NorthWest Arkansas Community College

HLC ID 1319

AQIP: Comprehensive Quality Review   Review Date: 4/6/2020

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

4/6/2020
Overview the Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR)

A Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR) is required as part of the Year 8 comprehensive evaluation during the final year of the AQIP Pathway cycle and may also occur in Year 4 based upon institutional request or HLC determination. The goals of the CQR are to:

- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. (With respect to the optional Year 4 CQR, the goal is to alert the organization to areas that need attention prior to its next Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Such concerns may be signaled during the Systems Appraisal process in the third year of the cycle.)
- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting the Federal Compliance Requirements.
- Facilitate the institution's continuing quality improvement commitment, confirming that a developing or established continuous quality improvement (CQI) culture and infrastructure exist that advances organizational maturity in relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories.
- Verify any issues identified in Action Project Reviews, Systems Appraisals or HLC actions.
- Validate process-level development and deployment as described in the Systems Portfolio.
- Identify actions taken to minimize identified strategic issues and to alleviate potential accreditation issues.
- Review CQI priorities and progress, including how Action Projects are integrated into the institution's overall performance improvement strategy.
- Review distance and/or correspondence education delivery, if applicable.
- Evaluate distributed education (multiple campuses), if applicable.
- Develop an initial recommendation regarding Pathway eligibility (Year 8 only).

Scope of Review

- Quality Highlights Report
- On-site Visit
- Federal Compliance Review (if applicable)
- Multi-campus Visit (if applicable)
- Reaffirmation Review (Year 8 only)

- Federal Compliance 2019 - AQIP
- CQR Quality Highlights Report

Institutional Context

The purpose of the evaluation was for a peer review team to conduct a Comprehensive Quality Review which included the Federal Compliance requirements and distance learning.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC), located in Bentonville, Arkansas, is a comprehensive, public two-year college serving approximately 15,000 students enrolled in college credit, workforce development,

community education, and adult education classes. In addition to its main campus, the College offers classes at an additional location in Springdale, the ALLPS School of Innovation in Farmington, the Regional Technology Center in Fayetteville, and the Bridgewater Culinary Center located near the main campus in Bentonville. In Academic Year 2019, the student population was primarily female (56%), white (63%), and enrolled part-time (70%). The median student age was 21.

NorthWest Arkansas' credit programs include 26 associate degrees, 1 General Studies certificate, 30 technical certificates, and 37 certificates of proficiency. NWACC has transfer agreements with more than 45 institutes, colleges, and universities including the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville and Arkansas State Universities. The College also participates in the statewide Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) which facilitates the alignment and transferability of courses between participating institutions. Classes are available through face-to-face, online, and web enhanced modes of delivery.

The mission of the College is to, "Empower Lives, Inspire Learning and Strengthen Community through Accessible, Affordable, Quality Education." NWACC aspires to "…become a premier educational provider in Northwest Arkansas by developing a responsive education delivery system customized to the needs of learners and receiving organizations."

Interactions with Constituencies

Session 1: Introductory Meeting
President

Session 2: Overview of Mission, Vision, and Values – Criteria One, Two and Five
President
Vice President of Finance and Administration
Vice President of Learning/CAO
Vice President of Career and Workforce Education
Vice President of Student Services
Executive Director of Community & Government Relations
Executive Director of Human Resources
Director of Institutional Research
Director of Accreditation and Assessment/ALO
Associate Vice President of Learning and Institutional Effectiveness
Associate Vice President of Finance and Administration
President, Faculty Senate

Session 3: Assessment of Student Learning – Criteria Three, Four and Five
Dean, Communication & Arts
Dean, Business
Chair, Assessment Committee
Chair, Curriculum Committee
Associate Vice President for Learning
Director of Accreditation and Assessment/ALO
Director of Student Life and Co-Curricular Assessment
Faculty (12)
Library Representative
Executive Director of Student Success

Registrar

Session 5: Retention, Persistence and Completion – Criterion Three
Dean, Social and Behavioral Science
Director of Institutional Research
Associate Vice President Student Services
Dean, Distance Learning
Director of Student Life and Co-Curricular Assessment
Dean, Communication & Arts
Executive Director of Student Success
Student Success Representative
Student Services Representative
Faculty (3)
Dean, Students
Library Representative
Director of Disability Services
Grants Administration Representative
Director of Veterans' Services
Enrollment Services Representative
Director of Testing Services
Vice President of Student Services
Director of Math Center
Director of Marketing
Director of Early College Experience
Director of Library

Session 6: Distance Learning and Dual Credit – Criteria Three and Four
Executive Director of Student Success
Dean, Distance Learning
Faculty (8)
Associate Vice President of Student Services
Enrollment Services Representative
Director of Counseling and Wellness
Director of Testing Services
E-learning Librarian
Director of Early College Experience

Session 7: Role of the Board – Criteria One and Five
Chairman, Board of Trustees
Board of Trustees Members (6)
Reporter with The Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Representative from Marketing & Public Relations Department

Session 9: Open Forum with Support Staff – Criteria Two, Three and Five
Support Staff (27)

Session 10: Open Forum with Students – Student Survey Results
Students (6)

Session 11: Strategic Challenges and Levels of Maturity

President
Vice President of Finance and Administration
Vice President of Learning/CAO
Vice President of Career and Workforce Education
Vice President of Student Services
Executive Director of Community & Government Relations
Executive Director of Human Resources
Director of Accreditation and Assessment/ALO

Session 14: Exit Interview
President
Director of Accreditation and Assessment/ALO

Additional Documents

Documents
Institutional Review Board Application
NWACC Facilities Master Plan 2015-2020
2019-2020 NWACC Fact Book
NorthWest Arkansas Community College Ends, Goals, & Objectives 2019-2020 (Strategic Plan)
Board Policy Manual
• Policy 5007.1, Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics Compliance
• Policy 7001, Technology Acceptable Use
• Policy 5001.14, Conflict of Interest
• GP-305, Governance, Process, Code of Ethics
• GP-306, Authorization to Allow the Community College to Purchase Commodities and Services
• From Board Members
• GP-312, Statement of Financial Interest
• BPR-400 Series
• Policy 3022, Academic Freedom
• Policy 2013, College Survey
• Policy 4012.4, Student Conduct Violations
• Policy 3014, Faculty Evaluation
• Policy 3017, Faculty Qualifications
• Policy 3020, Academic Program Review
• Policy 3023, Developing and Revising Credit Courses
• Policy 3010, Concurrent and Dual Enrollment
• Policy 3016, Credit for Prior Learning
Co-Curricular Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook
Faculty Tool-kit
Employee Handbook
Student Handbook
Faculty Handbook
Student Club Handbook
NWACC 2019-2020 Course Catalog
NWACC List of Accredited Programs
Required Online Course Elements and Facilitation Standards
Rubric for Online Instruction

e-mail from Diane Johnson, 4/6/2020, reference Faculty Office Expectations
Faculty Credentials Form
Faculty Credentials Procedure
Learning Outcomes as stated in NWACC Catalog
2018 One-Year Post HS Survey Report
Early Childhood Education Meeting Minutes 8/5/19
Early Childhood Education Syllabus Information
Assessment Critical Thinking for Gen Psych 2018
College-wide Assessment Plan
General Education Outcomes Assessment Calendar
General Education Outcomes
General Education Outcome Assessment AY 2016
General Education Outcomes Report Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Report Draft 3
General Education Outcomes Report Spring and Fall 2017 8-29-18
Assessment Committee Agendas and Minutes Fall 2019 and Spring 2020
Specific learning outcomes for the AAS in Business Management and AS Business Programs
Celebrate Learning Evaluations Spring 2020
Strategic Planning Team Agenda 1/24/20
Leadership NWACC Post Assessment 2017-2018
Search Committee Guide
Library Led Academic Workshops
Writing Center Workshop Schedule Spring 2020
Program Review Template
Program Review Training Guide
Fall Newsletter Communication and Arts
Professional Development Response from Student Services
List of Bates Lab Scholarly Activity
4-yr out HS-College Senior 2016 (Survey of students who had taken a NWACC course in HS)
High school Site Visit Report
Amber Holtz e-mail – confirmation of high school site visit
Sample of High School Class Observation (Williams)
E-mail confirming High School syllabi review (Jim Laughton)
Sample High School site visit report addressing alignment with NWACC courses (Wright, Heather Siloam Springs)
Signed checklist showing orientation activities by a High School instructor including discussion of course objectives (Zach Wilson - New ECE Instructor)
E-mail confirming record of orientation activities for a High School instructor (Zach Wilson)
Common Learning Framework and General Education Outcomes alignment documentation
Early College Experience High School-Based Concurrent Program Procedure Manual
Program Reviews (2017-2018)
• AA
• Early Childhood Education
• English

Websites

NWACC Accreditation
(https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/collegeleadership/cao/accreditation/aboutaccreditation.aspx)

Financial Aid Services (https://www.nwacc.edu/enrollment/financialaid)

Quick Facts about NWACC (https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/aboutus/quickfactsabout.aspx)

Arkansas Division of Higher Education Annual Reporting (https://www.adhe.edu/institutions/institutional-finance/annual-reporting)

Ethics Complaints Procedures (https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/15781/complaint.pdf)

EthicsPoint Questions Answer for Employees (https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/15781/faq.pdf)

EthicsPoint Portal (https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/15781/index.html)

Information Literacy Guide for Faculty (https://library.nwacc.edu/infolitforfaculty)

EMPACTS Program Description (https://www.nwacc.edu/academicdivisions/scimath/empacts.aspx)

NWACC Mission and Vision (https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/aboutus/missionvision.aspx)

Assessment Plans, Handbooks, Calendars, and Outcomes (https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/collegeleadership/cao/accreditation/assessment.aspx)

Arkansas Division of Higher Education Program Review (https://www.adhe.edu/institutions/academic-affairs/academic-program-proposal-and-review/existing-program-review)

Resource Center (https://www.nwacc.edu/disabilityservices/default.aspx, Disability)

Student Clubs and Organizations (https://www.nwacc.edu/campuslife/clubsorganizations/default.aspx)

Office of Hispanic Outreach (https://www.nwacc.edu/studentservices/hispanicoutreach/),

LIFE Program (https://www.nwacc.edu/studentservices/lifeprogram/)

Writing and Academic Literacy Center (https://www.nwacc.edu/studentsuccess/writingcenter/videostutorials.aspx)

Computer Labs and Study Rooms (https://www.nwacc.edu/studentsuccess/computerlabsandstudyrooms.aspx)

Communications and Arts (https://www.nwacc.edu/academicdivisions/commart/theatre.aspx)

Closing the Gap 2020, A Master Plan for Higher Education in Arkansas, Coordinated by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. (https://www.adhe.edu/about-adhe/master-plan9/)

Arkansas Division of Higher Education (https://www.adhe.edu/)

NWACC Workforce Development (https://www.nwacc.edu/workforce/default.aspx)

NWACC Campus Life (https://www.nwacc.edu/campuslife/default.aspx)

Strategic Plan (https://www.nwacc.edu/_documents/presidentsoffice/documents/website-nwacc-strategic-plan.pdf)

NWACC's Values & Strategic Goals (https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/aboutus/strategicgoals.aspx)

Monthly and Annual Budget Reports (https://www.nwacc.edu/administrativeservices/budget/budgetreports.aspx)

Early College Experience Information for Faculty (https://www.nwacc.edu/highschool/faculty/default.aspx)

National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (NACEP) Accreditation Standards (http://www.nacep.org/accreditation/standards/)

NWACC Testing Services (https://www.nwacc.edu/testingcenter/nwacctests/default.aspx)

Arkansas Division of Higher Education Arkansas College Transfer System (ACTS) Description (https://www.adhe.edu/institutions/academic-affairs/arkansas-transference-and-articulation/arkansas-course-transfer-system)

NWACC Transfer Process (https://www.nwacc.edu/transferservices/preparetotransfer/arkansascoursetransfersystem.aspx)

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.)

