Assurance Argument
Elgin Community College - IL

Review date: 12/9/2019

Introduction

Elgin Community College (ECC) is a comprehensive community college, one of 39 within the Illinois Community College System. Located in Elgin, Illinois, the college serves Illinois Community College District 509, a 360 square mile area in northwestern suburban Chicago, encompassing portions of five counties and 25 incorporated municipalities, rural areas, and four public school districts with 11 high schools. The District's service population is estimated at 457,915.

ECC's 217-acre main campus is located in southwest Elgin. The Center for Emergency Services is located in Burlington in the western portion of District 509, and the Education and Work Center is located in Hanover Park to the east. Currently, the college offers 138 degree and certificate programs in 33 university transfer and career education fields. It also offers dual credit high school instruction and a large adult education program, which provides pre-collegiate high school equivalency (GED/HiSET) and English as a Second Language courses. In the 2018-19 academic year, the college enrolled over 14,547 credit students (FTE=6,470), and the current fall 2019 headcount is 9,931 (FTE = 5,451).

Approximately 54% of enrolled students are women, and the average age is 26. Just over 42% of students are Latino or Hispanic, with the remainder 40% White, 8% Asian, and 5% African-American, and 5% two or more races or non-responding. The majority of students attend in person, with about 21% wholly or primarily online. A majority also attend part-time (69%). The college offers an array of high school dual credit courses and non-credit courses and corporate training. It also hosts student athletics programs in the Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference and a vibrant performing arts program with several musical ensembles.

ECC is recognized nationally for its outstanding initiatives in equity and inclusion. A designated Hispanic Serving Institution by the US Department of Education, ECC is also a Military Friendly School, a member of Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative, an Achieving the Dream Leader College, an Aspen Top 150 Institution, and a Bellwether Award recipient for its Alliance or College Readiness partnership and a nominee for its Financial Smarts Financial Literacy Program.

The college employs 122 full-time faculty, 402 part-time faculty, 48 administrators, and 478 staff and has been led since 2007 by Dr. David Sam, the college's eighth president.

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

Mission statements of Elgin Community College (ECC) are broadly understood and guide all college operations. Together, they consist of the Mission, or why the college exists; the Vision, a statement about the future and where we are headed; the Philosophy on Learning, which clarifies our stance on empowerment and why we operate as we do; and seven Share Values, or core beliefs that guide our work. Key concepts contained within these statements are discussed every day in classrooms, offices, and meeting rooms across campus.

Mission: The Mission of Elgin Community College is to improve people's lives through learning.

Vision: We will pursue our Mission by focusing all our efforts on making Elgin Community College a national leader in promoting success for all students. This Vision will be attained through a commitment to provide innovative and affordable learning opportunities for all constituencies and to promote cultural competence and community partnership in our decisions and actions.

Philosophy on Learning: Learning is the primary driver behind our Mission and Vision. We believe learning is a lifelong process of intellectual and interpersonal growth that occurs when individuals expand their depth of knowledge, skills, and experiences. We further believe that learning empowers individuals to improve their lives and the economic, social, and cultural conditions of local and global communities.

Shared Values: Excellence, Freedom of Inquiry, Equity, Diversity, Ethical Practice, Accountability Collaboration

1A1. Mission statements form the foundation of every goal, strategy, action, and decision we make. They were jointly crafted with students, community partners, and employees and -- together with the goals and strategies of the ECC Strategic Plan -- were approved on October 10, 2017. We consider them and the entire ECC Strategic Plan to be our pledge to deliver high-quality learning experiences to nearly half million individuals who live and work in Illinois Community College District 509. These statements and the ECC Strategic Plan were enacted on January 1, 2018 and will remain in effect until December 31, 2022.

The college's mission documents are ideally suited to culture of the institution and District 509 as a whole. ECC is proud to be one of the most diverse colleges in Illinois with the largest proportion of Hispanic students of any Illinois community college outside Chicago and higher percentages than peer college of students who are the first in their families to pursue higher education. At the same time, District 509 is home to communities where educational attainment and annual incomes exceed the state median. At ECC, we truly value diversity as reflected in strategic goals around equity for all students. Examples are cited throughout the Assurance Argument -- including contextualized models for developmental and career-technical education, innovative programs for students of color, programs to support globalization, an Honors Program, and strong partnerships with business, community, and educational partners. The link between mission and operations is evidenced by growth in each of these areas. It is also recognized by ECC employees as evidenced by responses to the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz College Employees Satisfaction Survey (CESS), a national survey that asks employees about their satisfaction with institutional commitment and pursuit of mission. On the handful of survey items related to the college's ability to meet students' needs (e.g., "this institution treats students as the top priority"), ECC employees report satisfaction levels that are significantly higher than national peer benchmarks.

1.A.2. The college's programs, services, and enrollment directly reflect the ECC Strategic Plan. In fact, no program or service is ever delivered at ECC without careful consideration of how it *improves people's lives through learning*. The ECC Environmental Scan, prepared during the strategic planning process in 2017, exemplifies this fact. In this document, we point out changes to the population of our service district, citing increases in median age and the diversity among residents. In turn, ECC's programs respond to these trends. In Operating Plans for 2018 through 2020, we focus on the development of adult-friendly online and flexible options and the addition of services, such as the Triumph Program and culturally responsive teaching, which promote equity for diverse learners. The ECC Environmental Scan also highlights increased demand for skilled workers in technology-focused careers. In turn, ECC responds by adding certificate and degree programs in cybersecurity, supply chain management, and advanced manufacturing. In sum, all ECC programs and services are consistent with the ECC Strategic Plan and Operating Plan, and our mission documents ensure we advance student learning and remain agile in responding to community needs.

1.A.3. Processes by which ECC prioritizes budgeting needs are described fully in Core Component 5C. Means by which this happens are the purview of the Strategic Planning and Budget Council, which ensures alignment of budgets to Operating Plan actions through deliberations on the delivery of operations and outcomes. Recent results demonstrate success in this regard. Survey responses from the CESS, described above, also reveal that ECC employees report higher satisfaction on items related to planning and clarity of purpose than national peer benchmarks. When asked about the level of involvement of administrators, faculty, students, and staff in planning processes, employees also consistently rated each group as more involved at ECC than national benchmark average ratings. In sum, operations at ECC are well planned -- budgets follow closely from goals, and goals follow closely from examinations of processes as they unfold.

Sources

- ECC Environmental Scan 2017
- ECC Map - D509 Municipalities
- ECC Operating Plan 112219
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- Empl Survey_2018 Compare to 2-yr Public Inst - All Employees

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

1.B.1. The ECC Strategic Plan is available online at www.elgin.edu and in paper copy throughout campus. Mission statements appear in *Impact* magazine (which incorporates student stories, program news and updates, the President's report of the college, alumni news, and upcoming events) which is mailed to district residents, employees, and donors; Para Ti, the college's Spanish-language newsletter; and the Community Report, distributed each year to a selective list of 2,300 elected officials, educational, and business partners. In addition, ECC's Shared Values are publicly recited by members of the ECC Board of Trustees at their monthly meetings and appear on employee business cards. Biannual commencement programs and the annual Student Handbook and Planner contain the Mission, Vision, and Shared Values, as does the College Catalog, which also contains the strategic goals and general education outcomes.

Progress in meeting strategic goals is articulated in the Performance Report, which is published each September and presented at the ECC Board meeting. The Performance Report is a comprehensive summary of progress in meeting quantitative performance indicators of the ECC Strategic Plan along with a narrative summary of each Operating Plan action for the preceding year. Following the presentation, the report is posted on the ECC website. Internal reports and updates from key departments and committees – such as the Deans' Council, Student Success Infrastructure, Alliance for College Readiness, and Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning – are formally presented throughout the year and used to assess formative progress in meeting strategic goals. Employees and students are kept informed via biweekly newsletters (Spartan Review) for employees, the *Observer* student newspaper, and videos containing updates and announcements, which are displayed via ECCTV screens in common areas and near campus entrances.

In 2019, the college strengthened its digital presence with a $1 million investment in search engine optimization and better tracking of web clicks and traffic from web sources (e.g., Google, Facebook, and Snapchat). In addition, the college provided ECC commercials through Comcast Sports and Spanish language radio, and advertisements in *Chicago Tribune* online and local

newspapers. Ongoing analytics will help us understand the impact of these approaches to retention/persistence over longer periods.

1.B.2. ECC's strategic goals focus on:

1. Equity and Learning
2. Holistic Programming
3. Community Partnerships
4. Service Excellence and Collaboration

Goals emphasize instruction, scholarship, research, creative works, and public and economic service and provides additional details on the constituents we serve, which include: students, employers, taxpayers, college employees, and partner educational institutions. Mission-derived documents include self-study program reviews, accreditation reports; webpages; department marketing materials; the College Catalog; professional development workshops and events; and budget documents. The scope and audience of each varies according to purpose, and nearly all are reviewed by Cabinet and Deans' Council, or the Administrative Team. Larger reports for the ECC Board of Trustees are scheduled chronologically throughout the year on the Board's Annual Planning Calendar. Faculty instructional coordinators, deans, and associate deans, and academic support staff play important roles in supplying information needed in these essential documents.

1.B.3. Residents and businesses of District 509 have diverse learning needs; thus, goals of the ECC Strategic Plan reflect a variety of offerings and services. In academic year 2018-19, ECC enrolled 14,547 students in credit programs, including six university-transfer degrees (Associate in Arts; Associate in Science; Associate in Fine Arts – Musical Performance; Associate in Fine Arts – Visual Art; Associate in Engineering Science; and Associate in Liberal Studies) across 33 disciplines; 138 career-technical degree and certificate programs; Adult Basic Education (ABE); General Education Development (GED) high school equivalency; and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. ECC also enrolled 3,266 students in non-credit/continuing education classes during fiscal year 2015. ECC's academic programs are described on the college's website, the College Catalog, view books, and student career planning guides. The Fast Facts brochure, which we publish annually and distribute widely on and off campus, cites many figures contained in our Introduction to this Assurance System, such as our 20:1 average class ratio and the 2,000+ awards we confer each year.

Support services include the Renner Academic Library, financial aid and scholarships, career development and job placement, services for veterans, services for residents over 50, a TRIO Upward Bound program for students at-risk for not completing high school, work study programs, internships, on-campus early childhood lab school, workforce transitions and unemployment services, distance learning, international studies/study abroad, tutoring and supplemental instruction, writing and math labs, placement testing, academic advising, academic advising and wellness, and co-curricular and service learning opportunities. Our

services are comprehensive, reflect the diversity of our community, and confirm our commitment to equity in serving the learning needs of all residents.

Sources

- Annual Planning Calendar 2019 Aug
- ECC Fast Facts 2018-11-08
- ECC Performance Report FY2019
- ECC Report to the Community 2018
- ECC Student Planner 2019-2020
- Impact Mag - Fall 2018
- Impact ParaTi - 2019 Oct

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1. ECC's Mission – to improve people's lives through learning – is an open invitation to all residents of District 509. During the 2018-19 academic year, ECC had a total unduplicated headcount of 14,547 students. Of these, 5% were African-American, 8% Asian, 42% Hispanic, <1% Native-American, and 40% White. The percentage contribution of minority students at ECC is higher than their relative representation in District 509 as a whole, where 4% of residents are African-American, 8% Asian, 26% Hispanic, <1% Native-American, and 60% White, according to the American Community Survey (US Census) 2018 estimates.

Over the past several years, ECC's student profile has become increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. A US Department of Education-designated [Hispanic Serving Institution](#), ECC was recognized in 2014 with the Diversity and Equity Award by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) and a Central Regional Equity Award nominee from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) for programs designed to raise cultural competence among students and employees. Female students represent 54% of all enrollments, a figure which has not changed substantially over the past several years. In terms of age, <1% students are under 17; 54% are 17 to 22; 21% are 23 to 29; 12% are 30 to 39; and 12% are 40 and older. The average age of students is 26, a figure which has declined slightly over the past several years due in part to increases in high school dual credit enrollments.

ECC is recognized for providing exceptional outreach to veterans and students with disabilities. ECC has been a recognized Military Friendly School (G.I. Jobs Magazine) since 2012 and employs a full-time veterans' affairs specialist and a full-time ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) services coordinator who works closely with the college's Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) officer.

Annually the college compiles membership lists of student clubs and organizations, and some of our largest student organizations are ones that focus on special populations. Outside of ECC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, our largest student organization with over 400 members, the next largest are: Students Who Are Not Silent, which includes 135 members focused on LGBTQ advocacy; and the Organization of Latin American Students and the Black Student Achievers, with 25 members each.

1.C.2. ECC subscribes to the Illinois laws and the federal government pertaining to civil rights and equal opportunity, including Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments Act and the ADA of 1990. ECC prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability unrelated to ability, in the recruitment and admission of students and the employment of faculty, staff, and students and wherever such discrimination is prohibited by law in the operation of college programs, activities, and services. In collaboration with legal counsel, Human Resources monitors compliance with federal and state equal opportunity and nondiscrimination laws.

