liberal Arts & Sciences have not done program outcome assessment nor completed the five-year Program Review process.

The Master Course Syllabi which function as the course outlines are accessible from the College website and contain the minimum information required by Chapter 335 of the PA Code governing community colleges. In a review of Master Syllabi it appeared that many are not up-to-date with the five-year review requirement. Interviews revealed that the date on a Master Syllabus is not updated when the syllabus is reviewed, but not changed, which gives the misleading impression that the curriculum has not been reviewed in many years.

The self-study points to the five-year Program Review process as the place to find evidence of assessment of student learning. Additional Program Review reports were requested when on-site, and interviews with faculty members helped to illuminate the degree to which assessment activities are happening at the program level. The College has mandated that each program of study conducts program level outcome assessment every year and documents a high level of compliance. However, the quantity produced has not consistently yielded quality information on which to base decisions about changes in curriculum and instruction.

The evidence provided does not enable one to determine clearly whether or not the location in which a course is offered or the mode of delivery produced comparable results in student outcomes. Campus interviews revealed examples from individual faculty members about their inquiry into how their online students perform relative to on-ground students, but evidence of a systematic approach including online students, who represent a very significant percentage of total enrollment, could not be substantiated.

The linkage between the educational mission, as demonstrated through academic programs and the budgeting process expressed through Program Review recommendations for resources, is explicit.

The self-study presents a discussion of how librarians contribute to the goals of fostering information literacy, and the ITS staff's role in helping instructors embed technology in courses in order to enhance technological competency skills across the curriculum. Interviews with instructional technology and IT staff members illuminated the degree to which one-to-one assistance is available for faculty seeking to enhance their instructional technology skills. Interviews with faculty members who teach online courses demonstrated how much the IT and instructional technology staff members are valued.

Resources to support student learning include the library on each campus, which is the location for various academic supports including Math Cafes and Learning Commons. In a group interview with Learning Resources staff from all four campuses, the spirit of collaboration toward a common goal of supporting students' academic success was readily apparent.

The College publishes and implements policies and procedures regarding the criteria by which it transfers in credit. The self-study contains a link to the Essentials of Transcript Evaluation, a detailed document to guide staff members evaluating transcripts.

The print catalog, Student Handbook, and website communicate the variety of ways students can achieve advanced standing. Students may satisfy degree requirements through transfer in of credit from other colleges, CLEP exams, Prior Learning Assessment, and a variety of other appropriate means. The website includes a page describing Credit Transfer with a link to the Application for Credit Transfer.

CCAC offers specific programs created for adult students. The Midnight Welding program which can enroll 16 students a semester, began in 2010 to supply a critical need in the local economy in a way that was accessible to incumbent workers. The College Credit Fast Track is a state-wide effort among community colleges to make gaining credit for prior learning experiences accessible. An interview confirmed that there is a point person to assist students with this process.

The Plus 50 Encore Completion Program helps returning adult students navigate potential obstacles including use of digital technology and preparation for the mathematics placement exam.

Strength: Significant accomplishment, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practice

- The library and learning services staff of the four campuses are commended for their collaboration in the delivery of academic student support services through Math Cafes, Learning Commons, and Learning Assistance Centers. Their spirit of cross-campus collaboration and a team approach to the common goal of providing both library services and academic support to students was impressive.

Suggestion for improvement

- Indicate that Master Syllabi have been reviewed and that the curriculum is current by updating them with the year that they are reviewed, even if nothing has been altered.

Recommendations

- Develop program level student learning outcomes for the degree programs that do not have them.
- Systematically include online courses in assessments of student learning, and further disaggregate results so that educational effectiveness of the institution's courses and programs can be more clearly demonstrated regardless of location or delivery mode.

Standard 12: General Education

The College meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

A college's program of general education expresses its educational philosophy and is constructed with a coherent framework designed to deliver content and learning experiences that help students develop a broad base of knowledge and skills. Key elements include development and ownership of the general education program by the faculty, along with assessable learning outcomes which are evaluated systematically in a way that provides meaningful information to feed curricular improvement. Further, courses in the major allow students to apply general education skills and abilities.

A review of the self-study and documents shows that in 2005 the College developed its vision of an educated person to include four statements of desired characteristics and traits, and then delineated six General Education Learning Goals with associated statements of skills, content acquisition, and dispositions. The College program of General Education, with its explicit learning outcomes, meets the required outcome skills and knowledge areas, and the 15 semester hour minimum for associate degree programs set by Middle States.