Rating

Met

Rationale

During the 2016-17 academic year, NWACC conducted a review of its mission and vision as part of its five-year planning cycle. Key stakeholders were engaged in a variety of ways including a survey of faculty and staff, a brainstorming forum for faculty and staff, external stakeholder meetings, and a review and refinement of the proposed mission and vision statements by the Quality Council and Cabinet. On October 17, 2016, the revised mission and vision statements were presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration and approved on May 8, 2017. Through the revised mission statement, NWACC aspires to "Empower Lives, Inspire Learning and Strengthen Community, through Accessible, Affordable, Quality Education." The College vision is to positively change the lives of those they serve.

Each year, NWACC develops End Statements in alignment with its mission, vision, and values, and the policies of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. End statements guide the College in setting priorities and determining what it will do for its learners, business partners, taxpayers, K-12 partners, and the College community. According to the NWACC website and confirmed during the CQR visit, the 2019-20 annual objectives were determined by NWACC Cabinet members based on several sources of information -- College Key Performance Indicators, HLC Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), Arkansas Closing the Gap 2020 plan for higher education, institutional budget constraints, the new Productivity Funding Formula implemented by Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and College-wide stakeholder input through use of the FY 2020 Strategic Planning Objectives and Budget form at the department and division level.

As a regional community college, NWACC's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission of providing accessible, affordable, and

quality education that prepare students for the workplace or transfer to a four-year institution. As of Fall 2019, NWACC offers 27 associate degrees, 30 technical certificates, and 37 certificates of proficiency to approximately 8,000 credit-based students, 2,500 non-credit learners, and 1,800 adult education students within Northwest Arkansas and the surrounding region. NWACC is noted for its programs in health, business, culinary science, and the arts. Recently, the NWACC Foundation launched a $12 million capital campaign to construct a new 38,000 square facility in Washington County, expanding the College's outreach. NWACC courses are delivered in a variety of formats, and several degrees are offered fully or mostly online. NWACC also provides basic adult education, non-credit continuing education, and customized training to meet employer and community needs.

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) governs the role and scope of each public institution. NWACC is responsible for serving the needs of Benton and Washington county residents who are seeking occupational, transfer, professional, and continuing education opportunities. AHECB has established a 35-hour minimum general education core that requires courses in English and writing, the humanities and fine arts, history and social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences. Through the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS), students are guaranteed the transfer of applicable credits and equitable treatment in the application of credits for admissions and degree requirements. NWACC has transfer agreements with more than 45 institutes, colleges, and universities including the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville and Arkansas State University.

The planning and budgeting of College resources are aligned with the five-year strategic plan and guide the development of College End statements and strategic objectives. Targets are set and results are tracked using key performance indicators (KPIs). Annually, NWACC departments and divisions participate in the planning and budget process. College departments and divisions develop strategic objectives and measures for the upcoming academic year that align with the strategic goals, mission, and vision. These objectives and measures are reviewed by the NWACC Strategic Planning Team, approved by the Cabinet and the Board of Trustees, and distributed widely throughout the institution. At the end of the academic year, the KPIs are reviewed by Cabinet to determine if the objectives have been met. The results are shared and discussed with the Board of Trustees at their July Board retreat.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC articulates its mission publicly. Primarily, NWACC presents its mission and vision statements on its website under Quick Facts in the About section. A downloadable pdf version of the 2019-20 NWACC Ends, Goals, and Objectives document includes the institutional mission and vision. Although the mission and vision statements went through significant revisions in 2016-17, these statements are not frequently found on college-wide documents and publications. There is an opportunity for NWACC to develop more public awareness of its mission and vision by giving these statements a higher profile on the College website and including these statements in the Student Handbook and other key stakeholder documents.

NWACC is guided on its outreach and delivery of education programs by Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board policy 3.18, which defines its primary role and scope as serving the needs of Benton and Washington county residents who are seeking transfer or career-technical education, upgrading of workforce skills, or completion of a GED. According to the 2019-20 Ends, Goals, and Objectives document, NWACC identifies its key stakeholders within the following communities -- learners, business, taxpayers, and pre-K through 16. In addition, the Closing the Gap initiative by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education challenges NWACC to partner with other public institutions to reach a 60% post-secondary attainment goal in Arkansas by 2025, a significant increase from the current estimate of 43.4%.

A clear understanding of the nature, scope, and intended constituents of this community college was consistently reflected in meetings with College constituents during the CQR visit and on the NWACC website. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students expressed an appreciation for the diversity of the NWACC student population and the willingness of faculty and staff to "meet the students where they are at". Specialized support services for diverse student populations are provided by the Office of Hispanic and Latino Outreach, Veterans Office, International Students Program Center, Disability Resource Center, Workforce and Economic Development Center, and Adult Education Division.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As a public institution within the State of Arkansas, NWACC seeks to address its role in a multicultural society through its curriculum, support services, and community outreach. In its publicly-stated Values statement, the College aspires to respect differences and view them as a strength. One of the institution's strategic goals is to "provide an open and transparent environment where students, staff, faculty, and alumni feel welcome, safe, valued, connected, and informed."

NWACC measures student gains in awareness of cultural perspectives through General Education Outcomes (GEO) Assessment. According to the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 General Education Assessment Report, of the 163 students assessed for this particular GEO, 125 or 76.69% were proficient, unchanged from 2017. Based on mode of delivery, 79.09% of face-to-face students and 71.70% of online students were proficient. The Assessment committee acknowledged that faculty should strive for a greater percentage of students participating in the assessment and monitor the differences in the mode of delivery to see if there is a pattern in differences in performance.

According to the 2019-20 NWACC Fact Book, 62% of the approximately 15,000 students served in AY19 are classified as "underserved/not college ready" and 30% are Pell grant recipients. As of Fall 2019, NWACC minority student populations included 1.2% American Indian, 2.4% Black, and 22.6% Hispanic or Latino. NWACC aspires to increase Hispanic student enrollment to 25%, the threshold for Hispanic Serving Institution status. In addition, NWACC has identified minority faculty recruitment as one of their key performance measures. As of AY19, the College had 7.6% full time faculty and staff identified as minority. The target for AY20 is 10%.

In the area of support for diverse student populations, NWACC provides targeted services from the International Student Office, Disability Resource Center, the Office of Hispanic and Latino Outreach, and the Veterans Center. NWACC is nationally recognized as the only two-year community college in Arkansas offering outstanding service to military veterans and was ranked as a Military Friendly School in 2015 and 2016. In addition, several student organizations reflect institutional support of diversity and inclusion such as the African Students Club, Hmong Culture Club, DREAMERs of NWACC, and PRIDE of NWACC. Finally, NWACC offers Study Abroad programs in seven countries including a new partnership with the American College of Greece.

NWACC seeks to develop a student enrollment profile that mirrors the demographics of the

community at large; and, therefore, outreach and support of Hispanic and Latino students is a priority. A newly-resourced Associate Director for Hispanic Initiatives position is responsible for outreach to these students and their families, connecting them to wrap-around academic and support services. Through the LIFE (Learning, Improvement, Fun, and Empowerment) program, area high school students who may or may not be considering college after graduation are provided onboarding opportunities through a two-day summer bridge program, college-age mentors, and resources for parents of first-generation Hispanic or Latino students.

Finally, as an Arkansas Closing the Gap institution, NWACC is partnering with other higher education institutions to help underserved individuals successfully transition to post-secondary education. This includes an initiative to expand outreach to the Adult Education population through the GED College Ready and College Ready Plus Credit programs.

Although several activities and services that address inclusion and equity needs are evident at NWACC, it is unclear how diversity and equity efforts are coordinated across the institution, how information is shared, and how decisions regarding improvements are made. In the 2016-17 revision of the College mission and vision statements, there is no explicit mention of diversity. Although one of the core College values is identified as "Respect our differences and view them as a strength", the focus is on creating a welcoming environment where students, faculty, and staff are valued rather than addressing global citizenship in a multicultural society.

As NWACC seeks to improve outreach, enrollment, and support for underserved students, to attain Hispanic Serving Institution status, and to recruit and retain faculty of color, the College might consider a more formal framework to provide oversight for issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating an aligned, coordinated, and mission-driven approach.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Through its actions and decisions, NWACC demonstrates its commitment to the public good. As an Arkansas state-assisted community college, NWACC maintains an "open door" policy to anyone who wishes to receive a higher education, and NWACC makes a concerted effort to respond to the needs of its diverse student population including specialized support of veterans, Hispanic or Latino students, and students with disabilities. A review of the College website and other documents provides evidence that a range of programs and services are in place to support student persistence and completion such as developmental coursework, tutoring, advising, career and transfer services, and Math and Writing Centers. In addition to traditional Financial Aid, NWACC offers a food pantry and emergency loans for students in need.

NWACC demonstrates financial stewardship in its attempts to provide an affordable, accessible education. According to Arkansas State Statute 6-61-520, the control of each community college is vested in a local board composed of nine (9) members who are residents and qualified electors of the community college district. The NWACC Board of Trustees (BOT) reviews and sets tuition, and the College's tuition is one of the lowest in the state system. During the CQR meeting with the BOT, Trustees emphasized that one of their top priorities is to provide an affordable education to their constituents. As a public institution, there are no investors or parent organizations involved in the operations of the College. In addition, the Arkansas Closing the Gap initiative is an outcomes-based funding model based on achievement of specific metrics with incentive funding when benchmarks are exceeded.

NWACC's planning processes include multiple approaches to gathering input from its key external stakeholders. Community partners serve on program advisory committees, sharing their industry-based ideas with faculty for academic program improvement. Recently, NWACC began the process of standardizing the operations of advisory committees through the development of an Advisory Board Manual with emphasis on the importance of feedback for program assessment and improvement. In addition, the College President and other members of the Cabinet represent the

College on a variety of community boards and committees.

NWACC is engaged in many collaborative educational partnerships throughout the communities that it serves. Through the Early College Experience program, high school students can take college-level courses in their own high school or participate in courses on the NWACC campus. In Spring 2020, the LIFE (Learning, Improvement, Fun, and Empowerment) program connected and supported over 1750 area high school students in making a successful transition to college with a college-age LIFE mentor. In AY19, nearly 2,000 students were served through Adult Education programs including GED prep, Citizenship classes, English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, and workforce development training. At the postsecondary level, NWACC engages in more than 45 transfer partnerships with other colleges and universities, providing articulated academic pathways for students.

NWACC actively engages in a variety of community collaborations with economic and workforce development partners, Chambers of Commerce, and business-industry partners. For example, the Workforce & Economic Development division trains skilled workers in the construction trades, robotics, and project management. Currently, there are 277 students involved in apprenticeship programs with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing, and electrical contractors. In addition, NWACC's Certified Retail Analysts (CRA) program was designed specifically to respond to a targeted workforce need of Walmart with its corporate headquarters located less than 10 miles from the NWACC campus in Bentonville.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Rationale

NWACC's mission is clear, articulated publicly, and guides the institution's operations. NWACC completed a stakeholder engagement initiative to review and revise its mission and vision, which were approved by the Board of Trustees on May 8, 2017. As a comprehensive community college, NWACC's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile demonstrate alignment with its mission of providing a quality, accessible, and affordable education to the various stakeholders it serves. Institutional priorities, budget, and plans are in alignment with the mission as evidenced by the 2019-20 Ends, Goals, and Objectives plan. The College demonstrates its commitment to the public good through its focus on serving students and its region through various community collaborations around transfer education, workforce training, and economic development.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) is governed by a nine member Board of Trustees elected for six-year terms by the citizens of its service area. Standards for Board members, faculty, and staff are included in the Board of Trustees Manual which is available to all employees and the public on the College website. Ethical standards for the Board are written into college policy GP-305 Code of Ethics, which states that Board members are expected, "… to perform their responsibilities in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, to avoid conflicts of interests, and to disclose those that occur." In accordance with Arkansas Code Ann. 21-8-701(c)(1)(A), Board members sign a Statement of Financial Interest each calendar year.