A focus on human diversity is integrated throughout the ECC Strategic Plan, and respect for diversity is one of the college's Shared Values:

We value and honor diversity in all forms and perspectives. To successfully achieve our vision, we provide a safe and inclusive community that promotes and affirms individual growth, social responsibility, and self-worth for success in a global world.

We champion diversity throughout the ECC Strategic Plan and the Operating Plan from which it derived. Achievements that reflect diversity are witnessed through work with students, employees, and the community.

Students

ECC joined the Partnership for College Completion's Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative (ILEA) in 2019, thereby committing to "eliminate racial and socioeconomic completion gaps by 2025 [to] increase overall graduation rates." Informing this initiative, student focus groups were conducted in fall 2018, the results from which are being used to inform strategies to support African American, Latinx, and low income students. Some of these include:

- African American History and Culture Courses. In 2017, SSI faculty proposed the creation of two courses focused on African American history so that, through them, we may be able to advance understanding of the African American experience among our students and faculty. These courses are being offered for the first time in fall 2019.

- Mandatory Advising Program (MAP). Through the Holistic Programming goal of the ECC Strategic Plan, the MAP ensures coherence of a curricular pathway for students by tailoring advising and educational planning at designated milestones, such as 24 credit hours or 36 credit hours. This initiative is contained in the college's upcoming ILEA Equity Plan, which is due on December 18, 2019. As it unfolds, credit hour thresholds will be re-examined and adjusted.

- Complete to Compete Scholarships. This strategy is also being proposed in the ILEA Equity Plan. It will encourage and facilitate completion for financial aid recipients who are "near completers" (45+ hours completed on average, with about 15+ hours to go to

complete associate degrees). In the program, a cohort of about 20 students will be selected each year to receive free tuition for the remaining classes they need to take in their programs of study.

- Safe Zone Training. Safe Zone is a program created specifically for colleges and universities to increase knowledge of LGBTQ diversity and acceptance. Safe Zone training is offered each semester, and new incoming faculty receive this training in new faculty orientation.

- Wellness Services and Student Disability Services. [Wellness Services] and [Student Disabilities Services] are discussed in detail in Core Component 3D. Each service helps to promote overall wellness through individual empowerment and cultivating an inclusive campus, facilitating access to services, and valuing diversity.

Employees

For employees, ECC hosts a variety of activities to advance knowledge of and/or solicit ideas regarding equity and inclusion. Some example are listed below. While designed for employees, many activities also cater to students directly through students participation (e.g., cultural competency training) or indirectly through sponsorship of student organizations, which then inform college planning through either the Student Government Association or the Student Trustee.

- Expanded professional development around equity. ECC strives to promote shared responsibility for inclusion, equity-mindedness, and increasing accountability. To this end, the college has expanded professional development around equity, which is required for serving on hiring committees and serving in leadership roles (e.g., Cabinet). Titles of current workshops are:
    o Seeking Cultural Competence and Diversity in Hiring
    o Professional Development in Cultural Competence: Recognizing and Identifying the Ways Implicit Bias
    o Sensitivity Awareness
    o Advanced Institutional Leadership in Equity

- Launched a Process Improvement Team. In response to needs identified through the CESS results, the President convened a Process Improvement Team in summer 2019 for the purpose of listening to and gathering ideas about means for reducing bureaucracies that impinge upon student success. While the team was not initially tasked with fostering equity, many of the process identified for improvement are ones that, upon further reflection, limit the college's ability to promote equity for students and employees (e.g., unnecessary fees or procedures). By reducing these barriers, we expect to see, and be able to measure, improvements in inclusiveness. Still underway, the President has asked for a full report in time for the college's January 2020 opening day convocation.

Community

For the wider District 509 community, ECC offers a variety of outreach, educational, and social activities that build awareness and understanding of human diversity:

- Informal roundtables on topics of diversity in higher education are offered throughout the year. Many are co-sponsored by student clubs or the faculty-led Multicultural and Global Initiatives Committee (MAGIC) and are held in conjunction with national events, such as African American History Month or Latinx Heritage Month. Web announcements, targeted emails, and flyers and posters are used to promote them.

- Workforce Development. ECC provides individual development services, continuing education, and corporate education opportunities for all community members and businesses in District 509.

- Spartan Terrace Restaurant. Spartan Terrace Restaurant is an upscale dining venue of ECC's Culinary Arts Program. Students in the program, under the guidance of faculty, run the restaurant which is housed near the Visual and Performing Arts Center in Building H. The restaurant serves as a real-world learning laboratory for students and hosts many community events throughout the year.

Finally, in planning the 2021 and 2022 Operating Plans, the Cabinet is actively considering the hire of a Chief Equity Officer to oversee the various efforts ECC deploys to promote in equity and inclusion. If approved by the Board of Trustees, this position would report to the President and align to the Equity and Learning goal of the ECC Strategic Plan.

Sources

- ECC Students Disabilities Brochure
- ECC Wellness Svs Brochure
- ECC Workforce Development Brochure
- HSI-Eligible Colleges-2016
- MAGIC Event Posters - Sample
- Spartan Terrace Restaurant - Webpage
- Student Focus Group Exec Summary 2018

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

1.D.1. Evidence that the college upholds its public obligation is demonstrated in several ways. ECC's shared value of collaboration is one example. Through this value, the college commits to "working cooperatively with local through global constituencies," and, in turn, creating partnerships to advance the educational primacy of the college. Relatedly, in Strategy 10 of the ECC Strategic Plan, the college commits to structuring programs in ways that respond to community and workforce needs. Finally, the ECC Foundation's Strategic Action Plan commits to "pursuing opportunities to make ECC the central organizing institution of the community." Across these efforts, ECC engages in community-based initiatives to advance its educational responsibility. In the Community Report released each year, ECC highlights the accomplishments made through public cooperation. Beyond this report, other means for engaging external constituencies include public forums, listening sessions, business after-hours, Board of Trustee meetings, advisory committee meetings, community breakfasts and roundtables discussed in Core Component 1C, financial literacy workshops, clinical site agreements, job fairs, and annual College Night forums.

ECC offices work together to serve the public. In 2017, the college established the Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning (SPEL) Office within its Workforce Development and Continuing Education Division. This office has catalyzed internships and apprenticeships. In addition, we have scaled personnel in the Alliance for College Readiness, the college's long-standing partnership with public school districts focused on aligning curricula, sharing data, developing educational pathways, and improving college-level placement. The Alliance, together with Transfer Services, coordinate efforts among school districts, colleges and universities, state agencies, and voluntary regional consortia such as the Alignment Collaborative for Education and the Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network. In the past few years, we have expanded high school dual credit programs, pre-college readiness, internship and apprenticeship opportunities, advisory committees, and off-site programming.

Beyond academic divisions, two Cabinet-level offices -- Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs and the ECC Foundation/Institutional Advancement Office -- oversee outreach to local

chambers of commerce, service organizations, and elected representatives. Finally, two additional locations illustrate our commitment to serving the community: the Education and Work Center (EWC) in Hanover Park and the Center for Emergency Services (CES) in Burlington. The EWC, opened in September 2014, is the first of its kind in Illinois to be jointly managed by two community colleges, Harper College and ECC. Offering free Adult Education and providing job training through the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, the EWC served 456 adult education students in 2018-19. Finally, the CES was launched in 2016 in response to demand for emergency technician training and training in fire science and criminal justice. In addition to ECC programs in these high-demand fields, area police and fire professionals use the facility for ongoing training. In academic year 2018-19, 315 students were enrolled at the CES.

1.D.2. Through our Mission, we declare our commitment to serve students and ensure their success. Our Vision goes on to state that we "focus all our efforts on making Elgin Community College a national leader in promoting success for all students" by which we commit to "providing innovative and affordable learning opportunities for all constituencies and to promote cultural competence and community partnership in our decisions and actions." Finally, as described in Criterion 2A, the Board's Code of Conduct highlights expectations for ethical behavior, such as requiring "unconflicted loyalty to their responsibilities to the college superseding personal interests and their interests in other organizations." In sum, the college's education mission takes primacy over any other purpose.

Evidence is also apparent in how the college operationalizes programming around student success and equity. Examples include:

- Student Success Infrastructure (SSI) – a cross-functional council formed in 2012 to launch implement, and incentivize initiatives that ensure overall student success. Co-led by a senior faculty member and administrator, the council is comprised of diverse administrators and support personnel and serves as a point of contact for ECC's affiliation with Achieving the Dream.
- Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative (ILEA) – a partnership that ECC joined in 2019 to focus on eliminating achievement gaps by race/ethnicity and income by 2025. Under this partnership, ECC is currently preparing an equity plan aligned to its goals of equity and service excellence of the ECC Strategic Plan.
- HLC Student Success Academy – a professional learning opportunity ECC joined in 2018 to advance data literacy, communication, and policy barriers impeding student success. ECC is currently developing a student success plan to guide goals and activities which will align to the ILEA Equity Plan and the ECC Strategic Plan.

Several key initiatives focus directly on college affordability, a central focus of our Vision:

- Free tuition for eligible students – the ECC Foundation raises thousands of dollars each year to be given away in the form of student scholarships. The Board of Trustees also awards special scholarships for high school students in particular fields, athletes, and students whose cumulative GPAs place them in the top 10% and 20% of their high

school graduating classes. Several scholarships are designated for Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language students.

- Complete to Compete Campaign – The ECC Foundation's Strategic Action Plan highlights a goal to raise one million dollars over the next three years to target students within one year of completing and for whom financial limitations render them vulnerable to drop out.
- Financial Smarts Literacy Program – The ECC Financial Aid Office has received national attention for this program, including from the US Department of Treasury. The program mandates one-on-one loan advising for student loan recipients, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion workshops, College Night, a College Smart Fair, College Goal Sunday, Adult Education financial education programs, and Money Smart Week campus events.
- Unemployment and career services – ECC supports a coordinator to serve unemployed residents who serves 100+ unemployed individuals each month, 60% of whom are over 50. The coordinator provides assistance in applying for public aid and referrals for emergency housing, which is currently a two-year wait in Elgin.
- Dual credit programs – ECC's dual credit programs reduce tuition costs and increase the number of students transitioning from secondary to post-secondary education. ECC had historically not been a significant provider of dual credit instruction before 2018 and did not have any courses in high schools. In annual Operating Plans beginning that year and continuing to the present, ECC has expanded its on-campus full-time dual credit program (Accelerate College), part-time on-campus program, and in-high school program. In 2015, for example, ECC enrolled just 144 dual credit students. In 2019-20, the number increased by 333% to 623 students. The college continues to expand dual-credit courses to more qualified high school students.

1.D.3. The college regularly engages external communities. As noted, the SPEL Office helps strategize outreach efforts with industries and works closely with academic programs. We increasingly use data to guide decision-making in this area. We track employer outreach with Salesforce CRM. In addition, ECC administrators and faculty participate in dozens of community organizations, and several employees serve on local boards. Participation of ECC personnel in external agencies is tracked through a local database maintained by the Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs Office.

 Recent engagement with the community has led to growth in a number of programs, including:

- Growing the number of student-apprentices from 11 to 18 (from 2019 to 2020) along with defining their experiential learning and employment outcomes through feedback from employers
- Hiring of 52 interns across 49 employers (26 from transfer programs and 26 from career-technical programs)
- Rebranding ECC's online job board to www.elgin.edu/hirespartans, resulting in 406 new employers to the site in the 2018-19 academic year and 1,821 job, apprenticeship, and internship postings

- Offering [Adult Education](#) instruction at outreach sites in Streamwood to the east and Carpentersville to the north
- Serving 3,266 non-credit students and numerous corporate training courses in the 2018-19 academic year
- Hosting six in-residence arts ensembles at ECC's Visual and Performing Arts Center, including the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Fox Valley Youth Theatre Company

Finally, the Student Life Office sponsored activities to meet the needs of our students and community alike. Highlights include:

- [Project Backpack](#): a back-to-school initiative that helps alleviate the burden of affording school supplies. Our district contains an estimated 1,300 homeless children and over 40,000 free or reduced lunch families. In fiscal year 2018, 2,030 backpacks with classroom supplies were distributed, and since 2010, over 15,000 have been distributed.
- [Boo Bash](#): a family event creates a safe alternative to neighborhood trick-or-treating that hosted 1,200 attendees in 2018, an increase over the 800 hosted in 2017.
- [Long Red Line](#): an Elgin-area version of the global One Billion Rising movement to stop violence against women, which hosts 250 community and college attendees in 2019 and a juried exhibit of artwork from students, alumni, and community members.
- Spartan Food Pantry: opened in February 2015, the campus pantry is operated by Phi Theta Kappa honor society and provides free groceries for needy students and their families.