General education is delivered through a typical distribution framework in which students select courses from general categories such as Humanities and Social Science. The College designates all courses within particular disciplines as meeting general education requirements. For example, all Art courses meet the Humanities elective requirement and all Criminal Justice courses meet the Social Science requirement. However, there is no system to designate specific courses as meeting general education distribution requirements. Without a mechanism for the faculty to review and approve selected courses as general education, there is a lack of coherence and purposeful construction of a shared core of learning for students.

Each of the six General Education Learning Outcomes has been assessed once. Evidence that the College uses the results of general education assessment to improve curriculum and instruction was sparse. The actions reported as a result of these assessments are two learning support initiatives to provide math and writing tutoring, and an online tutorial that librarians developed to help students learn research skills. There was scant evidence of results influencing the fundamental activity of the College: teaching.

The College documents how the six General Education Learning Goals are reinforced in programs of study. Appendix H, Assessment of General Education Goals within a Program or Discipline is part of the five year Program Review process. Appendix H, when completed, shows a side-by-side mapping of the six general education goals to elements within the program of study. Program Review documents show that faculty are attempting to demonstrate where general education outcomes are found in their program of study. However, there are multiple cases in which courses in the major are being stretched considerably to fit the definition of general education.

Interviews conducted with faculty members and administrators about the assessment process revealed that processes are in place to report assessment activity, but the depth and quality of the assessments done, and in particular the information gleaned, is not feeding into the most critical areas of curriculum and instruction.

Interviews also revealed that plans are in motion to assess both Information Literacy and Communication this academic year. However, knowledge about these assessments by people

who had been evaluators of these outcomes in the past was incomplete. Questions about how faculty members learn about the general education core and its assessment demonstrate that there is a need to develop genuine faculty ownership of a cohesive general education curriculum and its outcomes.

Recommendations

- The elements of the General Education core curriculum (courses, outcomes, and requirements) are scattered through the print catalog and online, and overlap with other sets of articulated institutional learning goals and areas of general study.   The College should bring everything together in one place, perhaps with the aid of a visual representation, in order to communicate as clearly as possible with students, faculty, and advising staff.
- Create a mechanism for faculty to review and designate specific courses that meet the general education distribution requirements, instead of designating all courses within a discipline.
- Devise the means to couple the general education distribution requirements and the General Education Learning Goals in ways that simplify the delivery and assessment of the general education curriculum.
- Ensure that the assessments of general education are comprehensive and systematic, and that the results are used for curricular improvement.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The College meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

CCAC provides avenues to identify academically under-prepared students using Accuplacer test results, and to work on reading, writing, and mathematic skills needed for placement into college-level courses. A comprehensive developmental curriculum addresses these needs. In addition to academic advisors and counselors, Student Success Coaches provide tremendous support to at-risk students; evidenced by programs such as Early Intervention and Jump Start, to name a few. Advanced technology solutions allow staff to more effectively track and monitor at-risk students.

The College offers almost as many certificate programs as it does associate degree programs. Students can choose from certificate programs that prepare them to meet workforce demands or serve as gateways to associate degrees. The student learning outcomes for credit certificates are stated in the print catalog and on the website. The credit certificates are subject to the same governance oversight and five-year program review cycle as the associate degree programs.

CCAC awards credit through Prior Learning Assessment and Advanced Standing earned by successful completion of college coursework in high school, transfer credits from other institutions, standardized subject tests, and various industry and agency training and certifications. Students may petition for prior learning credit using a portfolio process that is assessed by CCAC faculty. The College publishes how students may earn Advanced Standing in the print catalog, on the website, and in the Student Handbook.

Consistent with the College's mission, vision and goals, non-credit courses are offered that range from workforce development to personal enrichment. Staff members design, deliver, and evaluate non-credit offerings. Creative strategies are used to increase offerings that extend beyond the campus to local middle and high schools, businesses, libraries, and community or religious groups.

The College set strategic priorities to "develop and deliver educational opportunities for learners at every stage of their lives," and to "guide and support the economic development of our region with responsive, solution-driven workforce training programs." As noted in the Strategic Plan Assessment, fulfilling this part of the institutional mission within the context of declining enrollments in non-credit programs focused on workforce development remains a challenge.