NWACC ensures integrity in its financial operations by its policies and procedures designed to increase accountability and reduce the opportunities for fraud and abuse of College resources. The Board of Trustees approves the annual budget and retains the services of an external auditor to render independent opinions on the truth and fairness of its financial statements. Monthly budget reports are available on the College website.

NWACC has provided evidence that appropriate policies are in place to ensure the College operates with integrity and follows fair and ethical processes. These include Policy 5007.1, Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics Compliance, which outlines the expectations of behavior and conduct for faculty and staff. The policy is included in the Faculty Handbook and Employee Handbook which are available on the College website and as part of the orientation process for new employees. The College uses EthicsPoint, a confidential third party reporting provider, to facilitate reporting of perceived violations of policies or standards of ethical conduct. A link to EthicsPoint is available on the College website and information received through this reporting system is forwarded to the Ethics Committee for review.

Policy 7001, Technology Acceptable Use, outlines the expectations for students, faculty, and staff in the use of the College's technology resources. It also includes guidelines to avoid copyright infringement. Penalties for non-compliance including civil and criminal penalties are described as

well.

Policy 5001.14, Conflict of Interest, provides information on the College's expectations regarding the involvement of College employees in outside activities that may present a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which the objectivity of an employee could be reasonably questioned or one that might be in competition with the College. Employees must disclose through the submission of the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement any situation that may constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest. All disclosures and records of actions taken by the College with respect to conflicts are maintained by the Office of Human Resources for a period of three years.

The Public Incident Report link is available on the College website to report a formal conduct complaint or a concern about a student. Formal complaints are classified as those activities or actions that are in potential violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Submitted concerns are referred to the Behavioral Review Team and reports can be submitted by anyone in the College community or members of the public. Individuals submitting reports may remain anonymous or identify themselves as a member of a specific group such as a student, staff/administrator, faculty, or a member of the community.

The Student Handbook is available on the College website and provides information on students' rights and responsibilities, the student complaint and grievance policy against a staff member, technology acceptable use, academic honesty, and plagiarism. Policies and processes for academic grade appeals, student complaints and grievances, academic honesty, and plagiarism are also available in the College catalog.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NorthWest Arkansas Community College's mission vision, strategic goals, and End Statements are publicly communicated through the College's website and printed materials. Progress in meeting the College's key performance indicators (KPI) is shared publicly through the College's 2019-2020 Ends, Goals & Objectives document available on the College website and during scheduled Board meetings. Media representatives are present at all meetings of the Board of Trustees. Contact information for all faculty and staff, as well at the members of the Board of Trustees, is publicly available on the home page of the website.

Detailed descriptions of student-centered services are available in multiple formats including the website, social media, and print materials as evidenced by:
• An academic catalog that includes program requirements for all degree levels
• Course schedules for all degree levels offered
• A list of all tuition and fees and a net price calculator
• Financial aid guidelines and policies
• A public list of all accreditations
• A student handbook
• A department directory
• A list of articulation agreements
• Federally mandated Consumer and Campus Crime information

Conversations with students during the CQR provided additional evidence that NWACC presents itself clearly and completely. In addition, a representative from The NorthWest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette was present during the CQR session with the Board of Trustees.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The Board of Trustees Manual outlines the composition and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees as directed by state statute and policy. Board members are elected by the public for six-year terms and vacancies on the Board due to death, resignation, or other cause are filled by gubernatorial appointment. The Board is required to hold a public meeting every January during which dates, times and locations of regular monthly meetings for the calendar year are approved. Once approved, the schedule of monthly meetings is posted on the website.

A review of Board meeting agendas and minutes provides evidence that deliberations of the Board reflect the interests of the College's internal and external stakeholders. Ethical standards for the Board are written into college policy GP-305 Code of Ethics, which states that Board members are expected, "… to perform their responsibilities in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, to avoid conflicts of interests, and to disclose those that occur." In accordance with Arkansas Code Ann. 21-8-701(c)(1)(A), Board members sign a Statement of Financial Interest each calendar year.

Board Policy series BPR-400 addresses the Board-President Relationship for NWACC. These include the appointment of the president (BPR-401), the job description (BPR-402), performance evaluation (BPR-403, BPR-404), and the specific duties delegated to the president (BPR-405). Policy 3023, Developing and Revising Credit Courses, assigns the primary role in developing, revising, and implementing curriculum to the faculty through the Curriculum Committee which manages the process and assumes the lead role for outlining procedures for curriculum additions, deletions, or revisions. Discussions with Board members during the CQR provide additional evidence that the Board assigns the responsibility of the day-to-day operation of NWACC to the president.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC demonstrates it is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning through Policy 3022, Academic Freedom, which states that NWACC protects the right to the free exchange of ideas and the freedom of intellectual inquiry for all members of the campus community. Language in the policy includes protection for faculty, students, and librarians. Faculty are assured of academic freedom and are expected to adhere to scholarly best practices and consider the relevance of course content and pedagogical methods as appropriate for the catalogue description and standard course outline.

Students are given the assurance that they have freedom for their artistic expressions and intellectual pursuits and will be evaluated solely on academic performance and not on opinions or conduct unrelated to the academic criteria of the course. Similar to the provisions assigned to faculty, librarians are free to engage in academic endeavors without fear of retaliation or censorship and the library will provide uncensored and unfettered access to library materials for all users. In the event an individual feels his or her academic freedom rights have been impinged upon, threatened, or violated, due process is available through the Academic Freedom Committee.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC has clear and documented policies and resources relating to academic honesty and ethical use of information resources. The College's library webpage provides research guides for specific academic disciplines and online tutorials on appropriate citation and writing styles through links to the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) and the North Carolina Writing Center. In addition, the Library offers several Academic Literacy Workshops including: Plagiarism 101, Know Your Sources, and Research Skills: Finding the Good Stuff. Information literacy is a learning outcome for general education and, in support of this outcome, the library has developed an Information Literacy Guide for Faculty which is available on its website. The library defines information literacy as the set of integrated abilities encompassing: discovering information in a reflective manner, understanding of how information is produced and valued, using information to create new knowledge, and participating ethically in communities of learning.

Select courses in multiple disciplines also provide instruction in the responsible acquisition of knowledge and have developed student learning outcomes to accomplish this goal. Examples include:
• HIM 2523, Healthcare Statistics, provides students enrolled in the Health Information Management program with instruction in the appropriate application of Institutional Review Board (IRB) processes and policies as well as the application of ethical guidelines in the use of statistics.
• ARHS 1013, Creative Thinking and Practice, instructs students in methods to effectively conduct and critically assess art-related research.
• HIST 1043H, World Civilizations From 1500 Honors, provides students with the opportunity to learn how to explain and analyze information from primary and secondary sources as well as how to use information to reach original conclusions about historical issues. Students are expected to present their conclusions using appropriate evidence.

The College has established an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure a standard of best practices is used in the collection of survey data across the institution. The IRB is managed in accordance with Policy 2013, College Survey and co-led by a representative from the Institutional Research office and a faculty member. The IRB application is available on the Institutional Research page on the College's website.

The Student Handbook provides information on students' rights and responsibilities including technology acceptable use, academic honesty, and plagiarism. Students are expected to follow Policy 4012.4, Student Conduct Violations, which outlines the student behaviors that are considered to be detrimental to the College's mission to be a learning-centered postsecondary institution. Included in the list of unacceptable behaviors is a violation of academic honesty, i.e., cheating and/or plagiarism. This information is included in the Student Handbook and on course syllabi.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

The evidence for the core components in this criterion is clear and well presented. NWACC acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible as noted through the examples provided during interactions with Board members, faculty, staff, and students. Administrative policies, Board governance policies, and faculty and staff handbooks are all source documents for the conveyance of expectations for ethical behavior and consequences for non-compliance. Expectations for students are communicated through the Student Handbook, catalog, website, and course syllabi. NWACC is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning as evidenced by its policy on academic freedom.

The College's publicly elected Board of Trustees maintains primary fiduciary accountability for the College. The annual budget and monthly budget reports are available on the website.

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).

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC provides evidence that its degree programs are appropriate to higher education through various processes. According to the College-wide Assessment Plan, the Curriculum Committee is responsible for ensuring that courses and programs have clearly identified learning objectives. Course and program changes are recommended by faculty and processed through a defined process which includes approval by the Deans' Council, Board of Trustees, and the Arkansas Division of Higher Education as prescribed by Board policy. As described in the Quality Highlights Report, this process was revised in 2018-2019 to include a standard course outline with identified student learning outcomes for all credit bearing courses. The review process for all courses is scheduled to be completed in 2021 and a review of master course outlines posted on the College's website confirms that outcomes are articulated at the course level.

Some programs maintain specialized accreditation and others use advisory boards to ensure relevancy of the curriculum. A review of a sample of minutes from program advisory boards confirms that discussions are being conducted at regularly scheduled meetings. State required program reviews involving outside reviewers also address the currency and relevance of the curriculum as well as the program learning outcomes as they relate to the College mission. Samples of program reviews confirmed the requirements are being met by NWACC.

For programs leading to professional licensure or certification, pass rates on those exams are used to determine that learning occurs at appropriate levels and is relevant. In addition, the College uses annual reports on student progress at the University of Arkansas, the leading transfer institution for NWACC students, to determine the appropriateness of its learning goals.

Courses offered at a high school as part of the Early College program must be available to students on the NWACC campus and listed in the catalog. Those courses must also adhere to the College's academic policies. NWACC was reaccredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) in 2016. As part of the requirements for that accreditation, the College surveys concurrent enrollment students to evaluate their experience. Nearly 80 percent of respondents rated their experience as excellent or good in the survey conducted one year out, with similar levels of satisfaction reported four years out. College documentation demonstrates that high school and Early College liaisons conduct course observations and review syllabi and assessments once per semester.

The guidelines for online courses specifically state that Standard Course Outlines must be used as part of the posted syllabus. However, the Rubric for Online Instruction states that online course guidelines are for instructor self-assessment and for new courses. As noted previously, the process for implementing Standard Course Outlines has not been completed and a review of sample syllabi demonstrated some variance in the outcomes listed on syllabi for the same courses offered online, at a high school, and on campus. While the process for ensuring the consistent outcomes across modalities is still in the early stages of implementation, there is a plan in place to ensure that all courses follow the Standard Course Outline. The College is encouraged to develop a monitoring process to ensure the scheduled 2021 deadline is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC's general education program is consistent with the required skills and knowledge-based lower division general education curricula identified by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education. The 35-credit hour general education core requires courses in English and writing, the humanities and fine arts, history and social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences. For students completing an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science degree, it is fully transferable to meet the bachelor's degree program completion requirements at one or more Arkansas college/university. NWACC's Associate of Applied Science degrees require a minimum of 15-credit hours of general education which includes a minimum of one class in English composition.

NWACC's Common Learning Framework (CLF) is aligned to both the eight General Education Outcomes (GEO) and program learning outcomes as evidenced by the Business AAS and AS outcomes. The Assessment of Student Learning Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Common Learning Outcomes (CLO) remain current and aligned with the College's mission. Minutes from the Assessment Committee provide evidence that GEOs are reviewed by the committee and that alignment with stakeholder needs is considered as part of the review. The Assessment of Student Learning Plan demonstrates alignment with the College's mission and strategic plan as well. The GEOs are communicated publicly on the College website and catalog. They are also discussed at Conversation Day and through the Division Academic Coordinators.
NWACC ensures that its degree programs engage students in appropriate information literacy skills,

mastering modes of inquiry or creative work, and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments through its general education core curriculum and its GEOs. The eight GEOs are assessed in accordance with the Assessment Plan calendar and courses to be assessed are selected from high enrollment courses required by a majority of degrees.