Sources

- Advisory Committee Handbook Samples Rubric
- Advisory Committee Minutes Paralegal 2019-05-04
- Alignment Collaborative for Educ
- Apprenticeship Flyer and Program
- BOT Policies GP 2018
- BOT Policies GP 2018 (page number 7)
- College-Career Readiness Report 2019-07-31
- ECC Adult Basic Educ Center
- ECC Center for Emerg Svcs Business Plan FY20
- ECC Foundation Strategic Planning Results Action Plan
- ECC Report to the Community 2018
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (page number 8)
- EWC Intergov Agreemt FY2019-FY2020
- EWC Market Assessment Report 2019 March
- EWC Report FY19 rev2019-06-09
- Hire Spartans-College Central - Webpage

- HLC Student Success Academy Overview 2018
- ILEA Equity Plan Guide 03012019
- Internship Brochure and Flyer
- Legacy Award App 2019
- Long Red Line Recept and Flyer
- MOU Dual Credit - D300 2019 Mar
- Northern Illinois P-20 Network
- Proj Backpack Event Participant Flyer - English-Spanish
- SSI Equity Coordinating Council Bylaws 2019-09-13
- Student Life Boo Bash Flyer
- WD and CE Presentation - COTW 2019 Aug

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC's mission statements, including the Mission, Vision, Philosophy on Learning and Shared Values, collectively guide all college operations and strategic planning. These statements are shared with constituencies, internal and external, and also through the college's website, regular mailed communications (e.g., annual Community Report, quarterly newsletters, etc.), on-campus signage, and many additional online and printed resources.

Importantly, ECC's Mission is evidenced through its college-community partnerships. Collectively, these illustrate the importance the college places on honoring the diversity of students and community members and the focus it places on equity in success for students. *Diversity* and *equity* are two of the college's Shared Values. Additionally, the college is a recognized Hispanic-Serving Institution and a Military-Friendly School and is involved in a number of national initiatives focused on equity and reducing gaps in achievement for students of color, low-income students, and students with limited resources. Examples of state and national partnerships include the Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative and Achieving the Dream. Local examples include ECC's own Alliance for College Readiness, the Northern Illinois P-20 Network, and the Elgin-area Alignment Collaborative for Education. Partnership is also exemplified in the form of many campus departments or offices guiding continuous community outreach, including the ECC Foundation/Institutional Advancement, Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs Office, and many workforce partnerships created by the Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning Office.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Argument

College employees and the Board of Trustees follow formal policies to ensure integrity in operations. The Board maintains a Board Policies Handbook containing sections on:

- Governance Process (containing expectations for accountability in regards to the Board as a whole, each contributing member, the Board Chair, and all Board committees)

- Board/President Relationship (containing expectations for the President's performance, evaluation processes, executive succession, and delegated responsibilities)

- Executive Parameters (containing expectations for the President on interactions with personnel, budgeting, financial stewardship, asset protection, compensation and benefits, and communication with the Board).

Governance Process also includes the Board's Code of Conduct and rules for Board meetings, committee participation, and community engagement. Finally, annual operating goals are set by the Board each year and publicly posted. The Board, like all ECC departments and committees, aligns its goals to the ECC Strategic Plan.

Beyond the college, Board members and all employees follow external statutes that uphold integrity. We are bound to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/) which bans engagement in prohibited political activities, acceptance of gifts, and appoints an ethics advisor. Finally, the Board and college follow the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/), the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ILCS 220/), which ensures cooperation through local agreements among state agencies (e.g., between ECC and high schools), and the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/).

Within the college, the President ensures compliance with the Board's policies by setting administrative procedures, which formalize operations in key areas – academic affairs, student affairs, human resources, finance, legal affairs, and technology. Administrative procedures are vital to engaging constituencies in governance, and processes for their development, revision,

and approval are collaborative in nature, often involving months of work at all levels of the college. We revise procedures in accordance with schedules contained within the procedures themselves. Once approved, administrative procedures are linked to the employee portal and student handbook and cross-referenced in employee contracts. Several also appear on our website. Within the TLSD division, detailed sub-processes called PETALS (Processes for Effective Teaching and Learning) contain detailed information on procedures pertaining to curricula and student learning.

Academic Functions. All programs, courses, and student services described in our College Catalog reflects the united work of faculty and administrators in Teaching, Learning, and Student Development (TLSD). Courses and programs are developed and refined in the Curriculum Committee; student learning is assessed and assessment methods are refined in the Student Learning Assessment Advisory Committee (SLAAC) and by faculty in individual disciplines. Finally, the Faculty Evaluation and Faculty Development Committees ensure excellence in teaching and environments conducive to learning. To support faculty, the Deans Council recently revamped program health metrics and annual program health review processes to accompany five-year program reviews. While program reviews provide a broad lens for setting long-term goals, these new metrics and annual process ensure that shorter-term impacts are operationalized and ongoing. In addition, ECC maintains separate innovation funds to supplement what committees or departments do on their own. Funds for new initiatives are open to all employees and dispersed competitively by the Student Success Infrastructure (SSI), which, together with the Cabinet and Strategic Planning and Budget Council, monitors outcomes for future scaling. We recently hired a Project Assessment Administrator to facilitate evaluation and reporting of project outcomes. Finally, the ECC Foundation and Institutional Advancement Office works closely with TLSD to provide one-time Resources for Excellence Mini-Grants to faculty and students.

Personnel Functions. The Cabinet approves all requests for new and reclassified positions. Full-time faculty and administrator positions at or above the level of director are further approved by the Board of Trustees. To introduce requests for positions, supervisors complete a position justification form, and following Cabinet approval, they then complete a position description questionnaire (PDQ) to document job qualifications and responsibilities. The Human Resources (HR) Office created job descriptions from PDQs following classification by the Hay Method Committee. When existing positions are reevaluated, these forms are completed jointly by supervisors and incumbents. Minimum qualifications for administrators and staff are specified within PDQs and job descriptions. Faculty job descriptions are contained in the Board/ECCFA contract and in AP 5-103 (Minimum Requirements for Appointment to Faculty).

An online eTalent system (supported by PageUp People) ensures thoroughness in tracking applicant resumes and facilitating hiring. This system replaced our former Applicant Tracking System in early 2019 and has been very well received. Once hired, administrative procedures and labor contracts ensure position evaluation and professional development. A contract with campus police officers (the Board/MAP, Metropolitan Alliance of Police, contract) was adopted since our Assurance Argument in 2015. Staff employees are evaluated annually using the

performance appraisal form, and remediation/discipline procedures follow the Board/SSECCA contract. Faculty hiring, evaluation, and discipline follow the Board/ECCFA contract (pp. 67-81) and the Faculty Evaluation Handbook and include provisions for promotion and tenure. Administrative employees are given notice of assignment, evaluated annually, and employed at will. Draft procedures are currently under revision. All positions require a mandatory introductory probationary period of 90 days.

Regular meetings with the Managing Director of Labor and Employee Relations, working on behalf of the Board, and union leaders ensure contracts are implemented appropriately. We follow AP 5-401 (Employee Grievance) if a misapplication occurs, and elected grievance leaders are consulted. The college's annual grievance rate is reported every 3 years as part of the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) and is higher than peer institutions (1.0% at ECC versus 0.2% nationally as of 2019).

In addition to hiring and evaluation, integrity extends to employee development. HR's Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Office supports training for all ECC employees, and the Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) provides additional development for faculty. All new hires attend an orientation to the college, which highlights the ECC Strategic Plan, administrative procedures, operational processes, employee benefits, and campus safety. CETL provides training for faculty on pedagogical topics such as grading, outcomes assessment, and culturally responsive instruction. Discussions regarding mandated training are ongoing. At present, we require training in campus safety and emergency preparedness for all employees and cultural competency training for employees serving on hiring committees. Training in ethics, harassment, and information security is required for Cabinet and encouraged, but not required, for other employees. Other forms of training that address integrity include campus civility, customer service, and student academic record and data (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA training).

Financial Functions. The Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office maintains an Annual Planning Calendar of major events impacting planning cycles. Large expenditures and anticipated revenues are set by the Cabinet for Board review in late fall. Anticipated tuition revenue is based on predictive modeling for enrollment. Tax revenues are established by the Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805) and are derived from estimated appraised property values. Investment compliance follows AP 2-304 (Investment of College Funds) and the Public Funds Investment Act (30 ILCS 235). Other revenue sources include state appropriations (currently 7% of operating costs) and major grants. Projections are shared with the Board in late fall, and budgets are prepared by departments in early spring.

Our fiscal year starts July. As spending ensues, revenues and expenses are monitored by budget officers and the Strategic Planning and Budget Council, and contingencies are funded mid-year. Because we set budgets using the zero-based approach described in our Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative in 2015, contingencies are minimal but do occasionally arise. Following the fiscal year, we prepare a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which is subject to an eternal audit per auditing standards of the Illinois Community College Board Fiscal Management

Manual. Audits contain a report on internal accounting controls, and an annual A-133 audit is done for federal grants. Audit reports are presented to the Board Finance Committee in October. In addition to external auditing, an onsite auditor ensures integrity with administrative procedures. Working within the Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics of the Institute of Internal Auditors, Inc., the ECC auditor creates unbiased assessments to the Board, which are used to refine processes and inform procedures. This year the auditor's work is expanding to include non-financial compliance in records and data retention. We are also updating AP 3-804 (Whistleblower Protection) and identifying a vendor to launch a hotline and oversight program.

Auxiliary Functions. The college maintain nine auxiliary service areas:

- Athletics
- ECC Bookstore
- Corporate and Continuing Education
- Early Childhood Lab School (Childcare Center)
- Facilities Rental
- Food Services
- Printing and Production Services
- Student Life
- Visual and Performing Arts Center

Integrity of mission extends to auxiliary areas well, and as with academic programs, we place a premium on student learning in operating them. Athletics is a good example. Student athletes at ECC participate in our Athletes Commit to Education (ACE) program, wherein a dedicated advisor ensures academic success. A member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), ECC emphasizes college completion, and the NJCAA compliance exam is required for all head coaches.

Because student success is the driver of all activities, we do not require auxiliary areas remain profitable and recognize that one or more may sustain losses in any given year. Each spring, the Board engages in comprehensive review of all auxiliary areas, which submit business plans during the budget cycle. A review of the prior year's reports helps the Board decides how to grow or limit auxiliary operations. State law allows subsidies through Board-approved transfers from other auxiliary or educational areas, which are especially important for areas like the Early Childhood Lab School and the Visual and Performing Arts Center, which serve dual roles as learning labs for students. In other cases, we temporarily suspend auxiliary enterprises to support the primacy of our mission. In 2016, during Illinois' budget crisis, we temporarily closed the Illinois Small Business Development Center (funded through Corporate and Continuing Education) to redirect funds to academic programs. With funding now restored, we are relaunching the Center in 2020.

Sources

- PDQ Position Description Questionnaire Form
- 110 ILCS 805 - Public Comm College Act
- 30 ILCS 235 - Public Funds Investment Act
- 5 ILCS 140 - Freedom of Information Act
- 5 ILCS 220 - Intergovernmental Cooperation Act
- 5 ILSC 120 - Open Meetings Act
- ACE Program 2019-2020
- Annual Planning Calendar 2019 Aug
- AP 2-304 Investment of College Funds
- AP 3-804 Whistleblower Protection
- AP 5-103 Min Reqmts for Appt to Faculty
- AP 5-401 Employee Grievance
- AP List of Admn Procedures
- BOT Action 085-F-20 Transf btwn Funds
- BOT Action 097-F-20 Tax Levy 2019.pdf
- BOT Policies BPR 2019
- BOT Policies EP 2019
- BOT Policies GP 2018
- BOT Policies GP 2018 (page number 7)
- BOT Policies GP 2018 (page number 10)
- BOT Policies Handbook
- BOT Policy G 2018
- CETL Booklet - Fall 2019
- Curriculum Comm Bylaws 2018-05-04
- ECC Annual Security Report CY2018
- ECC Aux Oper Parameters FY2019-FY2020
- ECC CAFR 19
- ECC CAFR 19 (page number 25)
- ECC Employee Handbook - Draft Comp Section 2019 Dec
- ECC Professional Dev Guide Fall 2019
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31 (page number 68)
- Faculty Dev Handbook 2017-19
- Faculty Dev Handbook 2017-19 (page number 4)
- Faculty Eval Handbook 2017-19 rev2018 May
- Faculty Eval Handbook 2017-19 rev2018 May (page number 4)
- Finance Committee Agenda 2019 03-11
- Hay Methodology - Job Eval Mgr Brochure
- ICCB Fiscal Mgmt Manual FY2016
- ICCB Program Review FY17-FY21 rev2019-06-13
- Job Performance Eval Form
- MAP 735 Contract1 - ECCPD 11-13-18 to 06-30-22
- NJCAA Annual Report 2019

- Position Justification Form
- Program Health Metrics
- Program Health Review Process Guidelines
- QI Purposeful Budgeting - HLC Feedback and ECC Report 2015
- RFE Mini-Grants Recommendations and App FY2020
- Single Audit Report FY2019 A-133
- SLAAC Bylaws rev2018-08-28
- SPBC Presentation to BOT June 2019
- SSECCA Contract 2017-07-01 to 2020-06-30
- Student Success Infrastructure - Mission Stmt
- TLSD PETALS List

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

Our website (www.elgin.edu) provides students and the public information about the college, leadership and the Board, academic divisions and programs, degrees and certificates, and campus events. The main Elgin Community College (ECC) page contains facts about credit and non-credit programs, admissions and requirements, and costs. ECC's accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) (Mark of Affiliation) appears at the bottom of the main page, and from there, details about ECC's accreditation status can be viewed.