CCAC operates four full-service campuses, as well as a variety of college centers, additional locations, and instructional sites. Offerings at each instructional site are subject to the same governance process. A priority for the College has been to integrate all the campuses and additional locations into a One College concept. This effort incorporates all locations into the College's strategic plans and resource allocation processes pertaining to areas such as academic and student support and information technology.

Meetings with students, faculty, and staff at the various campuses and locations revealed that the processes of internal communications face some challenges but for the most part are successful. The good relationships among campuses and other locations are reflected in the participation of all relevant constituencies in the self-study process.

Educational offerings meet standards for quality of instruction and academic rigor regardless of campus or location. The population and student needs differ for each campus, creating challenges with coordination and consistency; or more specifically, the College's ability to provide similar levels of advising, tutoring, and other support services. Despite these challenges, faculty and staff from all campuses meet regularly to plan activities, evaluate curricula, and develop strategies to improve student success. In general, learning outcomes, support services, and program reviews are adequate but differ somewhat across locations.

Enrollment in online courses grew by 5% from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016. The College offers 14 degree programs and 13 certificate programs entirely online. Qualified faculty from each campus develops online and hybrid courses, while the Online Learning Center administers the online

learning environment. There are plans to create a virtual campus to further centralize administration so that online courses can be more easily coordinated.

To ensure quality and provide faculty with training and support, the College has adopted Quality Matters, a nationally recognized non-profit quality assurance system for online teaching and course design. Assessment of student learning, performed by faculty and academic deans, follows the same procedures as on-campus courses. Distance learning quality assurance focuses on faculty selection, training, instructional support, course evaluations, student support services, and governance oversight.

CCAC maintains a wide range of contractual relationships with external agencies or organizations that provide educational experiences outside of the classroom. The College ensures the integrity of its contracts with external providers and entities through adherence to College policies and procedures. The policy guiding oversight of contracts with external providers was recently reviewed and the Director of Contracts and the General Counsel approve contracts prior to them being signed by the President.

Suggestion for improvement

- Continue efforts for a virtual campus that centralizes coordination of course and program planning to enhance the quality and rigor of online offerings and increase students' sense of community, as well as the One College Concept.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

It is the judgment of the team that the Community College of Allegheny County has not provided sufficient evidence that it meets this standard.

CCAC has taken significant steps to develop a comprehensive plan for the assessment of student learning. There are plans for the evaluation of both institutional and program level outcomes. Despite having these plans, and a knowledgeable and dedicated person in charge of assessment, the College has not yet shown evidence of the documented, organized, and sustained assessment processes required by Standard 14.

Summary of evidence and findings

The College has reasonably articulated expectations of learning outcomes at the institutional, program and course levels. Though course outcomes are matched to general education outcomes, there are no curriculum maps or other documentation of the connection between courses and program outcomes. Similarly, the connection between program outcomes and strategic goals is not apparent nor is the connection between assessment results and fiscal planning documented.

It is not clear how statements of program and course level outcomes are approved. While the curriculum committee does review compliance of General Education credit distribution and reviews course level outcomes for conformity with Bloom's Taxonomy, it does not appear that there is a process of oversight for the writing of these outcome statements.

The timetables for completing the assessment cycle for both general education and program outcome assessment are not sufficient to provide timely feedback that informs decisions on how to improve student learning. Each program is responsible for assessing one outcome, using two different measures, annually. In most cases, this results in all program outcomes being assessed only once, with loop closures not completed for up to ten years. For programs having more than five program outcomes, the length of time it takes to cycle through all the assessments is unclear.

A comprehensive program review is scheduled to be conducted for each program/discipline every five years but actions which are initiated in the five-year review are not reassessed until the next five-year review. Faculty cannot have reasonable expectations as to when they can convene to review findings and plan for improvements. In fact, there is no evidence that student learning assessment information is sufficiently shared and discussed with appropriate constituents.

TracDat is used as an electronic filing cabinet to store assessment data. After reviewing TracDat files, assessment appears to be episodic, not periodic, indicating that the timetable is not always followed. When no assessment is submitted by a department, it is not clear who is responsible for ensuring that the data are collected and reported. Given the insufficient documentation of student learning assessment, it is difficult to find that the information gathered can be used with confidence to inform decisions. Due to the somewhat episodic nature of assessment of student learning, it cannot be said that the process is sufficiently practical and detailed to be sustainable.