Examples of how NWACC students and faculty contributed to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge in the past include Journalism students placing third in a national reporting competition, the College's 2018 Spring Arts and Cultural Festival, and the Division of Science and Mathematics' EMPACTS (Educationally Managed Projects Advancing Curriculum, Technology/Teamwork, and Service) program having 60 completed projects in 2018. More current examples include the presence of a student creative writing and a student research laboratory. Other examples in the arts include a student giving an art exhibition at a local gallery, a student cast in a local theater production, and a student hired as a community fellow at a local theater. In addition, NWACC has a student-run literary journal. Faculty have been featured in concert recitals, produced news stories and been published in magazines, including one story winning third place in a statewide contest. Another faculty member served as programming manager for a local film festival and a member of the English faculty directed a film found on Amazon. In the math and science area, the Undergraduate Research Lab provides students the opportunity to design and conduct scientific research. In addition, the Math and Science Department used the EMPACTS model to provide active learning opportunities to students in the classroom.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College uses multiple measures including enrollment trends, specialized accreditation requirements, and the program review process to determine the appropriate number of faculty needed by program. NWACC strives to have minimum of 50 percent of all class sections taught by full-time faculty. Results from the 2016 National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) shows 52 percent of all class sessions were taught by full-time faculty. The College is committed to small class sizes and the average class size is approximately 24. Also, according to Assessment Committee minutes, faculty release time is provided for assessment coordinators and is included in faculty workloads. Both of these factors influence the number of full-time faculty required to maintain its target. Due to changes in faculty staffing levels, the College has requested five additional positions for the 2020-2021 academic year to maintain the 50 percent target. The College also uses Southern Association of College and University Business Officers (SACUBO) data for comparison to determine if funding budgeted to faculty lines is sufficient.

According to the faculty qualifications policy (3017), the credentials for faculty candidates are reviewed by the dean and approved by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO). Credentials for current faculty are included in individual personnel files and are reviewed every two years. The College has developed a standardized form to document the specific qualifications for teaching, areas that the faculty is credentialed to teach, and the rules under which they are approved. Faculty who do not meet the qualifications for their area can be reassigned to an appropriate area or put on a plan to

update their credentials. The goal is to have all credentials compliant with HLC's standards by 2022. The Quality Highlights Report states that concurrent enrollment and dual enrollment faculty must meet the same criteria, and their credentials are reviewed by chairs, deans, and the CAO for approval. A sample of faculty credentials were reviewed as part of the CQR and provide evidence of that the College has appropriate qualifications established for its faculty.

Policy 3014 covers faculty evaluations. According to the Faculty Performance Review Summary, "The purpose of the Annual Faculty Performance Review is to improve achievement of Northwest Arkansas Community College's mission by ensuring that individual faculty objectives are consistent with our institutional goals and objectives." The timeline indicates that faculty are to be reviewed annually by their supervisors in a process considering classroom observations, student input, and annual goals. The review is conducted by the Dean, and focuses on teaching, professional development, and service to the College.

In addition to ensuring that faculty meet the qualifications necessary to teach in their discipline, faculty are offered opportunities for professional development, and their participation in professional development is recognized as part of the evaluation process. Before the beginning of each semester, faculty participate in a two half-day conference, Celebrate Learning. A sample agenda demonstrates that Celebrate Learning involves faculty and staff sharing information and best practices with each other. The College also supports faculty development through a Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). In addition to sponsoring Celebrate Learning, the TLC sponsors Lunch and Learn conversations and other workshops for faculty. Professional development grants are offered to faculty and, as part of the funding requirements, grantees must demonstrate that they shared what they learned with others in the College. Feedback forms were provided demonstrating that presenters at Celebrate Learning are provided feedback to allow them to improve future presentations.

The Student Handbook states that students can expect faculty to hold office hours on campus and be available for student inquiry. The faculty evaluation document and faculty job description evidence that faculty availability to students is part of faculty expectations and incorporated into the evaluation. The Associate Vice President for Learning and High School Relations indicates that the current policy requires faculty to devote a minimum of 15 hours per week to office hours, committee work and professional development. That requirement is currently under review through the Faculty Senate and is possibly being revised to reduce the requirement to 10 office hours per week. In interviewing students as part of the CQR, faculty availability was listed as a strength from the student perspective. On the Student Opinion Survey, 181 out 214 students agreed or strongly agreed that faculty are available when they need help.

According to the NWACC Search Committee Guide, the hiring process for all employees ensures that qualifications are current and appropriate and that applicants are screened appropriately to ensure they are qualified. Prior to any job posting, a representative from Human Resources (HR) works with department supervisors to finalize the job description to ensure it is an accurate depiction of the responsibilities and qualifications needed to fulfill the duties. In addition, the HR department has also added a compensation analyst to assist in establishing the credentials needed for college staff. New personnel receive training as part of the onboarding process and a copy of the PowerPoint was provided to the CQR team during the review.

The College offers a variety of professional development opportunities for staff including leadership training through its Step Up NWACC program. Other opportunities include participation in both community and professional organizations and training specific to job requirements. The desire to participate in professional development can be communicated informally directly to supervisors or

through the goal setting component of a staff member's annual performance evaluation. During the CQR focus session with staff, individuals working in Student Services stated that their departments provide ample opportunities for continuing education and many staff members belong to professional organizations that provide more job specific professional development. The Student Services area has line items in its budget related to professional development. Documentation provided by the College lists thirteen professional organizations to which student services staff members belong.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Focus meetings with faculty and students, a review of the College's website, and the last Systems Portfolio provided evidence that student support services are available and suited to the needs of NWACC's student population. Support services include financial aid, the Testing Center, disability services, veterans' services, Hispanic Outreach, career services, transfer services, and Wellness and Counseling Services. A risk factor assessment is administered as part of the First Year Orientation program to help identify sub-populations of students who may be in need of specialized support services and faculty teaching16-week courses are required to participate in an Early Semester Academic Progress Survey to identify students with low grades, missing work, or attendance issues. Tutoring is provided both in person and online, including specific tutoring through the Writing Center and Math Center. Additional support is provided for students on Academic Watch, Academic Probation Warning, and Academic Suspension. A Student Academic Progress Workshop helps students understand the financial aid process including the appeal process to be used in the event a student is denied aid due to extenuating circumstances. Other services are offered to serve unique student groups such as the Office of International Programs which serves international students and study abroad students.

College readiness for first time entering students is determined according to ACT, Compass, or Accuplacer scores. Students who place into developmental education courses are also required to take PSYC 1003, The Successful First Year Student. Students participating in the CQR focus session stated that they learn about academic and non-academic services as part of the admissions process, advising, and through orientation. Support services are also made known through syllabi, tutoring center classroom visits, and librarian visits. Advising is required of new students prior to initial registration and is recommended for all continuing students. It is included as part of orientation and

is available by appointment and via email.

According to the web site, academic facilities include a Business and Computer Information Computer Lab, a recently opened Integrated Design Lab, a Cell Culture Room and Undergraduate Research lab, a Culinary Demonstration Theater, and the Pauline Whitaker Library. The Facilities Master Plan examined space needs and identified a need for additional space for an arts/events center. Both faculty and students participating in focus sessions during the CQR expressed positive views on the facilities and stated that they met their current needs. The team was unable to conduct a visual examination of the facilities as the CQR was conducted virtually. This will be addressed during the Verification Visit scheduled for the fall of 2020.

Students receive guidance in the effective use of research and information through course curriculum as well as the Writing Center which provides writing workshops. The Library offers a number of Academic Literacy Workshops and research guides are available on its website. All degree seeking students are required to complete an English composition course as part of their general education requirements and student learning outcomes for both English Composition I and English Composition II include reading, analyzing, and interpreting texts as well as identifying reliable resources. In addition, the Undergraduate Research Lab provides students with an opportunity to design and conduct scientific research as part of their curriculum.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC defines co-curricular as, "…activities, programs, and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what students are learning in school." The College provides evidence of multiple programs and activities that contribute to an enriched educational environment including musical, drama, and other activities. While the College is in the early stages of assessing its co-curricular programs, a Co-Curricular Assessment Handbook has been developed and co-curricular assessment has been incorporated into the College's three-year assessment calendar.

An extensive list of clubs and organizations including a student newspaper, theater and music programs, honor societies, and program related student organizations is available on the College website and several students in the focus session discussed their involvement in these activities. An example of how these activities contribute to an enriched educational experience is Enactus, a community of students, academic and business leaders focused on providing opportunities for students to gain real world experience through projects with local businesses and nonprofit organizations. A student participating in Enactus helped develop a business plan for a nonprofit to run a coffee concession on campus. Members of the club also organized lectures and provided opportunities for students to network for the purpose of finding employment. Another example is the Student Nurses Association that conducted health screenings at a College health benefits fair and volunteered at a local Alzheimer's walk.

The College also provides opportunities for students to engage in service learning and community service as a means of tying its mission to the students' academic experiences. Examples cited include projects involving conservation and sustainability, reducing food insecurity, service to student veterans, hosting a symposium, and supporting a Native American school in Oklahoma. An English Composition II course requires students to research an issue and do six hours of service related to that issue on campus is also cited as an example.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

NWACC has degree programs that are appropriate to higher education and align with its mission and vision. Academic and career technical courses and programs are of an appropriate level, articulated appropriately, and maintain currency through active use of advisory committees and program review. The College demonstrates the integration of broad learning outcomes and skills into their educational offerings and monitors learning outcomes sufficiently. An initiative to develop a Standard Course Outline which includes the identification of learning outcomes for each course is currently in progress. Although the infrastructure is in place to complete this task, it is important for the College to move forward and ensure that all course sections regardless of location and modality use those outcomes.

Faculty and staff are qualified and evaluated regularly. Learning support is in place and available to students in both online and on-campus modalities. The College maintains co-curricular and related activities to enhance the overall learning experience of students and work is ongoing to establish co-curricular and curricular connections through assessment. In addition, the College provides multiple opportunities for students and faculty to engage in intellectual inquiry, with the Undergraduate Research Lab being a best practice.

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).

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its programs through a rigorous program review process which is required and delineated by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE), a commitment to ensuring quality of courses and programming across modality and in dual credit offerings, and a detailed set of policies guiding course prerequisites and acceptance of credit from other sources/institutions.

NWACC follows a seven-year program review cycle using a schedule determined by the ADHE. An individual program's review process begins with the Vice President of Student Learning notifying the dean and instructional coordinator 18 months in advance of the review date. The College provides

annual program review training to coordinators and coordinators use a standard template to complete the self-review. Deans submit program review materials to the Vice President of Learning a month in advance of final submission to ADHE. This process was confirmed through conversations with members of the NWACC President's Cabinet and other college representatives who participate in the program review process.

Per guidelines established by ADHE, as well as institutional policy outlined in the College's program review template, programs are expected to examine recent enrollment trends, projections of program growth, market demand for graduates and feedback from advisory groups. This was confirmed during conversations with NWACC leadership and faculty. The ADHE also provides a program Viability Report, described by faculty as a program-specific environmental scan, which identifies programs with low levels of graduates for programs on the program review cycle. This was confirmed by documentation on the ADHE website describing the statewide program review process. Per ADHE guidelines, programs with program-specific accreditation follow the review practices and schedule of their respective crediting body to satisfy this review, while programs without such external accreditation are expected to utilize two independent, external reviewers to review the program review report prior to submission to ADHE. These processes were confirmed during discussions with members of the President's Cabinet and faculty, as well as the ADHE website.

NWACC Policy for Prior Learning Credit (Policy #3016) outlines the College's policy for accepting credit for a variety of prior learning and/or testing experiences. This policy also details the process for students to pursue receiving such credit.

Members of the President's Cabinet, as well as representatives of student services, noted that NWACC enjoys a proactive working relationship with the University of Arkansas system that makes the process of transfer credit, in both directions, very smooth for students. Additionally, the Arkansas College Transfer System (ACTS) ensures equivalency in most common coursework amongst all public institutions of higher education in Arkansas. This transfer system was noted in conversations with faculty and the Assessment Committee. During the student open forum, a current student who had transferred in credits from the University of Arkansas noted that the process was very simple and that they received credit for their coursework just as expected. The student noted that the advisor served as their primary liaison and that they were very satisfied with the process.