The College Catalog exists in web form and is linked from the main page. For each degree or certificate program, the Catalog contains detailed information on program purpose and history, courses within programs, special entry requirements and prerequisites, costs to students, and accreditation relationships. In addition, individual program brochures are created annually in paper form for prospective and enrolled students and are available at campus entrances and in program offices. Many degree programs also maintain student handbooks which explain requirements and accreditation to enrolled students (e.g., Nursing Program Student Handbook).

Finally, the Student Handbook and Planner is published, spiral-bound booklet updated annually to contain the academic calendar; Mission, Vision and Shared Values, campus locations and phone numbers for each service; and short sections on academic and Student Life Office offerings, Student Services and Development Offices, enrollment and finances, college procedures related to students, and tips and strategies for success arranged by month. The handbook is a much-anticipated publication that is released each fall and has received external recognitions for its content and style. It is given free to students and employees.

The Performance Report and the Fast Facts brochure includes specific information about student enrollment demographics and success metrics and is updated annually each fall. Summary reports available on our website are updated annually and include: Student Right to Know and Campus Safety Act (Public Law No. 101-542) statistics and the academic success of athletes; the Community Report; Performance Report; accreditation reports; and budgets and financial reports. The Student Right to Know page contains information about enrollment, graduation, transfer, job placement, equity in athletics, pass rates on licensing exams, criminal incident statistics (per the Clery Act), and a link to aggregate statewide data from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

Sources

- BOT Action 046-A-18 Strategic Plan Appr 2018-22
- BOT Action 126-F-18 Tuition FY19 - Mar 2018
- BOT Action 144-A-19 Master Plan Svc
- BOT Agenda Item - Pres Eval 2019-04-09
- ECC Fast Facts 2018-11-08
- ECC Performance Report FY2019
- ECC Report to the Community 2018
- ECC Student Planner 2019-2020
- Elgin_Edu Webpage
- Nursing Program Student Handbook 2019 Fall
- Public Law 101-542 - Student Right to Know and Campus Safety Act
- Shared Values

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2.C.1. The governing body of the college is the Board of Trustees, which has seven members elected at-large from district voters. Trustees serve six-year terms on a rotating basis and are chosen in elections held the first Tuesday in April in odd-numbered years. Trustees are seated within 28 days of election in May. The eighth trustee is a student elected by the student body, who is seated in April. All seven trustees are voting members; the Student Trustee's vote is advisory.

Responsibilities of the Board are centered on a common [Statement of Purpose](#):

The Purpose of the Board is to represent the public in determining what programs and services the college will offer, to whom, at what cost, with what priority, and to evaluate the performance of the organization. The Board is committed to excellence and accountability in everything the college does, to programs and services of the highest quality, and to making them available to the widest spectrum of appropriate constituencies.

To carry out its Purpose, the Board outlines key responsibilities in its Board Policies Handbook:

- fixing and enacting the [college's strategic goals](#)
- ensuring financial resources and personnel needed to deliver the college's mission
- setting [tuition and fees](#)
- [hiring and evaluating the president](#)
- [approving the hiring](#) of full-time faculty and designated senior leader
- approving [employee labor contracts](#)
- approving major purchases and contracts
- developing and supporting public policy through community engagement and legislative work

- approving [campus infrastructure projects](#)
- selecting demand depository institutions

Each action requires the Board to prioritize the institution's best interests, as memorialized the Board's Governing Responsibility Statement: "to operate in all ways mindful of its civic trusteeship obligation to the citizens of the district." The Board begins each public board meeting by reciting its purpose and [shared values](#) to lead ethically and equitably, ensure accountability and excellence, to foster respect for diversity and freedom of inquiry, and to work collaboratively in service to students, employees, and the community.

2.C.2. The Board broadly considers the interests of internal and external constituencies. The Governing Responsibility Statement goes on to affirm the Board's commitment "to be accountable to the general public for competent, conscientious and effective accomplishment of its obligations as a body" and "to seek formal input from various sources, including staff, students, alumni, employers and other community members, on institutional goals."

To fulfill its promised to govern publicly and to hear from the public, the Board meets in open meetings 11 times per year, once per month, except in February. Per the [Open Meetings Act (5 ILSC 120/)](#), all constituencies are invited to Board meetings and allotted time to address the Board. Rules in the [Board Policies Handbook (p. 17)](#) ensure meetings are productive and collegial and follow parliamentary procedures. All meeting minutes are audiotaped, transcribed, and written minutes are approved during the next subsequent meeting. The Board convenes in closed session only for the purpose of discussing confidential legal or personnel matters and only after a vote is taken during open meetings to move to a closed format. Finally, as further evidence of autonomy in decision-making, the Board follows rules for leadership succession. Board leadership positions (chair, vice chair, and secretary) are limited to two-year non-consecutive terms.

Through professional development, the Board stays current about public affairs. The Board participates in ongoing [training by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA)](#), provides orientations for new members, and [retreats for two days in June](#) to outline annual goals, which include expectations for community service. Board members are represented on all major local and state councils: the ICCTA, the ECC Foundation, and the Finance Committee, and many regularly attend convocations, campus events, professional conferences, and meetings with elected officials. Board members prepare written and oral reports of their engagement activities during open meetings and have recently presented about ECC initiatives to members of the American Community College Trustees Association, the Illinois General Assembly, and the US Congress. The Board's professional activities adhere to the college's administrative procedure on travel and business expenses.

2.C.3. The Board preserves independence in several ways. First, Board members are elected and not appointed. Secondly, they govern by majority rule in accordance with Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS). All Board meetings follow the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/), outlining legal

criteria to ensure a quorum and focus on matters of public concern. Third, Board members ascribe to a [Code of Conduct](), affirming "unconflicted loyalty to their responsibilities to the college superseding personal interests and their interests in other organizations." Fourth, upon initial service and annually thereafter, all Board members publicly swear an [Affirmation of Service]() to operate according the Board Policies Handbook and to acknowledge authority that derives from community interests. Finally, members administer self-assessments each summer during their retreat in which they hold each other accountable for fostering mutual support, participating in planning, and delegating authority to the President. Finally, Board members are bound by an [Ethics Resolution](), which limits political activities, acceptance of gifts, and appoints a third-party [ethics advisor]() and/or ethics commission. To further avoid conflicts of interest and promote public confidence, each Board member and all ECC employees at the level of director and higher file [statements of economic interests](), income, investments, and real estate holdings annually with the Kane County Clerk.

2.C.4. "No individual Board member, officer, or committee has authority over the President." This statement in the [Board/President Relationship]() reinforces the Board's role to act as one body and to distinguish operational matters from matters of policy. The Board's job description in the [Governance Process]() is to "govern, not manage" the college and that any Board authority is delegated through the President. All communication between the President and the Board includes the entire Board and communication between personnel other than President is done through the President.

While the Board is focused on supervising the President, the President, in turn, delegates authority to the Cabinet, who prepares consent agendas for Board meetings and executes college operations. Cabinet leaders, in turn, hire, supervise, and evaluate directors, managers, faculty, and staff. All personnel other than the President are supervised and evaluated according to college's stated [administrative procedures]() regarding position appointments and performance appraisals.

Faculty, as outlined by contract, are charged with overseeing academic content and ensuring student learning. On behalf of the President, the Vice President of TLSD and the Chief Human Resources Officer support faculty in doing this. The [Board/ECCFA contract]() ensures faculty are given professional development to support their student, instruction, and service activities. Board policies and the contract place a primary emphasis on teaching, and any special work done by faculty and not defined explicitly by contract (e.g., grant writing) is articulated in separately negotiated memoranda of understanding. These, together with administrative procedures and labor contracts, ensure that we maintain clarity of purpose.

Sources

- 5 ILSC 120 - Open Meetings Act
- AP List of Admn Procedures

- BOT Action - SSECCA_ECCFA Approvals
- BOT Action 046-A-18 Strategic Plan Appr 2018-22
- BOT Action 089-A-18 ECCFA Contract Ratification
- BOT Action 126-F-18 Tuition FY19 - Mar 2018
- BOT Action 138-A-17 SSECCA Contract Approval
- BOT Action 144-A-19 Master Plan Svc
- BOT Action 171-A-14 Ethics Advisor
- BOT Affirmation of Svc - 2019-2020
- BOT Agenda - New Hire Approval 2019-08-13
- BOT Agenda - Pres Eval 2019-04-09
- BOT Agenda - Retreat June 2019 18-19
- BOT Ethics Resolution 2004
- BOT Policies BPR 2019
- BOT Policies GP 2018
- BOT Policies GP 2018 (page number 1)
- BOT Policies GP 2018 (page number 7)
- BOT Policies Handbook
- BOT Policies Handbook (page number 17)
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31 (page number 39)
- ICCTA Trustee Training
- Shared Values
- Statement of Econ Interests - Kane County

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

Academic freedom is discussed in detail in the Board/ECCFA contract (p.15) which articulates that faculty are required to present information fully and without bias and are entitled to research and speak freely about academic matters. Shared values on diversity and freedom of inquiry further instantiate our position. The freedom of inquiry value statement reads:

We believe learning is most engaging and viable when a spirit of free inquiry exists, allowing everyone the freedom to explore new and diverse ideas and to express their interests and attitudes. We strive to create environments where inquiry flourishes and guides innovation.

The value of diversity reads:

We value and honor diversity in all forms and perspectives. To successfully achieve our vision, we provide a safe and inclusive community that promotes and affirms individual growth, social responsibility, and self-worth for success in a global world.

Shared values are recited aloud by the Board before each monthly meeting.

In addition to value statements, our operating practices support and protect diversity of opinion. AP 5-401 (Employee Grievance) preserves the right of any employee to speak freely and confidentially about perceived violations. We respond to all Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/) requests and assign oversight to an administrator who reports to the President. Finally, we create safe spaces (e.g., Socrates Café) and training (e.g., Safe Zone) for students and employees to engage freely in discourse. Our student organizations, co-curricular activities, Student Life Office, Student Wellness Office, and faculty offer myriad experiences and assignments that provide outlets for diverse thinking and expression. Our annual Honors Symposium, held each spring, is a celebration of original student research on cutting-edge topics in human development, technology, and sciences.

Because our values are inclusive and extend to all constituencies, they are, at times, put to the test. One example involves a fringe community group called Heterosexuals Organized for a Moral Environment, which annually visits our public buildings to distribute pamphlets. While the values of this organization are inconsistent with our own, we nonetheless recognize its rights and provide space in accordance with our regular request process. Even still, the President sends preemptive emails to college constituencies alerting them of the group's visits with a reminder that freedom of expression extends to all.

Sources

- 5 ILCS 140 - Freedom of Information Act
- AP 5-401 Employee Grievance
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31 (page number 15)
- Honors Symposium 2019
- Safe Zone - Webpage
- Socrates Cafe - Humanities Webpage

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

2.E.1. ECC provides oversight and support to ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice. AP 3-103 (Data Collection Involving People at ECC) contains procedures for conducting research involving students, employees, or affiliates of ECC. Per this procedure, anyone collecting original data (either in numerical or qualitative form) must submit requests in writing using a standard research intake form and participant consent forms. Administrative oversight is maintained by the PIE Office and overseen by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) of elected faculty members.

Research conducted by students as part of class assignments or by faculty individually or in the Faculty Research Community are exempt from IRB review and instead follow their own data collection protocols. Such protocols are overseen by faculty assigning the work (e.g., see Honors Program Handbook) or by Institutional Research. Research external to ECC -- from faculty or graduate students at other institutions or from external agencies (such as book publishers) -- undergo IRB review. When approval is granted, the IRB prepares a formal letter signed by the Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Technology and stipulating an ECC point person (typically a dean) to facilitate logistics, a time window for data collection, and any caveats for data collection implementation.