Of those assessments submitted, more than 70% conclude that "no action is required" because a benchmark was met. This suggests that there is a lack of understanding of the use of assessment to drive continual improvement. Further, there is no "assessment of the assessment" to insure quality of results and actions. In ten years of assessment of over 80 programs, only four artifacts of loop closure were submitted, confirming that assessment results are not being used to improve student learning. When questioned, faculty displayed sporadic knowledge of assessment activities, results, and closing the loop. This was evidence that a culture of assessment has not permeated the College.

Information on program-level assessment planning and results is disseminated to faculty during two discipline meetings each year. General education assessment results are not disaggregated to allow individual programs to take steps to improve students' general education learning. Although some assessment data have been collected, there is a lack of evidence that these data are used to inform institutional decision making in terms of instruction or financial planning.

Essentially what is lacking, is the implementation of a comprehensive plan of assessment that includes course, program, and support activities, timetables for completion, specific positions

responsible for meeting those deadlines and required follow through. The College should consider a multi-level process that establishes performance standards, monitors activities, helps to analyze results, and retains some level of oversight while the loop-closing activities are taking place.

The lack of these and other elements results in a process that is vague in terms of substantive activities, accountability, sustainability, and oversight. Perhaps the greatest deficiency is that there does not appear to be anyone with sufficient authority and responsibility for oversight of the assessment process. That person must be in a position to require administrators to meet deadlines, follow-up on missing reports, and seek to ensure that assessment findings result in actions designed to improve student learning and support processes.

<u>Requirements</u>

The College must:

1. Centralize assessment. Define a clear pathway of who is responsible and accountable for each stage of assessment.

2. Ensure that assessment is conducted for all academic programs, including General Education.

3. Shorten the timetable for assessment so that loop closure occurs in a timely fashion.

4. Provide evidence that assessment results are being used to inform decisions regarding instruction, curriculum, and resource allocation.

5. Define and adopt a systematic and consistent method of assessing the assessment process to ensure quality.

6. Improve documentation and communication of assessment results.

Conclusion

The team again thanks the College for its participation and hospitality, and we hope that it will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are being offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review. As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

- The institution receives a draft team report from the chair and corrects any errors of fact,
- The institution replies to the team report in a written response addressed to the Commission,
- The team chair submits a confidential brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action,
- The Commission staff and the Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully review the institutional self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institution's

formal response, and the chair's brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission, and

- The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.

Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance and Requirements

Standard 7:
Recommendations

- It is critical for assessment efforts to be sustainable. Though assessment protocols are comprehensive and well-aligned, the sheer volume of efforts is unwieldy and is likely to provide an overwhelming amount of information. These assessments include:
  - o the Plan for Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning,
  - o the Strategic Scorecard,
  - o the annual operating plan,
  - o the Student Development Services Assessment, and
  - o the Student Success Matrix.

  The College's recognition of the challenge in efficiently communicating assessment data can be addressed more effectively by simplifying the process to make it more accessible. As such, the College might benefit from determining the most important indicators to report regularly, and consider creating a sustainable rotation of the ancillary assessments.

- The College should maintain a comprehensive document that aligns assessment of objectives with consequent actions taken based on findings.

Standard 10:
Recommendation

- Further develop procedures for evaluating adjunct faculty so they can be implemented more consistently. Improve the recordkeeping associated with this process.

Standard 11:

Recommendations
- Develop program level student learning outcomes for the degree programs that do not have them.
- Systematically include online courses in assessments of student learning, and further disaggregate results so that educational effectiveness of the institution's courses and programs can be more clearly demonstrated regardless of location or delivery mode.

Standard 12:

<u>Recommendations</u>

- The elements of the General Education core curriculum (courses, outcomes, and requirements) are scattered through the print catalog and online, and overlap with other sets of articulated institutional learning goals and areas of general study. The College should bring everything together in one place, perhaps with the aid of a visual representation, in order to communicate as clearly as possible with students, faculty, and advising staff.
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3. Shorten the timetable for assessment so that loop closure occurs in a timely fashion.

4. Provide evidence that assessment results are being used to inform decisions regarding instruction, curriculum, and resource allocation.

5. Define and adopt a systematic and consistent method of assessing the assessment process to ensure quality.

6. Improve documentation and communication of assessment results.