Prerequisites are determined during the program and course development process. Conversations with faculty and members of the Curriculum Committee confirmed that new programs and courses were typically proposed by faculty, with the identification of relevant prerequisites, and these were then reviewed/approved by the dean, the Curriculum Committee and then the Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The College's website outlines placement testing procedures and requirements, and the course catalog identifies placement score and/or course prerequisites for each course.

According to the course catalog, general admission to NWACC requires proof of high school completion, demonstration of language competency and placement score requirements, and completion of Arkansas core curriculum requirements in accordance with ADHE Act 1290. NWACC Concurrent and Dual Enrollment Policy (#3010) states the current GPA and placement score requirements that high school students must meet serve as prerequisites for concurrent course enrollment. The Early College Experience Concurrent Enrollment Procedures Program outlines the expectations and procedures for students to enroll in dual credit coursework, as well as the expectations for dual credit faculty. Conversations with faculty and administrators responsible for concurrent enrollment offerings confirmed this general process. Faculty also detailed the responsibilities of the faculty liaisons, who serve as NWACC resources and contacts for high school

instructors teaching courses in their respective areas. Faculty liaisons review the curriculum, syllabus and texts for each concurrent course in their discipline. The faculty described the evaluation process for concurrent enrollment high school instructors as similar to that of all faculty in credit-level coursework. Faculty noted that such equivalent practices were required as part of the College's accreditation through the National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).

Career-technical programs at NWACC are externally accredited where applicable. However, it is unclear how the College determines which programs to seek accreditation for, but conversations with faculty indicated that the majority of technical programs had longstanding accreditation relationships. A list of associate degree programs with specialized accreditation provided with the Systems Portfolio indicates that 27 of 43 Associate Degree programs had external accreditation. A list of programmatic accrediting organizations is also available on the College website. As noted previously, programs with external accreditation are expected to utilize the processes and review of their accrediting body for the purposes of ADHE-mandated program review. Conversations with faculty and members of the Assessment Team indicated that most career programs with external accreditation utilized the results and feedback from these processes for multiple purposes, such as program review and course refinement or development.

Conversations with faculty, members of the Assessment Team and members of the Quality Council indicated that NWACC utilizes graduate survey data to evaluate success of graduates and to inform curriculum development and program review. Additionally, advisory committee and employer feedback provides current and emerging industry trends and standards.

In conjunction with ongoing curriculum and program review, faculty and administration highlighted the collection of additional data to confirm that stakeholder needs are being met. This included institutional and program graduation rates, retention and transfer rates, as well as pass rates for career-technical programs on state and national exams.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC demonstrates its commitment to educational achievement and improvement with a robust general education assessment process and an institutional commitment to collecting data about student learning.

NWACC's Systems Portfolio noted that the College has 8 General Education Outcomes (GEOs) that serve as campus-wide learning goals, and this was confirmed in conversations with the Assessment Committee, faculty and administration. The NWACC College Assessment Plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of the President in providing oversight of institutional assessment through the annual Ends,Goals & Objectives Report, the CAO in providing guidance regarding all assessment activities, and the faculty-led Assessment Team in reviewing, revising and approving the College's General Education Academic Assessment Plan every three years. This general process was confirmed through conversations with the President's Cabinet, faculty, and the Assessment Team.

The Office of Accreditation/Assessment supports all of these activities and sets the calendar for the College's assessment activities. According to this calendar and the College's Assessment Plan Overview document, all areas of the College submit yearly assessment reports that are shared with the President's Cabinet, the Strategic Planning Committee, the Quality Council, and the Assessment Committee on a three-year cycle. The assessment data reside in the Office of Accreditation and Assessment and are used annually at the program/department level to make decisions for curriculum, budget, office operations, etc. These procedures were confirmed in conversations with faculty, and members of the President's Cabinet, the Assessment Team and the Quality Council.

NWACC's Academic Assessment Plan outlines the four levels of assessment conducted at the College:
• Institutional Assessment – examining Common Learning Framework metrics and ensuring alignment with the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution. This level of assessment is evaluated annually and conducted through the Office of Assessment and Office of

Institutional Research.

• General Education Outcomes Assessment – examining the attainment of GEOs in courses with the highest enrollment. This level of assessment is evaluated annually and overseen by the College's faculty-led Assessment Team.

• Course Level Outcomes Assessment – examining course-level learning outcomes determined by program faculty. According to the Academic Assessment Plan and the Faculty Toolkit documents, all credit level courses at are expected to be assessed a minimum of once every three years. This level of assessment is overseen by faculty.

• Program Level Outcomes Assessment – examining program learning outcomes and ensuring alignment with the Institution's Common Learning Framework. Programs are reviewed every seven years through the ADHE-mandated program review process. This level of assessment is overseen by faculty.

The stated assessment practices are detailed in the NWACC Academic Assessment Plan, Assessment Plan Calendar, and Faculty Toolkit. Focus visit conversations with faculty, members of the Assessment Team and members of the Quality Council confirmed these assessment practices.

NWACC also launched an AQIP project in 2017 to adopt a co-curricular assessment plan separate from the General Education learning outcomes. As part of this process, co-curricular areas developed learning outcomes that support the mission and learning goals of the College and the Systems Portfolio indicated that the College would begin gathering co-curricular assessment data in Fall 2019. Focus visit conversations with the President's Cabinet further clarified that the College discussed and identified what "co-curricular" meant at NWACC, and recently created a Co-Curricular Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook that is available on the website. The College has also created a new position, Director of Student Life and Co-Curricular Assessment to oversee these efforts.

The Systems Appraisal noted that NWACC had effective assessment processes in place and that data collection appeared to be robust and reflect good practices, but that there were few examples illustrating the use of such assessment information in developing insight that the College could use to improve student learning. Conversations with faculty, members of the Assessment Team, and members of the President's Cabinet included examples of how NWACC was beginning to standardize the use of assessment information for continuous learning outcome improvement. For example, the program review process includes data regarding program viability and this assessment information was utilized to make the institutional decision to close a Homeland Security program that was determined to no longer be viable. Discussions with faculty members involved with assessment reiterated that processes for collecting assessment data were well-established, but that the institution was now beginning to share and use this information in more systematic ways. This included discussion of course-level assessment findings at start-of-term department meetings, although this practice did not appear to be consistent across all programs. Career-technical program faculty members also highlighted the importance of state/national licensure and credential testing pass-rates for students in their program, and the usage of input from advisory committees in guiding improvements to course and program curriculum that reflected the constantly changing needs of the labor market.

As noted previously, NWACC's assessment efforts are primarily driven by faculty. The Assessment Team, which develops the GEOs and approves the Academic Assessment Plan, is comprised of nine faculty members, with two staff members from the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness to provide support. Program and course-level assessments are entirely faculty-driven,

with support and oversight provided by staff and administration.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.)

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC displays its commitment to student learning through the examination of student graduation, retention and persistence rates in all four of the College's levels of assessment. The College's student retention, persistence and completion goals are partially informed by the state's productivity-based funding model, which includes measures of degree progression, time-to-completion, and total credentials awarded in the current funding formula, according to the ADHE Productivity Funding Policy. Conversations with members of faculty, the President's Cabinet, the Quality Council, and student services confirmed that the College also utilizes the strategic planning process as a means of establishing goals and targets related to student completion and retention. Within the institutional planning process, the annual Ends, Goals and Objectives Report includes targets for all of the institution's KPIs, including those related to student completion, retention, and persistence. According to the 2019-2020 Report, the current fall-to-fall retention rate is 46.8% with a 2020 target of 48% and the three-year success rate which includes completion and transfer is currently 36.4% with a target of 36%. Conversations with the President and President's cabinet reinforced the importance of whether prior year's targets were met in establishing future goals and upcoming institutional priorities.

Conversations with members of student services indicated that retention and persistence were logical priorities for student service staff, and that targets for these institutional metrics were established through benchmarks provided with National Student Clearinghouse college retention reporting. Members of the President's Cabinet and the Institutional Effectiveness Office also confirmed that the institution is scheduled to participate in the national Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA)

reporting framework to, among other purposes, establish benchmarks to help set institutional targets regarding student completion and retention. The VFA website advertises the initiative as "a clear, consistent, and effective way to measure student progress & outcomes and institutional effectiveness".

The annual NWACC Fact Book, published by the Office of Institutional Research, includes institutional metrics related to IPEDS graduation and retention rates. The College's Ends, Goals & Objective report is also published annually and includes metrics related to strategic goals. KPI categories shared in this report include "Student Performance" and "Student Retention/Completion". Conversations with the President and President's Cabinet reinforced the importance of these two reports in examining institutional progress towards strategic goals.

Conversations with members of student services and the Assessment Team confirmed that additional retention and completion data are gathered and analyzed on certain specialty populations such as Veterans, and under-served student populations such as LatinX students. Conversations with faculty confirmed that completion and retention information is examined as components of course and program-level assessment practices. Conversations with staff and faculty also highlighted that the College is in the middle of implementing a new enterprise resource planning software (Workday). The expectation from all is that this new software will allow for more efficient and consistent tracking of student data related to retention and completion.

As noted previously with respect to assessment data, the Systems Appraisal and conversations with NWACC staff and faculty indicated that the College has robust processes in place for collecting student completion and retention data, but that there was an opportunity to improve in the usage of these data to inform institutional and programmatic decision-making. Conversations with the President's Cabinet, with faculty members and with student services staff members indicated that the institution is actively progressing towards improved usage of these data.

An example cited was the examination of developmental math coursework as a common drop-out point for many non-returning students. This coincided with a conversation around assessment work in the math department when the faculty realized there were more data being collected for assessment discussions than could ever be properly analyzed and utilized for improvement purposes. This has led to a refinement in data collection with a focus on analyzing data with specific decisions in mind; a move that was labelled as a "radical simplification to assessment" during conversations with NWACC faculty.

Conversations with members of student services also highlighted the college-wide "First Student Program", which is a focus on first generation students. This program began with an examination of recent retention and completion rates for NWACC's first generation students, as well as national persistence and completion data for this group of students that indicated an opportunity for improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rationale

NWACC demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services through a robust assessment data collection and reporting process. Similarly, the College collects and reports data related to student completion, retention and persistence at the institutional and program level through a number of annual strategic planning reporting mechanisms. While the Systems Appraisal indicated that examples were lacking in the usage of these data in evaluating the effectiveness for student learning through these assessment and data analysis processes, conversations with faculty, staff and administrators indicate that NWACC has already begun the shift to actively using such data for decision-making purposes.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

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

The annual budget process begins in October with a budget request form submitted by units/departments. The form provides a clear linkage between the College's mission, vision, Strategic Plan, and funding priorities. The College ensures its educational resources are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas. The FY 2020 Budget Expenditures By Functional Classification detail shows 48 percent of the budget is allocated to Instruction, 14 percent to Student Support, and 12 percent to Academic Support. NWACC budget managers monitor the budget allocation to actual results on a regular basis, which are then reviewed periodically at the Cabinet level. Arkansas legislation requires institutions of higher education to maintain a balanced budget and NWACC meets this requirement. The annual legislative audit has had no findings for four years. The budget development process is aligned with the strategic planning cycle to ensure that resources are allocated to support priority initiatives. Monthly budget reports are available on the College's website.

NWACC has five strategic goals with corresponding strategic ends that include metric-driven responses. Those goals are to serve the learner community, the business community, the owner (taxpayer) community, the k-16 community, and the college community. The 2019-2020 Strategic Plan includes Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for each strategic goal. The parameters set forth in the Strategic Plan serve as evidence of aligning NWACC's organization, resources, and opportunities with the KPI's. The College provides evidence that it links the Strategic Plan with other operational processes and plans. An example of linkage between the Master Facilities Plan and the strategic goal of serving the needs of business and the broader community is the construction of the new building in Washington County. Evidence demonstrated a growing need for an enhanced College presence in the Washington County region that justified moving from a leased facility to a college-owned building. The new building was completed in October 2019 and opened for students in Spring 2020. Another example of successful connection between budgeting, strategic planning, and facilities planning is the expansion of the Construction Technology program. Enrollment in the program increased to a level that justified the need for additional space. An interdisciplinary initiative based on the design thinking process between the arts and construction programs resulted in a successful bid for a $500,000 grant to help fund the cost of construction of the Integrated Design Lab.