As reported throughout this Assurance Argument, we share summary data freely through public reports, data summits, and Tableau dashboards. Custom requests for data, such as crosstabs or ad-hoc analyses, are routed to analysts in appropriate offices (generally Institutional Research, Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, or the EEO/AA Office). For non-summary individualized or identifiable data, we require written contracts ensure data is used responsibly and limiting its use and distribution. Service agreements with consultants and technology vendors that cull data from our Colleague ERP are kept on file in the Business Services Office and described in the Data Privacy Policy currently under review. Any external entity not providing a contract of its own is required to complete ECC's non-disclosure/data sharing agreement, which defines ethical use. Data sharing agreements are signed by the requesting party and the ECC President.

2.E.2. A number of administrative procedures are in place to ensure the ethical use of information, and guidance is provided to ensure understanding and proper use. First, research assistance for students is available from the [Renner Academic Library and Learning Resources Center](#) and [The Write Place](#), ECC's writing lab for students. A [Guide to Writing at ECC](#) is a manual written by ECC faculty that includes information about writing research papers, plagiarism, editing strategies, and resources for writing assistance. It is provided as a link through Desire2Learn (D2L), the college's learning management system, for students in online classes as well as from the Renner Academic Library website, and in print version in the ECC Bookstore. In addition, Research Guides on the library website provide links to articles, video tutorials, online videos, and websites for researching and writing in various disciplines. Finally, help is available on a walk-in basis, by appointment, or through the free Writing with Integrity non-credit course offered through The Write Place. Librarians teach classes in-person and online in the use and evaluation of all types of information and provide students help with research projects for ECC classes and assignments.

Beyond these on-the-ground practices, responsible use of information is memorialized in our Ethical Practices value statement, which reads:

We are responsible to carry out our work with honesty and integrity. Our decisions and actions are guided by our vision and not by personal interests, and they will be enacted with a sense of service to students and community members.

It is also memorialized in [AP 4-407 (Academic Integrity)](#), which reinforces our commitment to providing a learning environment that values truth, honesty, and justice. This procedure clearly defines types of dishonesty – plagiarism, fabrication, complicity, multiplicity, and misconduct in research – so that our position is clear to anyone conducting research on behalf of ECC.

2.E.3. ECC maintains a number of administrative procedures focused on the discovery and application of knowledge:

- Administrative Procedure 3-103: Data Collection Involving People at ECC
- Administrative Procedure 3-301: Copyright
- Administrative Procedure 3-404: State Officials and Employees Ethics Act
- Administrative Procedure 3-803: Conflicts of Interest
- Administrative Procedure 3-804: Whistleblower Protection
- Administrative Procedure 3-808: Business Ethics and Conduct

And also a number pertaining to academic integrity and honesty for students:

- Administrative Procedure 4-401: Complaint Procedure
- Administrative Procedure 4-402: Student Code of Conduct
- Administrative Procedure 4-403: Appeal of Final Grade
- Administrative Procedure 4-404: Placement Test Appeals
- Administrative Procedure 4-407: Academic Integrity

- Administrative Procedure 4-408: Appeal for Complaint Procedure

Each procedure outlines the college's definitions, general guidelines, and provisions for compliance, as well as repercussions should procedures be violated. For many procedures, the college follows state or national laws. For example, AP 3-301 (Copyright) follows copyright laws of the United States. Others guidelines are articulated locally through negotiated contracts. For example, intellectual property rights are detailed in the Board/ECCFA Contract (p. 54).

For students, procedures are introduced during new student orientations, during the COL-101 (College 101) course, and in the Student Handbook and Planner. A standard statement on academic integrity with approved language is required in the master syllabus template. AP 4-401 (Complaint Procedure), AP 4-403 (Appeal of Student Grades), AP 4-404 (Placement Test Appeals), and AP 4-408 (General Appeals) offer detailed processes students can follow for complaints of process. The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Institutional Complaint System web page is also linked on the college's homepage. For employees who, procedures are articulated during employee orientations.

Violations of procedures and appeals of various decisions (e.g., grades, judicial decisions, etc.) are discussed in fair hearings and without fear of retribution. A Violation of Academic Integrity form is used by faculty and the Director of Student Success and Judicial Affairs to document the process. Violations may result in verbal warnings, mandatory successful completion of The Write Place's Writing with Integrity tutorial, a rewrite or revision of an assignment, a grade reduction or failure of an assignment, or grade reduction or failure of a course. For employees who violate these procedures, disciplinary practices follow the employee discipline and grievance/appeals process, which is found in contracts for union employees [see p. 9 in the Board/SSECCA contract and p. 11 in the Board/ECCFA contract] and AP 5-401 (Employee Grievance) for non-union administrators.

Data on student complaints and data on appeals and resolutions are kept on file in the Student Services and Development Division in the Dean's Office. For the 2018-19 and prior 2017-18 academic years, the Dean's Office logged 146 total complaints, approximately 24 per semester. Of these complaints, 77% were based on a college policy which the student disagreed with; often the college's tuition refund policy. Of the 146 complaints, 102 complaints requested a tuition refund or reimbursement of some sort. After review and investigation, refund or reimbursement was recommended/approved 43% of the time. In terms of complaint type, non-academic complaints were a majority of complaints (66%), and among all complaints, policy disputes (77%), treatment of students by college employees (12%), and administration of policies (5%) were the most common. All complaints receive thorough investigation, often requiring coordination across several departments. If the outcome is less than favorable vis-à-vis the student's requested remedy, every attempt is made to explain the process and result, using the experience as a learning opportunity.

In general, frequencies of complaints and appeals are low and represent a small fraction of enrolled students. We do this intentionally in the spirit of empowering faculty to provide

instruction rather than punishment for first-time or low-level violations. Should a violation warrant oversight by the Director of Student Success and Judicial Affairs or other leaders, repercussions may include disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. Due process is provided to students through application of the Student Disciplinary Committee Hearing Process. The process is composed of faculty, administrative, staff, and student members and uses a learning-centered restorative justice approach to address Student Code of Conduct (AP 4-402) violations as they arise.

Sources

- AP 3-103 Data Collection Involving People at Elgin Community College.pdf
- AP 3-301 Copyright
- AP 4-401 Complaint Procedure and Form
- AP 4-402 Student Code of Conduct
- AP 4-403 Appeal of Final Grade Proc and Form
- AP 4-404 Placement Test Appeals
- AP 4-407 Academic Integrity
- AP 4-408 Appeal for Complaint Procedure
- AP 5-401 Employee Grievance
- AP List of Admn Procedures
- Data Policy - Student Terms Conditions Draft 10-20-2019.pdf
- ECC Library Brochure
- ECC Student Planner 2019-2020
- ECC The Write Place
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31 (page number 54)
- Faculty Research Comm Program Details
- Guide to Writing at ECC
- Honors Program Handbook 2018-2019
- IBHE Institutional Complaint System
- IRB Approval Letter - Ballard
- IRB Intake and Consent Form
- Master Syllabus Template 2019 01-12
- Student Discipl Comm Trng and Hearing Script
- Tutorial - Writing with Integrity ECC
- Violation of Academic Integrity Policy Form 2017 08 22

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Criterion 2 illustrates how ECC acts with integrity and engages in conduct that is ethical and responsible. As explained, this is accomplished in financial, academic, and auxiliary functions through leadership and operational structures, through enactment of administrative procedures, which follow policies of the ECC Board Policy Handbook, as well as through employee contracts, formal grievance procedures, whistleblower and ethics advisors, and student conduct and appeals.

Second, the institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and the public regarding programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, and accreditation relationships. This is evidenced in the college's website, Course Catalog, Student Handbook and Planner, and Student Right-to-Know disclosures, Clery Act Reports, Performance Reports, Annual Budgets and Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, and Program Review Reports -- all of which appear on the website and used by the President, Cabinet and Board to guide institutional governance.

Third, the Board is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution. Its deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. It reviews and considers the interests of internal and external constituencies, preserves independence from undue influence, delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration, and expects faculty to oversee academic matters.

Lastly, the institution's policies and procedures call for the responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by faculty, students, and staff. The institution accomplishes this by providing effective oversight and support services to faculty, offering guidance in the ethical use of information resources to students, and establishing policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A.1. ECC strives to ensure academic programs remain current and relevant. In designing and delivering courses, programs, and services, ECC faculty rely on the latest research in higher education, labor market data, and ongoing feedback from course reviews, program self-studies, employers, students, external advisory committees, and professional accreditation organizations. In early 2019, the Curriculum and Assessment Office redesigned the template for Curriculum and Program Development Guidelines to focus on demonstrated need, quality, and responsiveness to students and the community. Based on information provided in the ICCB Program Approval Manual and Administrative Rules Section 1501.302, this process requires feasibility studies. Two programs completed the new template in 2019: supply chain management and computer information science.

Employing a backwards design model, ECC career-technical programs create student learning outcomes based on requisite industry knowledge and skills and feedback from employers and graduates. For transfer programs, learning outcomes are based on alignment to baccalaureate programs through articulation with university partners, the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), and the Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network. Once vetted internally by the Cabinet and Board of Trustees, programs undergo a series of external approvals by the HLC and Illinois Board of Higher Education. Onboarding of new programs includes setup in the Colleague ERP system and the eTalent hiring system as well as integration into all other college systems for goal setting, performance management, marketing, student recruiting, enrollment, and budgeting.

Every five years, programs prepare self-study reports per the [Illinois Community College Board Program Review Manual](#). Programs use these reports to document their goals, needs, curricular improvements, student success measures, and costs. From department-level reports, ECC prepares an [annual state report](#), which is then combined by the ICCB with reports from the other 47 Illinois community colleges. In its [2018 feedback report](#) to ECC, the ICCB noted several exemplary practices, including teaching innovations in ECC's health, math, and EMT programs and state-of-the-art educational and industry partnerships. Additionally, the ICCB noted areas to monitor and scale, including broadening use of course-level disaggregated data and Perkins grant funding across career-technical programs.

The college recently developed an [Annual Program Health Review Process](#) to complement ICCB's five-year self-study process. As described in Core Component 2A, the annual process aims to assist faculty to better identify areas needing resources during the Purposeful Budgeting process. More standardized than state's five-year process, the annual process uses quantified criteria uniformly across programs. In this sense, it contrasts with the more individualized state ICCB process. Metrics are compiled into an annual Program Viability Scorecard consisting of: enrollment trends; student success metrics (course success, withdrawals, and attainment of credentials per FTE); program efficiencies (course fill rates, section fill rates, and cancelled classes); and costs and profit margins. The scorecard is reviewed by the Assistant Vice President of TLSD and a team representing academic programs, the Business and Finance Office, and the Institutional Research Office. The team reviews and ranks all programs and make recommendations to the Vice President of TLSD for areas needed focused attention during budgeting.

While ICCB self-studies and ECC program health reviews operate at the program level, the college also sets expectations for quality at the course level. All ECC courses begin with a [master course outline (MCO)](#) used to document learning outcomes, prerequisites, [credit hours](#), IAI codes, books, supplies/materials, and teaching qualifications for each course in our curriculum. All MCOs are publicly available in the CurricUNET curriculum management system at http://www.curricunet.com/elgin. For each course offered, faculty are required to provide a course syllabus derived from the MCO, which includes course information, instructor contact information, office hours, course requirements, course learning outcomes, grading standards, attendance policies, classroom behavioral expectations, methods of assessment, a topical course outline, and a tentative class schedule consistent with the MCO. Since our last assurance filing, ECC has developed and makes available a [macro-enabled syllabus template](#) to all faculty to build syllabi stemming from the affiliated course MCO. In addition, the Curriculum and Assessment Office provides a guide to creating a new course and faculty training to inform course development and sound assessment practices.

Once deployed, all ECC programs and courses are reviewed and approved by the [Curriculum Committee](#), a standing council chaired by an ECCFA-approved full-time faculty member and consisting of faculty representation from all divisions as well as ex-officio members from Academic Advising (Student Success Center), Transfer Services, Records and Registration, and Curriculum and Assessment. The committee meets bimonthly in the fall and spring to review

proposed new programs, certificates, and courses – taking into account the varied needs of particular disciplines, students, community needs, graduation requirements, course transferability, and state guidelines and/or requirements. The committee recommends approval or denial of programs and courses to the Vice President of TLSD. The committee records meeting minutes, which are available to all ECC employees via the employee portal, and the committee produces summary reports twice annually. During the past five years, the committee has reviewed over 830 proposed changes, which include new programs and courses, prerequisite changes, and course withdrawals (see table).