The goals incorporated into NWACC's mission – to empower lives, inspire learning, and strengthen community through accessible, affordable, quality education – are realistic in light of the College's organization, resources, and opportunities. The College is a community college with strong ties to local businesses, high schools, and four-year institutions. The College has a strong offering of continuing education and professional development courses as well as occupational programs and transfer programs. Annually, the President and Cabinet develop strategic objectives based on data and input from the College's constituency groups. Resources are allocated through the normal budget process to meet the objectives.

NWACC works to ensure that faculty and staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained. It provides opportunities for professional development at all employee levels. Supervisors attend the Supervisor Training Summit and all staff are encouraged to participate in professional development. In 2014, NWACC created "Leadership NWACC". The program is a LEAD award winning program for staff development due to its customizable content creation. Twenty-nine employees have graduated in three years (a maximum of 10 per year allowed to participate) and three programs have resulted that have added to staff development opportunities: STEP UP, Mentor@NWACC and Community Begins@NWACC. Institutional evidence supports a slightly lower turnover rate for participants in the Leadership program, while the "n" remains very low to be particularly meaningful (29). All staff are required to complete mandatory training such as Title IX, FERPA, HIPAA, etc., and completion is monitored by the Human Resources department. Conversations with staff as part of the CQR indicated that funding is available for professional development and requests are usually approved, however, it appears to differ by department and depend on the decision of the immediate supervisor. NWACC has the opportunity to create a systematic process by which staff access and take advantage of professional development opportunities.

The College has a clear process for verifying and documenting required teaching credentials for faculty. Professional development is required as a component of faculty evaluation and a variety of development opportunities are available through the Office of Faculty Development and through funding for external activities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC has and employs a wide range of policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies in the institution's governance. These policies are Board approved and divided into nine primary sections: Board of Trustees, General College, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Human Resources, Financial Operations, Information Technology, Operations, and Risk Management and Public Safety. The Board Policy Manual is openly available via the website. All employees and students are informed of the policies and procedures as is evidenced by references in the handbooks for faculty, staff, and students.

NWACC's Board is knowledgeable about the institution and provides appropriate oversight of the College's financial and academic policies and practices. As evidenced by Board agendas, meeting minutes, and conversations with Board members; the Board of Trustees is provided with regular updates from the President, members of the Cabinet, and various other individuals as relevant. These updates include a report of the events happening at NWACC, awards and recognitions, development updates, purchasing reports, and College financials. The Board regularly reviews and approves major purchases, changes to policy and procedures, as well as changes to academic programs. Annually the Board reviews and approves the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. A final report of the College's annual accomplishments in relation to its strategic goals and objectives is also presented by the President. All Board meeting dates are publicly posted on the College website. The President of the Student Ambassador and Government Association (SAGA) serves on the Board to ensure that students' needs are considered in decision-making.

The College involves its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures and open communication for contribution and collaborative efforts. Communication at NWACC occurs through several venues and at several levels – such as Board, Cabinet, division, department, committee, and cross-functional project team meetings. The College also works with the Faculty Senate and the Staff Council to facilitate effective

communication and collaboration. In addition to the Faculty Senate, faculty contribute to policy development through the Dean's Council and other committees such as the Curriculum Committee. The President offers students an opportunity to engage in open dialogue with senior administration through her "Pizza with the President" initiative. Students participating in the CQR listening session expressed strong approval for this activity and stated that any issues presented to the President were taken seriously and feedback was always provided. The Student Ambassador and Government Association (SAGA) also works with College administration to advocate for a learning environment that is supportive of students' goals.

In 2015, results from the Noel-Levitz survey indicated that employees felt disconnected from the College's policy development process and did not have an opportunity to provide input. The College initiated an AQIP Action Project to address the issue and the Academic Policy Development Flow Chart was an end product of the project.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NWACC allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities through their annual strategic objectives planning process. Every five years the Strategic Planning Team leads a review of the strategic goals from which the strategic goals and College's Ends Statements are developed. Annually, division and department representatives develop strategic objectives and measures of success for the next academic year. The objectives must align with the institution's goals and include metric-driven KPIs. As part of the process which links planning and budgeting, Planning and Budget forms are submitted through the Vice President of the Division to the College's Strategic Planning Team for review prior to being forwarded to the Cabinet for approval. After final approval by the Cabinet, the strategic objectives and associated KPIs are communicated to the Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff. The Cabinet initiates the budget process by examining needs that are prioritized as part of the strategic plan. Results of the progress in meeting the College's objectives are shared with the Board at its July Board retreat.

The College links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations planning, and budgeting. This is evidenced through the current strategic goals and objectives included in the Strategic Plan. Some examples of KPI's that assess student learning, evaluate operations and help with the budget process are: the development of systematic processes to measure course and program level assessment practices and results, the development of a systematic process to assess co-curricular, strengthen the Associate of Fine Arts program, continue work of incorporating Guided Pathways, merge the fixed assets monitoring and reporting tasks, and use the Academic Resource Allocation model to report and measure the academic funding allocation and targets.

NWACC considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups in their planning process. The College directly engages its various constituent groups through advisory boards, student surveys, membership and participation in community organizations, meetings with high school

superintendents and counselors, student "Pizza with the President" sessions, and the annual "Conversation Day." Each year members of the Expanded Cabinet visit with the local economic development council to learn about employment trends and job needs in the community. This year NWACC has identified the goal of forming a taskforce to investigate the feasibility of a comprehensive environmental scan as one of its strategic objectives which will further enhance the College's planning efforts.

The College works to anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in its primary revenue sources including enrollment, state support, and tax revenues. Each year the Board of Trustees holds a planning retreat at which multiple environmental factors are presented and considered. These include enrollment trends, changes to higher education at both the state and national levels, and changes to local property tax assessment. As part of the budgeting process, the College conducts an analysis of enrollment, state financial support, financial market trends, governmental regulations affecting funding, and current tuition and fees. Diversifying the College's resource base is a priority for the institution and grant funding for special projects and initiatives is strongly encouraged. An example of the College's success in obtaining external funding is the grant from the Walton Family Foundation to build the Brightwater culinary facility. The College Foundation also takes an active role in identifying opportunities for external funding as reflected in the successful campaign to raise money to support the Washington County expansion.

NWACC's planning anticipates emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization. The College uses an array of internal and external resources to monitor and anticipate the changing needs of its constituents. Environmental impact information used as part of its strategic planning processes assists in these efforts and regular communication with advisory committees and other external stakeholders contributes as well. College staff and faculty participate in professional organizations to stay abreast of current and future trends and department meetings are held to share information.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Rationale

NWACC has historically identified a clear set of strategic objectives and planned improvement initiatives prior to the start of the fiscal year. Selected results are shared through the annual NWACC Fact Book, published by the Office of Institutional Research at the end of the fiscal year, which includes institutional metrics related to IPEDS graduation and retention rates. The College's Ends, Goals & Objectives report is also published annually and includes metrics related to KPI categories such as Student Performance, Student Retention/Completion, Employee Satisfaction, Percentages of Minority FT Faculty and Staff, and College Business such as electrical usage and instructional expenses as a percentage of total expenditures. Conversations with the President and President's Cabinet reinforced the importance of these two reports in examining institutional progress towards strategic goals. A review of minutes of Board meetings provides evidence that Ends reports are made routinely to the Board but is unclear if the reports are shared with other constituent groups or how information in the reports is being used to inform improvements. While the identified Ends statements are included in the College's Ends, Goals & Objectives report, the document does not include any detailed information regarding the accomplishment or progress in meeting those goals.

The College demonstrates its intention to learn from its operational experience by its inclusion of administrative outcomes in its College Assessment Plan and Assessment Calendar. The Assessment Plan is designed to determine how well the College is meeting its goals as outlined in the Strategic Plan, Program/Classroom Assessment Plans, and the Co-curricular Assessment Plan. It also calls for the development of an annual Institutional Effectiveness Report to document data and reports of unit accomplishments and budget expenditures. Administrative units are now included in the three-year cycle of the Assessment Calendar. The robust Program Review process and culminating reports demonstrate evidence of performance and applying what is learned to improve effectiveness in the College's academic programs but it remains unclear how the College learns from its operational experience. As stated in the Appraisal Feedback report, the College is encouraged to provide evidence of how its different processes work together to inform decision making.

Conversations with staff and faculty highlighted that the College is in the process of implementing a new enterprise resource planning software (Workday). The expectation from all is that this new software will allow for more efficient and consistent tracking of student data related to retention and completion and will be used to inform the College's improvement efforts in this area. Evidence of how the new software might be used to assist in measuring operational effectiveness was not provided

during the CQR.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

A Interim Report is recommended to provide evidence that the College is documenting and assessing its operational performance, Additional evidence should also be provided to demonstrate that the institution is learning from its operational experiences and applying that learning to improve overall College performance.

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.

Rationale

Based on the evidence for 5D, this criterion is determined to be "Met with Concerns." NWACC has the personnel, financial, and technological resources to fulfill its mission,improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. Governance through the Board of Trustees, its organizational structure and policies provide the framework needed to operate the institution consistent with state laws and regulatory standards. The strategic goals and objectives included in the Strategic Plan demonstrate a linkage between the College's processes for the assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

The College Assessment Plan and the Assessment Calendar, provides evidence of the institution's intention to collect data to measure effectiveness in its operations. The Ends, Goals & Objectives Report documents the identification of annual goals referred to as Ends Statements but details of how progress in goal attainment is monitored, how results are to be communicated, and how data will be used to inform decision-making is still lacking. Given the progress the College has made with respect to its assessment of student learning, the CQR team is looking forward to learning more about the College's progress in this area during the Verification Visit.

6 - Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

6.A - Question 6.A

Levels of Organizational Maturity in Relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories
Please provide a brief paragraph or two that captures the team's perception of the institution's overall level of maturity (and the relevant challenges and strengths) and how the institution might further advance its agenda.

Rationale

NorthWest Arkansas Community College has systematic processes in place with several areas exhibiting the potential to move to aligned maturity levels. The CQR Team found that NWACC responded to the Appraisal Feedback Report in earnest and has made progress in its improvement efforts.

The College's results are primarily systematic moving toward aligned maturity. Measures, metrics, and benchmarks are being used and shared across the College community for the majority of its operations. Learning from the feedback provided n the Appraisal Report, the College has made improvements in its use of data to inform its decision-making and the recent implementation of Workday as a platform for sharing information across the institution has the potential to assist these efforts. The College is encouraged to enhance its use of direct measures to evaluate the effectiveness of its operational units and to use those results to make data informed decisions.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

6.B - Question 6.B

Evidence of Principles of High-Performance Organizations
Please provide a brief paragraph or two that indicates how and where the institution demonstrates its systematic approach to continuous quality improvement through aspirational values found in the Principles of High-Performance Organizations.

Rationale

NWACC has demonstrated a systematic approach to several of the principles of High Performance Organizations. The College has demonstrated a strong **focus** on CQI. This has been accomplished through strong **leadership** from the president and **involvement** by all areas of the College. **Learning** through assessment and the use of **information** for decision-making in academic programs are becoming strengths of the College. This requires **agility**, flexibility and responsiveness to changing environments. **Foresight** was demonstrated through the College's strategic planning efforts and KPIs that **involve** all the **people** (staff, faculty, students, and stakeholders) that it serves. **Collaboration** has been a critical factor in the accomplishment of the improvements that have recently occurred. After interviews with staff, faculty, students and the Board, it is apparent that the College serves its community and stakeholders with **integrity** and actively contributes to the community good.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7 - Commitment to the AQIP Pathway

7.A - Question 7.A

Actions That Capitalize on Systems Appraisal Feedback

Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Rationale

NWACC received its Systems Appraisal Feedback report in January 2019. The report reminded administrators that while the College has been collecting data for several years, it had not clearly articulated in the Portfolio how those data are being shared or used in decision-making. The following is an example of how the College has capitalized on the feedback:

• The College is in the process of implementing Workday, a software platform that will allow institutional data to be stored in a central location and accessible to the end user. The site will share a variety of institutional data to be used in decision-making.