Summary of Reviews Conducted by the ECC Curriculum Committee over the Past Five Years

Year	New Programs	New Courses	Course Revisions	Withdrawn Courses
2015-16	0	12	100	44
2016-17	3	27	135	40
2017-18	4	17	69	48
2018-19	2	19	100	48
2019-20	7	22	130	9

A final way the college ensures its programs remain current is by maintaining close partnerships with area employers. All ECC career-technical programs maintain external advisory committees consisting of local business leaders whose companies hire our graduates. One of our most highly visible committees is the Manufacturing Advisory Committee, which aids faculty in our Integrated Manufacturing Technology, Computer Aided Design, and Computer Aided Manufacturing Programs. Comprised of high school faculty and administrators and industry partners, the committee meets to examine labor markets, review curriculum, and ensure responsiveness to local needs. Labor market studies conducted through program review self-studies and our current master planning process indicates growth in manufacturing throughout our region, a fact we are well attuned to. Through industry partnerships, ECC has been fortunate to receive donated equipment, software, and faculty training from Swiss Automation in Barrington; Renishaw, Inc. in West Dundee; and Assurance Technologies in Bartlett, lead manufacturers headquartered in our area.

In May 2019, the advisory committee was instrumental in developing our recent CNC Programmer certificate by providing input into the requirements for successful employment in the program, including knowledge of math and blueprint reading, and skills in computer design and metrology. The new CNC Programmer Certificate was approved by the ICCB in 2019 and will be offered for the first time in 2020.

3.A.2. All ECC programs define, deliver, and assess learning outcomes for students. Outcomes are documented in self-study reports at the program level and in CurricUNET for courses.

Outcomes are communicated to students in various ways. The Paralegal and Radiography Programs, for instance, lists outcomes in the details sections of their webpages. Healthcare programs publish program outcomes in handbooks distributed during students' first semesters (e.g., see the Clinical Laboratory Technology Program Handbook). In spring 2019, the college transitioned to an online Course Catalog, and in an effort to make program outcomes broadly accessible to students, we will begin listing program outcomes in the catalog in 2020.

ECC has two main curricular tracks that, while not mutually exclusive, are focused on different student intents. The university transfer track is designed to advance students through general education requirements and associate level programs in preparation for junior status at baccalaureate institutions. This track consists of six associate degrees. The career-technical education track consists of 36 associate of applied science (AAS) degrees, 30 vocational skills (VS), and 63 basic vocational skills (BVS) certificates. Career-technical programs focus on preparing students for employment.

Many career-technical programs build skills through stackable credentials that can be taken as students transition through employment levels. Students first qualify for entry-level employment by getting a basic vocational skills (BVS) certificate, from which they may proceed (immediately or later) to a vocational specialist certificate, and then an AAS degree. The AAS requires students to complete at least 15 semester credits of general education courses. ECC also has agreements with several universities to allow AAS graduates to enter baccalaureate programs upon transfer.

In Illinois, all community colleges, public four-year institutions, and most private institutions belong to the IAI [www.itransfer.org], a general education course transfer agreement which ensures that ECC courses and programs align to other state institutions (IAI process document). Courses approved as IAI courses have equivalent learning goals as same-numbered courses at other IAI institutions (IAI general education core curriculum), and as such, IAI institutions accept general education courses equivalent to their own required mix of general education courses. The IAI program thus assures that students who complete an AA or AS university transfer degree at ECC enter four-year programs with junior status.

In 2019, the college secured approval from the ICCB to award the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) credential. This new credential is designed to allow easy transfer of completed general education core curriculum between participating Illinois colleges and universities. Transferring students are assured that general education requirements for an associate degree or lower division general education requirements for a bachelor's degree have been satisfied. Successful completion of the GECC credential represents completion of the general education core of a transferable degree and is not a workforce certificate or industry-recognized credential.

3.A.3. ECC's learning outcomes are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations. Most ECC courses are taught at the Spartan (main) campus, but others are taught at the Education and Work Center in Hanover Park and Center for Emergency Services in Burlington. In addition, Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language courses are

taught at various community locations, such as the Streamwood Village Hall. Courses are taught face-to-face, hybrid (partly online), or wholly online. Key gateway courses are offered in all three modalities (e.g., English 101). Regardless of location or delivery mode, all modalities are included and evaluated during the program review and follow the same MCOs.

Hybrid and Online Courses. Faculty development of online and hybrid courses is assisted by an associate dean and technology coordinators in the Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Office. In addition to providing course enhancements, the office provides technical training to faculty and oversees the Distance Learning Advisory Committee of faculty, staff, and administrators. Desire2Learn (D2L) is the college's learning management system, and the Quality Online Course Initiative (QOCI), a framework developed by the Illinois Online Network, is used to reinforce quality and ensure that learning needs are met in online course development.

Dual Credit Programs. ECC provides dual credit courses to qualified high school students in full-time on campus (Accelerate College), part-time on campus, and high school programs. The number of dual credit students at ECC has increased with the implementation of the in-high school dual credit program in 2018. Details on courses, outcomes assessment, and faculty qualifications are detailed in Core Components 1D and 3C, and numerous agreements with high schools ensure quality and rigor. All dual credit students meet the college course perquisites. They also receive orientation, D2L training, and have access to all college resources. Both career-technical and general education courses are offered as dual credit.

Articulated Credit. Several high schools offer ECC-articulated courses in a number of career technical fields. To receive articulated credit, students complete an equivalent high school level course with a grade of A or B and have their credits reviewed by ECC faculty after enrollment. Articulation agreements are reviewed every two years by ECC faculty. High schools must provide course outlines, syllabi, sample tests, texts or other information necessary to document the alignment of course content and rigor.

Contractual and Consortial Agreements. The college contracts with two hospitals (Advocate Sherman Hospital and Presence St. Joseph Hospital) to provide emergency medical technology (EMT) coursework. This coursework is based on the US Department of Transportation National Emergency Medical Services education standards and National Standard Curricula. Student success and learning outcomes are evaluated with the same rigor as coursework taught on campus. Additionally, the EMT program is required to conduct a program review self-study according to ECC's and the ICCB's frameworks. These contracts were approved in 2016 under the HLC substantive change process.

Sources

- Advisory Committee Handbook Samples Rubric
- Article - Swiss Auto Donation to ECC - Trib
- Clinical Lab Tech Student Handbook

- Credit and Contact Hour Calculation
- Curriculum Comm Bylaws 2018-05-04
- CurricUNET -Webpage Elgin
- ECC Center for Emerg Svcs Business Plan FY20
- ECC Educ and Work Center
- ECC Program Develop Guidelines FY20 ver1.0 6.4.19.0 6.4.19
- ECC Program Health Review Process Guidelines
- ECC Program Review Feedback FY2018
- ECC Program Review Report FY2019
- HLC Approval - EMT Change Panel Action Letter 12-15-15
- IAI General Education (GECC) Requirements
- IAI General Education Core Curriculum
- IAI Process Document
- IAIPoliciesandProceduresManual
- ICCB - ECC_GECC Approval 2019
- ICCB Program Review FY17-FY21 rev2019-06-13
- iTransfer.org - Website
- Master Syllabus Template 2019 01-12
- Northern Illinois P-20 Network
- Program Health Review Process Guidelines
- QOCI Process 2.0
- Sample Master Course Outline - Sample BIO108

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

3.B.1. In classrooms and cross-campus experiences, ECC students develop knowledge and skills needed for academic, career, and civic success. ECC's general education program allows students to acquire necessary skills in the areas below:

- Communication
- Scientific literacy
- Quantitative literacy
- Critical thinking
- Information literacy
- Global and multicultural awareness

Detailed descriptions of each outcome are contained in the College Catalog - General Education and posted on the college's website. Students fulfill general education requirements in standard ways. All programs leading to associate of arts and associate of science or applied science degrees require general education coursework and a demonstration of satisfactory mastery of outcomes. Additionally, all vocational skills certificates, while not intended for transfer, require completion of coursework that aligns to general education outcomes of reading, writing, critical thinking, and global awareness. As described in Core Component 3A, the statewide IAI allows students to transfer general education credits earned elsewhere to ECC (and vice versa) and ensures that courses are of high quality.

3.B.2. Building upon the American Association of Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes (National Leadership Council, 2007), ECC's general education program encompasses the values and skills necessary for students to achieve higher levels of learning and ensure strong intellectual and practical skills to navigate an ever-changing world. ECC's general education philosophy also appears in the College Catalog - General Education.

Student Learning Assessment and Advisory Committee (SLAAC). Oversight and review of general education is the purview of the SLAAC, a cross-divisional faculty committee. SLAAC is charged with developing and implementing strategies to improve student learning and setting language to frame general education outcomes in light of advances in curriculum and educational standards. In 2018, for example, SLAAC adopted new language for the communication outcome, combining former separate outcomes for reading and writing. The new outcome emphasizes the importance of inferring and imparting meaning in various formats through an understanding of context, purpose and audience.

In addition to defining outcomes, SLAAC is tasked with organizing and communicating evidence of student learning. In 2015, the committee began using the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Transparency Framework for this purpose. The framework builds a six-step process around how assessment works and how data are used to make improvements. SLAAC is using this framework to organize its subcommittees. Each subcommittee follows a different component of the NILOA framework. The Rubric Subcommittee is charged with determining the effectiveness of rubrics, tools, and methods for data collection. The Evidence of Student Learning Subcommittee identifies sources of student learning – either those which are in progress or gathered from prior course and program assessment reports. The Faculty Resource Subcommittee solicits, compiles, and prioritizes faculty needs for SLAAC to support. In 2019, this team launched a google site to disseminate information regarding assessment plans, results, and use of evidence. Other applications of the NILOA framework appear in the most recent General Education Assessment Annual Report. Gathering evidence of academic accomplishments and using it to improve learning is a continuous process.

3.B.3. ECC offers six associate degrees designed for transfer. These include the AA, AS, associate of fine arts in music, associate of fine arts in visual art, associate of engineering science, and the associate of liberal studies. Each requires students to complete general education coursework in communications (6-9 semester hours); mathematics (3-9 semester hours); physical and life sciences (7-10 semester hours); humanities and fine arts (3-9 semester hours); and social and behavioral sciences (3-9 semester hours). The college also offers non-transfer associate of applied science degrees, which require coursework in communications, social or behavioral science, mathematics or science, and liberal education. During five-year self-study reviews, programs review curricula and align courses to both their program and general education outcomes. A mapping exercise ensures that each degree program allows students adequate depth of learning – with opportunities to for exposure, practice, and mastery as well as

research and critical thinking skills across the curriculum. Advisory committees and accrediting agencies also reinforce the need for students to acquire such skills.

The ability to conduct research is reflected in the general education outcomes of critical thinking and information and technology literacy. The Renner Academic Library offers research services to support students and faculty – including workshops within and outside classes, one-on-one service, and programs on academic issues. In addition, librarians collaborate with faculty to create customized research guides for particular classes or assignments, using appropriate databases and online resources. In the last year, research guides were created in nearly 100 categories, for several hundred different sections. Finally, Phi Theta Kappa and Honors Program students participate in Honors in Action projects, in which an entire cohort of students select a particular theme for research investigation. The program fosters intellectual curiosity and skills that promote lifelong learning.

3.B.4. Curricula are designed intentionally to respect human and cultural diversity. As described in 1C2, diversity is one of ECC's shared values, and the curriculum encompasses courses in world languages, humanities, history, political science, gender, religion, and international studies. Effective May 2019, the college began offering several new courses touching upon these topics: HIS-119: History and Politics of Gender; HIS-189: African American History I; HIS-190: African American History II; and POS-140: Community and Civic Engagement. Finally, co-curricular offerings include an annual International Week, featuring dance, food, and conversations about global cultures; Latinx Heritage Month, African-American History Month, and the college offers short-term grants with stipends for faculty to infuse global perspectives into their courses.

The Global/International Studies Taskforce (GIST) is a cross-functional team tasked with advancing globalization efforts and critical thinking of global affairs. Formed in 2007, the committee strives to sustain cultures of global competence of faculty, staff and students in support of strategic goals. Comprised of faculty and six administrative representatives, GIST provides leadership to infuse curriculum, foster global exchanges for faculty and administrators, explore strategies to expand global opportunities for students, and increase international student enrollment. An example of a current GIST activity is the William Pelz Global Speaker Series, which debuted in spring 2018 as an on-campus discussion series dedicated to examining global issues, trends, and concerns through thoughtful presentation and conversation. Named in honor of Professor William Pelz, who taught history and political science at ECC for 19 years, the event is co-sponsored by GIST and the Multicultural and Global Initiatives Committee (MAGIC). Now it its second year, the series consists four events during the academic year – two in the fall and two in the spring.

ECC is founding member of Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP). The college maintains strong partnerships with Chongqing Technology and Business University (CTBU) in China for study abroad programs. We also partner with institutions in France, Austria, Italy, Brazil, and India and will pilot new study abroad programs in 2020 at Centro Studi Italiani in Urbania, Italy: a short-term program for ECC students in the culinary, hospitality, and pastry arts programs; and a four-week, faculty-led Italian language and culture immersion program.

Additionally, ECC offers two-week professional exchanges for faculty and administrators to China, the Netherlands, and Finland; semester programs in Spain, England, Austria, and Ireland; and summer opportunities in France, Ireland, Austria, Spain, and Costa Rica. ECC culinary students are able to participate in short-term programs in Semmering, Austria and Angoulème, France. Exploratory visits to set up new partnerships have recently been conducted at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana and Yamaguchi University in Japan.

While GIST focuses primarily on globalization abroad, the Multicultural and Global Infusion Committee (MAGIC) supports multicultural learning experiences locally and domestically. A variety of sponsored speakers, book discussions, films, and cultural events are held annually for students and staff with attendance estimated to be over 1,000 individuals each year – including representation from the wider community (e.g., Council of Elgin Religious Leaders, Elgin Human Relations Commission, Elgin Police Department, and the Gail Borden Public Library). Two full-time faculty co-chair the MAGIC committee, which includes 20 part-time and full-time faculty, administrators, staff, and students. MAGIC also assists with cultural competency training provided by the Professional and Organizational Development Office.

3.B.5. ECC faculty are expected to create and broadly disseminate scholarly and artistic works and prepare and update teaching materials. As a condition of employment, faculty are afforded full freedom in research and publications, subject to satisfactory performance of academic duties. Each year, the Board supports one or more faculty sabbaticals as a means to contribute to scholarship and increase the effectiveness of instruction.

Through the Student Success Infrastructure committee, a [Faculty Research Community (FRC)](#) subcommittee was established in 2015. Each participant submits a research proposal and works collaboratively with other FRC members to design, carry out, measure progress, summarize, and share results with ECC and external audiences. Long-term goals of the FRC are to increase faculty interest in scholarship; investigate ways that research can enhance teaching and learning; increase the prestige of excellent teaching; broaden the evaluation of teaching and assessment of learning; increase faculty collaboration across disciplines; and support teaching and learning financially. In a similar way, the Honors Program challenges highly motivated students to lead research investigations with faculty and analyze, synthesize, and share findings.

As described in Core Component 2E, ECC maintains an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that data derived from, or to be derived from, human participants affiliated with ECC (i.e. current, potential, or former students; employees or affiliates of ECC) is collected and used in a manner that complies with standards of acceptable practice and federal mandates. Faculty Research Community projects are also reviewed through this process.

Sources

- ECC General Educ Assessment Annual Report FY2019
- ECC General Education Outcomes

- ECC Library - Lib Guides
- Faculty Research Comm Program Details
- GIST - RCI App and Info
- IRB Intake and Consent Form
- NILOA Transparency Framework.pdf
- Program Outcomes Map shell
- SLAAC Bylaws rev2018-08-28

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1. ECC maintains personnel sufficient to carry out instruction and support needs. Per the college's most recent IPEDS report, we employed 524 (137 full-time and 387 part-time) faculty members. One hundred thirteen (113) full-time faculty are tenured, and 24 are pre-tenured on a tenure track. Full-time faculty consist of instructional faculty, who teach and carry out assessment and committee work; and instructional coordinators, who are appointed by deans to oversee program reviews, adjunct hiring, and scheduling of courses. The last category of faculty include faculty in the Library, who manage collections and archives, oversee circulation of materials, coordinate with the public, and provide technical services and information literacy instruction.

Faculty ensure the primacy of our educational mission. Even as we froze most hiring during Illinois' budget impasse (from 2015 to 2017), we still hired faculty to ensure effective instruction and student learning. We strive to have 60% of all credit hours taught by full-time faculty, an indicator we [report annually](#) and make available through Tableau dashboards. The college's most recent figures come close to this target, especially in gateway courses in English and math, but are farther in others, such as music and art, where we tend to rely on adjunct faculty. We also strive to maintain a student-faculty class ratio of 20:1. In 2019, sixteen new full-time faculty were hired, and seven more will be hired before the end of spring 2020. Fiscal year 2019 marks our largest wave of faculty hiring in the last decade.

3.C.2. In 2017, the college conducted an audit of full-time and part-time faculty qualifications and updated AP 5-103 (Minimum Requirements for Appointment to Faculty) to align to the HLC's *Determining Qualified Faculty* guidelines. AP 5-103 now requires faculty teaching university transfer courses to have a master's degree in the discipline they teach or in a related discipline of at least eighteen (18) graduate hours. Faculty teaching career-technical education courses must have at least a bachelor's degree and 2,000 hours of work experience; or a master's degree in the discipline or in a related discipline of at least eighteen (18) graduate hours and 2,000 hours of work experience. Faculty teaching Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, or English as a Second Language must have a bachelor's degree in the discipline or in a related discipline and one year of teaching experience in the discipline or a related discipline. Faculty teaching pre-college courses must have a bachelor's degree in the discipline or a related discipline. Additional requirements may apply to individual courses to meet applicable laws. The Board/ECCFA contract contains job descriptions for each faculty type, which are reviewed during contract negotiations.

During the 2017 audit, we discovered that two faculty were out of compliance with our administrative procedure, and a development plan was put in place for them to complete and report professional credentials or required work hours to Human Resources. The college also established an agreement with the ECCFA to outline processes for remediation and confirmation moving forward. Relatedly, an agreement was instituted for high school instructors teaching dual credit courses to ensure that their qualifications are the same as ECC faculty on campus. Per agreement, they must also complete dual credit faculty training and annual professional development. Finally, each high school instructor is assigned a Dual Credit Liaison who provides support and completes site visits to ensure quality and rigor.

3.C.3. Expectations for faculty evaluations are described in the ECCFA/Board contract. The forms, procedures, and schedules are detailed in the Faculty Evaluation Handbook. Generally, non-tenured faculty are evaluated annually by a dean during their first three years of employment. The probationary period may be extended for an additional year and notification of non-renewal is given at least sixty days prior to the end of a semester. Tenured faculty are formally evaluated every three years. Unit adjunct II faculty who have taught six semesters or more are evaluated every two years. Unit adjunct I faculty who have taught two to five semesters are evaluated annually. As part of these evaluations, each faculty member submits a self-evaluation, including a professional growth plan, to his or her dean. Student evaluations of instruction are also compiled for each course. In 2017, the College transitioned from paper to Smartevals.com for gathering student feedback on courses.

3.C.4. According to the 2019 Performance Report, professional development expenditures per FTE employee increased from $645 in 2018 to $706 in 2019. Results on the 2018 administration of the CESS show that satisfaction with professional development remains strong. ECC employees' average rating was 3.5 (vs. 3.4 nationally) on the item pertaining to availability of training ("*I have adequate opportunities for training to improve my skills.*") and was 3.6 (vs. 3.4 nationally) on the availability of professional development ("*I have adequate opportunities for professional development.*"). ECC faculty play an active role in the prioritizing and design of

training related to pedagogy through the [Faculty Development Committee](#), as detailed in the Board/ECCFA contract. The committee is the oversight body for formal study, including degrees or certifications, as well as sabbatical leave, financial support for other forms of professional growth such as travel, publications, and professional works.

Per contract, all faculty are expected to participate in professional activities aligned to ECC Strategic Plan goals, participate in professional organizations, and stay current on research and technologies in their fields. Accordingly, the college budgets for professional development at a rate of $750 per year for full-time and $200 for adjunct faculty. Full-time and adjunct faculty may also may apply be awarded credit toward salary lane movement for professional presentations, publications, and certifications as defined in the Faculty Development Handbook.

Adding to these benefits, the [CETL](#) supports ECC faculty and instructional staff with research-based training in pedagogy, andragogy, and instructional technology (see also Subcomponent 5A4). With a mission to study how students learn and how different teaching approaches affects student learning, CETL allows faculty to:

- Demonstrate and facilitate the appropriate use of instructional technologies to enhance learning.

- Provide opportunities for faculty to come together to share teaching experiences and expertise.

- Provide orientation and instructional support to new faculty.

- Provide opportunities for renewal and growth in teaching to senior faculty.

The Center provides support to the Distance Learning Office and Open Education Resources initiative (Action 1.2 of the FY2020 Operating Plan); the Faculty Research Community; and Teaching/Learning for Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE), another faculty subcommittee deploying and overseeing equity in instruction (Action 3.2). Currently, TIDE is using the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity micro-messaging, culturally responsive teaching, and mindset toolkits as best practices, and together with CETL, is engaging faculty in discussions about offering Equity Coach Certification.

3.C.5. All ECC instructors are accessible for student inquiry. Faculty are issued a college email and phone number, which are communicated to students on syllabi. Faculty hold office hours in their offices or laboratories, and office hour schedules are submitted to deans and posted on divisional bulletin boards. Full-time faculty are required to be available for at least 60 minutes for each day they are assigned to teach. Office hours are to be held at least four days per week. Adjunct faculty hold office hours for at least 25 minutes per week for every credit or contact hour of teaching

Engaging students is a hallmark of a culture focused on student success, and ECC's 2012, 2014, and [2017](#) reports from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) indicate

strong positioning in this regard. ECC scores above the mean for large colleges on student-faculty interactions, the benchmark CCSSE uses to index faculty availability and one-on-one consultation. The college will administer the CCSSE again in 2020, and for the first time will administer the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) for faculty teaching CCSSE-survey eligible courses. Results from the CCFSSE will strengthen understanding of engagement from front-line faculty and staff and help us tailor professional development to address needs.

Finally, we administer the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory every three years. Since 2013, ECC students have reported increasing satisfaction with all 12 scaled items, and our 2019 report reveals gains from 5.72 to 6.00 (+0.28) on Instructional Effectiveness, which is the scale that contains items pertaining to faculty feedback and availability. We are especially pleased that all scaled items on the survey outpace national levels.

3.C.6. Staff members providing student services are well qualified and supported in their professional development. Staff in academic advising, financial aid, tutoring, and co-curricular student life have credentials appropriate for their roles. Academic advisors in the Student Success Center have at least a bachelor's degree, a year of experience advising students, and three years' experience in higher education. Financial aid advisors have at least a bachelor's degree and two years' work experience in a financial setting. Professional tutors have at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Required professional experience on PDQs and job descriptions also include proficiency in verbal and written communication and presentation skills.

ECC recognizes the value in providing professional development to maintain the quality of student services. Professional development in tutoring, financial aid, advising, and student life and wellness services is budgeted and overseen by budget officers in these respective areas and collectively by the Assistant Vice President of Student Services and Development. In the current fiscal year, staff in these areas will participate in Illinois chapter meetings of the National Academic Advising Association and the Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. The Board/SSECCA contract (p. 22) allocates $87,000 per fiscal year to professional development for staff, which is awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis at a rate of $2,200 per year for full-time staff and $1,100 per year for part-time staff.

ECC students rate the helpfulness of support services higher than comparison colleges on the CCSSE. In the 2017 report, ECC's scores outpaced other large colleges on items related to interactions among diverse populations, career planning, receiving feedback from instructors, and the use of academic advising. In addition, recent reports from the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI show that satisfaction with support services in generally higher at ECC than peer institutions (e.g., in the 2019 administration, ECC students rated Campus Support Services at 5.98 vs. 5.33 nationally; Registration Effectiveness at 6.04 vs. 5.68; and Academic Services at 6.30 vs. 5.80).

Sources

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- CCSSE Benchmarks Report - All Students 2017
- CETL Booklet - Fall 2019
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- Dual Credit Faculty Liaison - 102219
- Faculty Dev Handbook 2017-19
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- MOU Dual Credit - D300 2019 Mar
- MOU HLC Remed Plan Faculty Qual
- PDQ Academic Advisors
- PDQ Financial Aid Advisor
- SmartEvals_com Webpage
- SSECCA Contract 2017-07-01 to 2020-06-30
- SSECCA Contract 2017-07-01 to 2020-06-30 (page number 23)
- Student Satisfaction Evidence - ATD Conf Proposal 2020

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

3.D.1. ECC's support services assist students throughout their programs. Many are even provided before students apply for admission. Across all services, ECC performs well – in fact, the college's standardized score on the CCSSE's Support for Learners benchmark outperforms other colleges (e.g., 53% vs. 50% on ECC's 2017 administration), and the highest rated item on the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory is Academic Services at 6.30, up from 6.05 since 2013 (and compared to 5.80 nationally). All student support services, descriptions, and contact information are updated annually in ECC's [Student Resource Guide](#), which is prepared by the Student Life Office and emailed to students and available in print, in the College Catalog, the college's website, and within D2L.

Admissions and Registration. Admission and enrollment information is available on www.elgin.edu and in-person at the Admissions Office. Bilingual staff assist Spanish- and Polish-speaking students, and all [registration information](#) is available in English, Spanish, and Polish in print and online. Over the years, the office has also developed presentations for Latinx students and families. Additionally, an Adult Education coordinator holds information sessions three times a year, which focus on prior learning, transcript evaluations, and other needs.