• Two new positions were created to lead co-curricular assessment. These new positions will assist in the coordination and use of data. External benchmarks have been established and communicated across the institution. A co-curricular assessment plan has been developed and progress is being made in documenting results. Co-curricular assessment has been added to the College's three-year assessment calendar.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7.B - Question 7.B

Actions That Capitalize on Strategy Forum Participation

Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Rationale

Several key administrators including the President attributed a change in the College's culture to their participation in the Fall 2017 Strategy Forum. Direct results include:

• According to faculty and staff, College efforts have moved from a focus on "student access" to a greater focus on "student success." Emphasis is now placed less on enrollment to identifying how the College can ensure its students are being successful.

• Development of the Action Project on Co-curricular Assessment. The College now has a formal definition of co-curricular assessment and a Co-Curricular Assessment Handbook has been developed. Training is in place to assist in assessment efforts and six assessment plans are in place. Co-curricular assessment is now part of the College's three-year calendar for assessment.

• Development of assessment process for the effectiveness of Board of Trustees. A process has been developed to allow Board members to conduct a self-assessment of a specific area of Board knowledge or behavior. It also gives individual Board members an opportunity to evaluate their perception of the knowledge or behavior of the Board as a whole.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7.C - Question 7.C

Actions That Capitalize on Action Projects
Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Rationale

• The Radical Simplification of Math Assessment project was designed to enhance the existing processes for collecting math assessment data. Math faculty had collected large quantities of quantitative assessment data but the data were not being fully utilized to inform improvements. This project assisted in the development of qualitative data to assist in the analysis of the qualitative data. By integrating qualitative with quantitative data, math faculty have been able to interpret the results more fully and inform changes in the curriculum.

• The Technology-Assisted Assessment Process project helped advance the College's assessment efforts. A form was developed to document General Education assessment activities and a survey was conducted to document the various tools and methods used by faculty to conduct assessment. The development of standard course outlines was also one of the deliverables of the project.

• The Co-Curricular Assessment project resulted in the creation of two new positions to lead the College's co-curricular assessment efforts. Co-curricular assessment has been defined and a Co-Curricular Assessment Handbook has been developed. Faculty and staff have received training and six assessment plans are in place. Co-curricular assessment has been included in the College's three-year assessment plan.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7.D - Question 7.D

Commitment to Active Engagement in the AQIP Pathway
Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Rationale

At the time of the CQR, it is known that the AQIP Pathway will not be continued by the HLC. Those participating in the scheduled listening session addressing quality improvement indicated that quality is now engrained into the culture at NWACC and AQIP has helped the College achieve its current level of success. The Quality Council will continue to function and the College plans to continue its participation in national initiatives and surveys such as the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP). The College also plans to participate in the American Association of Community College's Voluntary Framework of Accountability Tier I. This will provide the College with data to track and report on student progress and outcomes which will be used to inform institutional effectiveness. Based on conversations with the President's Cabinet and others participating in focus sessions held during the CQR, there appears to be an institutional commitment to continuous quality improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met With Concerns
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	
6	Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)	
6.A	Question 6.A	
6.B	Question 6.B	

7	Commitment to the AQIP Pathway	
7.A	Question 7.A	
7.B	Question 7.B	
7.C	Question 7.C	
7.D	Question 7.D	

Review Summary

Interim Report(s) Required

Due Date
9/1/2022

Report Focus
An Interim Report is required to address concerns noted in 5D. To provide evidence that the College is evaluating the performance of its operations and using evaluation data to inform improvements in institutional effectiveness, the Report must include:

• Documentation of identified processes/activities used in the evaluation of performance in the College's operations including KPIs, methods/tools used for data collection (e.g., IPEDS data, requests for technology assistance, employee satisfaction surveys, student surveys, etc.), and how results are utilized

• Specific examples of how these data have informed institutional decision-making and/or improvements in operational effectiveness

• Evidence that results have been shared broadly with the institution's constituent groups

Due Date
10/1/2020

Report Focus
NWACC participated in a U. S. Department of Education Program Review in February 2019. Ten findings of noncompliance were cited in the review. At the time of the virtual CQR, the College had not received the Program Review Determination letter to document that all deficiencies had been resolved. The College must provide the U. S. Department of Education's Program Review Determination letter.

Conclusion

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, the present review was conducted as a virtual visit resulting in certain limitations. For example, the team could not observe the physical campus facilities nor could there be any substantial interactions with faculty, staff, or students. In accordance with a decision by the Higher Learning Commission, this review will be followed up in the Fall of 2020 by a 'Verification Visit" to the NWACC campus by a minimum of two members of the current team. The purpose of the on-campus visit will be for those team members to confirm the report's conclusions regarding the determinations presented in the virtual review.

During the on-campus visit, the team will focus primarily on Criteria 3, 4, and 5. In addition to a tour of the physical campus, the team will want to engage in face-to-face interviews with the President and her Cabinet, the Assessment Committee, members of the Quality Council, the Financial Aid Director, students, and faculty. The

team will also want an update on the progress of the Federal Compliance monitoring requirement and the interim monitoring activities for Core Component 5D..

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation
Eligible to choose

Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

For AQIP Pathway Comprehensive Evaluations

Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components

This worksheet is to be completed preliminarily by a Federal Compliance reviewer and then, subsequent to the on-site evaluation, finalized by the peer review team that conducts the visit. When a Federal Compliance reviewer is not assigned, the worksheet is completed by the team. The team that conducts the visit is ultimately responsible for the contents of this worksheet in its entirety. When a Federal Compliance reviewer completes the form, the reviewer will evaluate the materials submitted in advance of the visit and refer any issues to the team no later than one week prior to the visit for further exploration and confirmation on-site. The team chair ensures that the team has reviewed the Federal Compliance reviewer's preliminary findings, makes any necessary adjustments to the preliminary evidentiary statements and findings in the worksheet subsequent to the on-site visit, and submits the finalized worksheet as an integral part of the team's final report.

The Federal Compliance reviewer and/or the team should separately review each item identified in the *Federal Compliance Filing by Institutions* (FCFI) and document their findings in the appropriate spaces below. Peer reviewers are expected to supply a rationale for each section of the Federal Compliance Evaluation. Refer to the *Federal Compliance Overview* for information about applicable HLC policies and explanations of each requirement, as well as expectations for communication between the Federal Compliance Reviewer and the team.

Generally, if the team finds in the course of the review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised within the appropriate parts of the comprehensive evaluation team report. If the team recommends monitoring on a Federal Compliance Requirement in the form of a report or focused visit, the recommendation should be included in the Federal Compliance monitoring sections below, added to the appropriate section(s) of the team report, as well as in the Summary Section of the Team Report indicating any expectations for improvement.

Submission Instructions

Federal Compliance reviewer: Email this worksheet in an editable format to the team chair. The team chair's email address is provided in the Assurance System.

Team chair: Send the draft of this worksheet to the HLC staff liaison for review and then to the institution for corrections of errors of fact. Submit the final worksheet at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Final

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Page 1

Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the worksheet is sent to the correct HLC staff member.

Institution under review: NorthWest Arkansas Community College

Name of Federal Compliance reviewer: Dr Lynette L Olson
Leave blank if a Federal Compliance reviewer was not assigned.

TEAM CHAIR ONLY:

Name: Dr. Janet S. Fontenot

☒ I confirm that the evaluation team reviewed the institution's compliance with the federal requirements in this worksheet and that the worksheet reflects the team's ultimate findings and related rationales.

1. Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition

A. After gaining access to the institution's Federal Compliance materials in the Assurance System, contact the institution's Accreditation Liaison Officer to request a sample of course and program materials. Review the sample and other documentation submitted by the institution and make a reasonable determination as to whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education:

  o The institution's policy (or set of policies) and procedures for assignment of Credit Hour for all **types** of courses, disciplines, programs, credential levels, formats, regardless of modality

  o The institution's course or program credit assignment **procedures** and its representative sample approval documentation

  o The process the institution utilizes to verify length of academic period and compliance with credit hour requirements through course scheduling

B. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

  ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

  ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

  ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

  ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. *Related HLC Requirements: Core Component 3.A. and Assumed Practice B.1.*

  Rationale:

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Page 2

NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) has invested in PolicyStat which offers a software tool to organize policies and procedures.   Policy procedures for general degree and certificate requirements were reviewed in NWACC's policy # 3003. Degree and certificate approval flow charts and links were provided and reviewed. NWACC has processes in place regarding assigning credits hours, program lengths, and tuition.

NWACC guidelines for credits, program lengths, and tuition are established by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. NWACC follows state guidelines for contact hours per credit hour. Definitions were stated clearly including 50 minutes of classroom instruction per week over a 15 week period.

Sample course syllabi were evaluated to determine the requirements regarding credit hours. Academic policies and requirements for attendance, grading, course expectations, and academic honesty were consistent in the syllabi reviewed. The Standard Course Outline document was also reviewed. Faculty have access to provide students with common definitions, course requirements, and language stated in the document under Developing and Revising Credit Courses Policy #3023. Students have access to the NWACC 2019-2020 Course Catalog via the Colleges website at: https://nwacc.edu/_docuents/catalogs/catalog.pdf which points to policies awarding credit hours for courses and programs.

Additional syllabi were reviewed by the team during the CQR. All syllabi reviewed appear to be appropriate for the course, lab, and credit hours assigned. Though there was minor variance, outcomes were consistent across modalities and length of course.

An established Academic Calendar Committee determines term dates and processes are included in the Academic Calendar Policy #3001. Schedules are provided to students in a timely fashion via the College website, a scheduling software tool, and Course Catalog.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

2. Institutional Records of Student Complaints

A. Verify that the institution has a policy and procedure(s) for addressing student complaints.

B. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. *Related HLC Requirements: Core Component 2.A and Assumed Practice A.3, A.4.*

Rationale:

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Page 3

NWACC's Student Complaints against a Staff Member Policy #4012.2 and the Policy on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment & Sexual Misconduct Policy #2003 provide students at NWACC with an equitable and orderly process to resolve complaints and grievances. Students Grievance Forms and Procedures were reviewed. The College provides an online reporting system for all student misconduct issues. The form that students may fill out is located at https://nwacc-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid809899? The College demonstrates it does have a system in place for students to submit complaints received and to track and handle the complaints.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

3. Publication of Transfer Policies

A. Verify that the institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public.

- o Review the institution's transfer policies.

- o Review the list of articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and for specific programs and how the institution publicly discloses information about those articulation agreements.

- o The information the institution provides should explain any program-specific articulation agreements in place. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution:

  - Accepts credits for courses offered by the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement.

  - Offers courses for which credits are accepted by the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements.

  - Both offers courses and accepts credits with the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement.

  - What specific credits articulate through the agreement (e.g., general education only; pre-professional nursing courses only; etc.).

B. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. *Related HLC Requirements: Core Component 2.A and Assumed Practice A.5.D.*

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Page 4

Rationale:

NWACC's Institutional Articulation & Transfer Policies #3004 included consistent practices and definitions for accepting credits and making transfer decisions.

Transfer timelines and preparation information is presented for students and the public at NWACC's website at: http://ww.nwacc.edu/transferservices   Articulation agreements with other colleges and universities (in state and out of state) are also offered through Transfer Services. A list of institutions; such as program areas for Health Professions offer a number of programs an avenue to transfer credits. Students interested in the University of Arkansas have the opportunity to view courses that are equivalent via the Office of the Registrars course equivalency website.

Conversations with students as part of the CQR confirm students are aware of transfer policies and additional information, if needed, is available through academic advising.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

4. Practices for Verification of Student Identity

A. If the institution **does not** have students enrolled in distance or correspondence courses, indicate this in the responses below.

B. If the institution **does** have students enrolled in distance or correspondence courses, confirm that the institution verifies the identity of students. Confirm that it appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students, and that the method of verification makes reasonable efforts to protect students' privacy.

   o Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.

   o Check that any costs related to verification (e.g., fees associated with test proctoring) and charged directly to students are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance or correspondence courses.

C. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☐ The institution does not have students enrolled in distance or correspondence courses.

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. *Related HLC Requirement: Core Component 2.A.*

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Page 5

Rationale:

NorthWest Arkansas Community College does have distance education courses and uses a secure sign-on process. Students are issued a username and password after completing the admissions process. During this process, the student's individual identity is verified by examining documents relating to: 1) Birth Certificate, 2) Driver's license, or 3) Social Security card. NWACC uses Canvas, a learning management system, which provides a common infrastructure for online and hybrid courses. Login directions and links are used inside the My NWACC Connection or NWACC web site portal which asks for a Username and Password. NWACC has an Information Security Policy #7000 and a Password Management Policy #7003 that adheres to the State of Arkansas Standard for password management. User identification is authenticated before access which is critical in a user/student identity which establishes accountability for the online and/or hybrid student.

No fees or charges for proctoring services are charged directly to the student. Online course fees are explained to the student during enrollment and registration. The NWACC Board of Trustees approves all tuition and fees each year. The College's web site provides access to fees and tuition in a timely fashion enabling students to plan accordingly.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

5. Title IV Program Responsibilities

A. This requirement has several components the institution must address. The team should verify that the following requirements are met:

- o **General Program Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the U.S. Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities. (See Appendices A and B.)

- o **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. *Related HLC Requirements: Core Components 5.A, 2.B; Assumed Practice D.* (See Appendix C.)

- o **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, the institution's compliance with these regulations.

- o **Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated the compliance with these regulations. *Related HLC Requirement: Assumed Practice A.6.*

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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 6

- o **Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its compliance with this regulation. *Related HLC Requirements: Criterion 3.A; Assumed Practice A.5.*

B. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. (See related HLC Requirements with each section of the Title IV Responsibilities above.)

Rationale:

- General Program Requirements – NWACC's last certification by the U.S. Department of Education was July, 2014. The last program review by the U.S. Department of Education was February 4, 2019. The U.S. Department of Education Program Review Report – July 2, 2019 was submitted in Appendix A. Ten findings of noncompliance were cited. The action plan to remove deficiencies by NWACC was provided to review. Recertification by the U.S. Department of Education is currently in process and was not available during the CQR.

  The U.S Department of Education – Financial Student Aid Approval Letter (12/04/2019) issued approval to offer financial aid from 2020 – 2022.

- Financial Responsibilities – NWACC's Institutional Updates and Financial Indicator documents were reviewed in the Assurance Evidence File. The composite scores were (2016:3.93), (2017:5.14), (2018:2.72) and are within the above range.

- Campus Crime – NWACC has a coordinator responsible for ensuring compliance with the Campus Safety and Security Reporting – Clery Act NWACC Annual Security Report 2019 is located via the college web site. The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Institutional Policy, Risk Management, and Compliance are the offices designated to ensure the NWACC Campus Safety and Security Reporting/Clery Act Policy is actively implemented. Statistics and Reports on Alcohol and Drug Violations were reviewed by year in the 2018 edition of the Report (p. 76). Findings were very minimal based on research and information available.

- Student Right to Know – Federal Consumer Information and Resources are located under the Financial Aid web page. The College makes available to students and parents information in the area of Students Rights and Responsibilities – Student Activities and Leadership options.

- Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy – NWACC students have access to policies relating to financial aid and academic progress guidelines on the college's web site at: https://www.nwacc.edu/enrollment/financialaid/receivingfinaid/maintaineligibilityfinaid.aspx The College offers students access to 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Satisfactory

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Form
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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 7

Academic Progress Policies. Information regarding the appeals process is also available.

Additional monitoring, if any:

In order to meet the General Program Requirements, a copy of the U. S. Department of Education's Program Review Determination Letter confirming that all findings of non-compliance to be resolved should be made available to the team chair prior to the Fall 2020 Verification Visit.

6. Publication of Student Outcome Data

A. Verify that the institution makes student outcome data available and easily accessible to the public. Data may be provided at the institutional or departmental level or both, but the institution must disclose student outcome data that address the broad variety of its programs.

B. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. *Related HLC Requirement: Assumed Practice A.6.*

Rationale:

NorthWest Arkansas Community College student outcome data are accessible to the public in a number of avenues listed below.

- Faculty, staff, and students have access to processes and handbooks designed to address conducting student assessment. (https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/collegeleadership/cao/accreditation/programreview.aspx)

- The College has an Assessment Plan which is used to measure annual goal settings and program review (https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/collegeleadership/cao/accreditation/programreview.aspx)

- General Education Outcomes Assessment Report for Spring 2017 and Fall 2017 Data is available to the public – this is a must see report! (https://www.nwacc.edu/_documents/accreditation/general-education-report-spring-and-fall-2017-8-29-18.pdf) General Education Outcomes and Assessment is also referenced in NWACC's Quality Update Report, March 1 2020. The College contributed evidence of enhancing documentation of General Education assessment and reporting data.

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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 8

- Specific program data relating to national data, exam rates, and student success can be found on the college's web site. An example is Respiratory Therapy Program Outcomes Data located at: https://www.nwacc.edu/academicdivisions/healthprofessions/respiratorytherapist/accreditationrespiratorytherapist.aspx

- College Rankings, Top Results, Average Costs, Comparison Results, College Reviews, etc. can be found under public google searches such as; https://www.niche.com/colleges/northwest-arkansas-community-college/

- NWACC's Institutional Research Department provides data to support reporting requirements for external agencies; required IPEDS Reports; College Fact Books, Arkansas Department of Higher Education reports, etc. College Quick Facts discloses statistics that assures public access relating student information and program highlights (https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/aboutus/quickfactsabout.aspx)

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

7. Standing With State and Other Accrediting Agencies

A. Verify that the institution discloses accurately to the public and HLC its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditors and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

Note: If the team is recommending initial or continued accreditation status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the assurance section of the team report and provide its rationale for recommending HLC status despite this action.

B. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. *Related HLC Requirements: Core Component 2.B; Assumed Practices A.7, C.4.*

Rationale:

NorthWest Arkansas Community College discloses a list of specialized accrediting bodies on their web site at: https://www.nwacc.edu/aboutus/collegeleadership/cao/accreditation/aboutaccreditation.aspx

Audience: Peer Reviewers
Form
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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 9

Students and the public have access to a list of program accreditation information relating to the Academic Division; an example is the Health Profession Division – Physical Therapist Assistant Program. The Physical Therapist Assistant Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy (CAPTE). NWACC's Nursing Program added information pertaining rankings, completion stats, employment stats, and the address for further information of the accrediting body.

Students also have a direct link to accreditation information in the College's Catalog (p.6) with access to specific program accreditation. An example is: Health Information Mgt. Accredited by CAHIIM which includes the Accreditation Letter of Approval located at: https://www.cahiim.org/docs/default-source/programs/accreditation-letters/Northwest-Arkansas-Community-College-828-Associate---Accreditation-Award-Letter---February-23-2016.PDF

The Institutional Updates were reviewed where the college reports any changes with the accrediting bodies. They were reported in Good Standing.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list of materials reviewed here:

NWACC web links are embedded within the report

NWACC Quality Update, March 1, 2020

Standard Course Outline

Institutional Updates for 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019

Department of Education – Federal Aid

Department of Education Approval Letter – Federal Student Aid 12/04/2019

NWACC Institutional Status & Requirements Update

Financial Indicators – Institutional Updates

NWACC 2019-2020 Course Catalog

NWACC Student Handbook

The following courses were reviewed:

Advanced 3D Modeling

American National Government (Online and Classroom)

WAN Implementation & Support

Torts Legal Law

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Page 10

World Civilizations to 1500

Principles of Accounting

Pride & Justice – English 2413

Additional courses reviewed during CQR:

Patient Care Asst+

Public Speaking

English Composition II

Intro to Programming Logic

College Algebra

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Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 11

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	NorthWest Arkansas Community College, AR
TYPE OF REVIEW:	AQIP Comprehensive Evaluation
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	Visit to include a Federal Compliance Reviewer: Dr. Lynette Olson
	This visit is being conducted as a virtual visit followed by a verification visit. The verification visit will take place on (dates) by (team chair's name) and (second team member's name).
DATES OF REVIEW:	4/6/2020 - 1/1/2020

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: no change

Degrees Awarded: Associates

Recommended Change: no change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2012 - 2013

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2019 - 2020

Recommended Change: 2029-2030

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, Doctoral

Recommended Change: no change

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Additional Location:

The institution has been approved for the Notification Program, allowing the institution to open new additional locations within the 19-state North Central region.

Recommended Change: no change

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change: no change

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway   AQIP Pathway

Recommended Change: Eligible to choose

Upcoming Events

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change:

Due October 1, 2020: NWACC participated in a U. S. Department of Education Program Review in February 2019. Ten findings of noncompliance were cited in the review. At the time of the virtual CQR, the College had not received the Program Review Determination letter to document that all deficiencies had been resolved. The College must provide the U. S. Department of Education's Program Review Determination letter.

Due September 1, 2022: An Interim Report is required to address concerns noted in 5D. To provide evidence that the College is evaluating the performance of its operations and using evaluation data to inform improvements in institutional effectiveness.

Institutional Data

Educational Programs

Undergraduate

Recommended Change: no change

Certificate	68	_____
Associate Degrees	26	_____
Baccalaureate Degrees	0	_____

Graduate

Master's Degrees	0	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Doctoral Degrees	0	_____

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

None

Recommended Change: no change

Additional Locations

Arkansas Art Academy, 506 W. Popular Street, Rogers, AR, 72756 - Active

Brightwater: A Center for the Study of Food NorthWest Arkansas Community College, 801 SE 8th Street, Suite 71, Bentonville, AR, 72712 - Active

Don Tyson School of Innovation, 2667 Hylton Rd, Springdale, AR, 72764 - Active

Fayetteville High School, 994 W. Martin Luther King Blvd., Fayetteville, AR, 72701 - Active

Northwest Arkansas Community College at Washington County, 6101 Watkins Avenue, Springdale, AR, 72762 - Active

Shiloh Christian School, 1707 Johnson Road, Springdale, AR, 72762 - Active

Recommended Change: no change

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: no change

Distance Delivery

03.0104 - Environmental Science, Associate, Environmental Regulatory Science

03.0104 - Environmental Science, Certificate, CP-Environmental Regulatory Science

03.0104 - Environmental Science, Certificate, Environmental Regulatory Science

11.0101 - Computer and Information Sciences, General, Associate, AAS-Computer Information Systems

12.0301 - Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General, Certificate, TC-Funeral Science

15.0507 - Environmental Engineering Technology/Environmental Technology, Associate, Environmental & Regulatory Science-Mgmt Option

15.0507 - Environmental Engineering Technology/Environmental Technology, Certificate, CP-Safety and Health

15.0507 - Environmental Engineering Technology/Environmental Technology, Certificate, Safety & Health

15.0507 - Environmental Engineering Technology/Environmental Technology, Certificate, TC-Environmental Regulatory Science

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AS-General Education

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, Associate of Arts

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Certificate, Certificate of General Studies

43.0104 - Criminal Justice/Safety Studies, Associate, AAS-Criminal Justice

43.0107 - Criminal Justice/Police Science, Certificate, CP-Criminal Justice

51.0000 - Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General, Certificate, CP-Pre-Health Sciences

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Associate, AS-Business

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Certificate, TC-Business Management

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Certificate, TC-General Business

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Associate, AAS-Business Management

52.0203 - Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management, Certificate, TC-Logistics Management

52.0302 - Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping, Certificate, TC-Accounting Technology

52.0701 - Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies, Certificate, TC-Entrepreneurship

Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change

Consortial Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change