The Managing Director of Enrollment Services leads the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee, a cross-departmental team that meets twice per semester to ensure steady enrollment and ongoing matriculation of students through programs. The committee [strategically connects many enrollment initiatives](#) of the Operating Plan, including call campaigns for near-completers, outreach to adult students, course scheduling modifications, and enactment of new placement standards. In 2019, ECC acquired Hobsons

Naviance software to guide targeted marketing communications to prospective high school students. Since acquiring the product, ECC has seen a 23% increase from fall 2018 to fall 2019, representing approximately 400 additional current high school/recent high school graduates.

Academic Advising and Transfer Services. Academic and transfer advising services are offered through the Student Success Center. A detailed description is provided in Subcomponent 3D3.

Early Alert Program. The Early Alert program, internally called [Spartan Alert](#), was established in 2015 as a tool to recognize and document student needs. Referrals through the platform are delivered to a case manager (usually the student's academic advisor), who connects students to campus resources and individualized support. The program has seen continuous growth from the start. Academic year 2018-19 saw 1,683 alerts in total, the highest the program began. Data shows that academically at-risk students served by Spartan Alert achieve, on average, higher GPAs in their classes and higher fall-to-spring retention.

Career Exploration. Assistance in choosing majors and careers is offered through the Career Development Services Office. In addition to individual appointments, this office offers coursework that offers hands-on exercises. GSD-120 (*Exploring Careers and College Majors*) is offered each fall and spring, and an online version has been offered since 2012. The course is designed especially for students who have not decided on majors and uses self-concept theory to match students' career choices to interests. Since fall 2017, the college has used funds from the Pathways-to-Careers and Perkins Grants to offer GSD-120 courses free of charge.

Internships. The college maintains an internship program which provides real-world skills tied to students' programs of study. In the 2018-19 academic year, 101 students from university transfer and career-technical programs completed internship intake training to build self-efficacy and employability skills. Forty-nine (49) employers hired 52 students as interns. The internship coordinator advocates strongly for internship salary, and over 85% of interns are paid.

Apprenticeships. Recognizing a need to build upon internships, ECC formed the Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning Office in 2018 and launched an apprenticeship program (see Core Component 1D). US Department of Labor-approved apprenticeships in IST/Maintenance Technology and Basic Nurse Assistant began that year with 11 apprentice-students, and IMT/Machine Tool Technology was added in 2019 for an additional 10 apprentice-students. Participants in the program earn degrees and certificates while simultaneously earning salaries, full benefits, and guaranteed employment with job advances. Employers pay the costs of tuition, books, and fees. While fairly new, apprenticeships are growing, and currently ECC and area employers are articulating longer-term outcomes, including employment retention and milestone completion points.

Wellness Services. The mission of [Wellness Services Office](#) is to broaden students' understanding of personal health. Using a holistic approach, the office focuses on eight wellness dimensions: environmental, emotional, financial, intellectual, occupational/academic, physical, social, and spiritual. The office started in spring 2015 through a redesign of academic advising (see

Subcomponent 3D3) and has experienced caseload increases ever since (see Student Services and Development 2018 Annual Report, p. 32). Wellness Services offer free short-term individual counselling up to four sessions per semester, crisis intervention training, support groups, and seminars. Two full-time professionals are on staff with plans to add a third in 2020 and a fourth in 2021. Student concerns not met through Wellness Services are referred to off-campus providers, and the office collaborates with the Renz Center to provide 24-hour intervention and with Campus Well, an online magazine.

Student Disabilities Services. The Student Disabilities Services Office serves students with physical, cognitive, or socioemotional disabilities, assisting approximately 450 to 550 students each semester. Students with disabilities self-identify. At intake, professionals verify eligibility through provided documentation and oversee accommodations as noted in AP 3-501. The office works closely with the Testing Center, Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Offices, and the Student Success Center to ensure accessibility in testing and with online materials.

Like Wellness Services, the Student Disabilities Services Office has experienced increasing caseloads in recent years and hired both an administrative assistant and accessibility specialist. The course syllabus template recommends that faculty include disability services statements in syllabi. The Student Disabilities Services Office also organizes and leads the Advocacy for Disabled and Abled People Together (ADAPT) student club. Finally, the office works closely with high schools to conduct presentations.

Financial Aid and Financial Literacy. The Financial Aid and Scholarships Office provides a suite of financial resources to students and their families. In addition to assisting with financial aid questions, the office oversees ECC's Financial Smarts Program which includes community workshops and high school presentations (approximately 30 events and 5,000 attendees on average per year), a Financial Literacy 101 module on the ECC website, student loan counseling, hands-on workshops to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), and presentations in student orientations and in classes. The office oversees student campus employment, awarding and packaging ECC Foundation student scholarships, and aids in phone call check-in campaigns. In 2018, the office saw 18,629 walk-in visitors, received 5,426 files to package and award, and made 3,342 calls to students and community members.

Testing Services. ECC's Testing Services Office/Testing Center administers a variety of placement tests, make-up tests, internet tests, proficiency tests, and vendor certification tests for students (CLEP, WorkKeys, and Pearson GED and HiSET are examples). The Center administers the Psychological Service Bureau Health Occupations (PSB-HOA) tests for students entering health professions and provides PSB-HOA workshops in spelling, reading, science, and math. Various PSB prep books housed in the Renner Academic Library are used by the Center for math and English placement workshops. The Center collaborates with academic programs to offer certifications and proficiency exams and uses text messaging (via the RegisterBlast appointment system). Professionals in the Center proctor over 30,000 tests annually for students and community members, who use the Center for workplace certification tests.

Tutoring. The Tutoring Center operates in six locations across campus in private, drop-in, and online sessions. Students may attend as often as they like and stay as long as they need. In 2018, the Tutoring Center removed fees for private tutoring sessions, and now all tutoring services are free of charge. In addition to private tutoring for individual courses, the Tutoring Center offers basic skills "Filling the Gap" sessions on computer basics, biology study skills, test taking, test anxiety, and note-taking techniques. Online tutoring is available for over 50 courses through D2L. In 2018, there were over 20,000 student visits across all forms of tutoring.

ECC also offers two subject-specific labs – the Write Place and the Math Lab. [The Write Place](#) provides free one-to-one assistance in all types of writing – reports, essays, grammar, punctuation, formatting papers, speech outlines and vocabulary and helps with reading comprehension. It also offers a free non-credit course, *Writing with Integrity*. Faculty across the college heavily promote The Write Place in their teaching. The Math Lab is available on a drop-in basis four days per week. Staffed by professional math facilitators, it is a relaxing space for students to form study groups and seek assistance with math problems.

Library. The Renner Academic Library and Learning Resources Center serves students, faculty, staff, and community members. The Library's homepage serves as both a communication tool and an instructional tool (http://library.elgin.edu). [Research guides](#), created by ECC librarians, house information on locating references for various topics and are used online, in-person, and via messaging chats. The Library has created 329 individual research guides as of September 2019 used by faculty and students. Sixty eight (68) computers are available in the Library open lab, an two Library classroom contain computer stations. Enclosed glass study rooms are available for group or individual study. The Library also lends out sixty Chromebooks and twenty laptops, 50 medical models, and 30 graphing calculators. Interlibrary loan services are used to circulate resources located at other institutions.

Underrepresented and At-Risk Students. ECC supports four federally funded TRIO programs (Student Support Services, TRIO Student Support Services/English as a Second Language, Upward Bound, and Talent Search) and one self-funded homegrown program, the Transition Academy – which assist underrepresented high school students with supports for college success. Student Support Services works with college students, while Upward Bound, Talent Search, and the Transition Academy prepare middle and high school students. Across these programs, services include:

- Referrals to academic planning resources
- Tutoring
- Financial aid and scholarships
- Assistance with college applications and transfer
- Visits to four-year institutions
- Workshops on college life and expectations
- Leadership development
- Cultural and social activities
- Referral to college and community support services

- Mentoring

Programs for Special Populations. ECC is committed to providing services to special populations. Three such populations are veterans, male students of color, and student athletes.

The college employs a full-time Veteran Services Coordinator who provides transition support and guidance and publishes a veteran's guide, a monthly newsletter, and organizes resource fairs and special events. One academic advisor is assigned to all veteran students. Moreover, a Veteran's Resources Center was dedicated and opened in May 2017. ECC has recognized as a military friendly school by G.I. Jobs Magazine. This year ECC is also recognized as a military-friendly spouse institution. Finally, ECC maintains a student club, Military Branches United (MBU), and has a chapter of the SALUTE National Honor Society. The master syllabus template encourages faculty to include a veteran's assistance policy statement on syllabi.

Another special population receiving special services are men of color. In fall 2019, ECC began participating in the Triumph (Transforming and Inspiring Undergraduate Men Pursuing Higher Education) Expansion Initiative, funded by ECMC Foundation. The goal of the mentoring program is to increase the retention, transfer and/or graduation rates of men of color by attempting to address head-on the challenges minoritized males face as they navigate higher education. The program requires a series of required check-ins which build cumulatively over time with a heavy emphasis on the first year and transitional support services. The Triumph Coordinator is new to ECC and still in the process of recruiting student mentees and community mentors.

Student athletes at ECC have an assigned advisor who assists with academic planning and accountability. The college's Athletes Commit to Excellence (ACE) program includes mandatory meetings with advisors and required logins of study hours for continued play eligibility. During the 2018-19 academic year, 16 first-year student athletes qualified for Academic All-Conference recognition (with GPAs above 3.0) for earning 24 credit hours or more, and 18 second-year athletes earned 48 hours or more. ECC grants the Dick Durrant Award to the female and male student athletes with the highest cumulative GPAs, and last year's female and male winners earned GPAs of 3.73 and 3.84 respectively.

Open Access Time Management Resource. Many ECC students struggle to balance academic, work, social, and family responsibilities. In response, the Student Services Division developed an online suite of time management resources at https://sites.google.com/student.elgin.edu/timemanagementresources/home. Designed to be self-guided, the resources can be accessed online by any student at any time, but students are encouraged to debrief with academic advisors to maximize impact. A similar resource for study skills is currently in development.

Employment Support. ECC's Workforce Transitions Office assists unemployed or underemployed students through financial assistance for tuition, testing fees and books; referrals for childcare and transportation, resume development and interview skill training; job search and referral

assistance; support groups and one-on-one advising; computer skills training; and employer tours.

3.D.2. ECC is an open-admission institution. All first-time students are required to attend a new student orientation to learn about support services and meet with an academic advisor to understand placement testing and course selection. An online orientation is currently under development and will go live in spring 2020.

Placement into many ECC courses is based on solid demonstration of minimum competencies in reading, English, and math prior to enrolling. Students have access to a number of placement tests and preparation workshops to fulfill this requirement. ECC accepts standardized test scores from ACT, SAT, PARCC, and HiSet, successful completion of high school transitional math courses, prior college coursework, and early college credit (e.g., advanced placement or CLEP). For students who do not meet minimum requirements, ECC administers the ALEKS (math), College Success Reading Test (reading), and an ECC-developed writing placement test (writing) to determine course placement. Through analysis and statistical modeling done in the Institutional Research Office, the Math and English Programs have allowed placement through high school GPAs since 2015 as described in Core Component 4C. Analyses of historical performance data, placement test scores, and GPAs are used to validate and implement these alternative enrollment options.

Core Component 4A contains details on new placement standards recently adopted state-wide. These recommendations allow multiple methods for students to qualify for entry into college-level English and math. ECC had already been implementing these options prior to the release of these recommendations with the exception allowing high school GPA, in itself, to qualify for placement into college-level courses. Per the state's new recommendation, ECC is now allowing this -- cumulative high school GPAs of greater than 3.0 are now considered college-ready in English and cumulative GPAs above 3.0 plus the successful completion of a senior-year math course (which is not required in Illinois high schools) are considered college-ready in math. Although not yet formally adopted by the ICCB, ECC has already adopted these recommendations and began implementation in 2019 (see Operating Plan 2020 [Action 7.1](#)).

For many years, ECC has focused on ensuring students progress through developmental courses and matriculate onto college-level courses quickly. To this end, the Math and English Programs have implemented accelerated courses, as described in Core Component 4C. Accelerated options include a single developmental course in place of two separate courses in math and literacy (e.g., 4-credit and 5-credit MTH-099 and LTC-099) as well as pairing developmental and college-level courses into hybrid courses (Accelerated Learning Program).

Lastly, the Alliance for College Readiness helps ensure that high school graduates are college-ready throughout District 509. A formal partnership among ECC and public school districts, the Alliance started at ECC in 2006. As a means for improving district-wide readiness, ECC examines [long-term trends in placement results](#) for new freshman from local high schools and shares this information quarterly with high schools. Results are encouraging and show that the

proportion of incoming high school students who arrive to ECC college-ready (i.e., have no developmental placements in math, English or reading) has risen from less than one-quarter (24%) when the Alliance first formed in 2006 to a third (33%) as of 2018. ECC uses this information to monitor placement practices, as noted earlier.

3.D.3. Academic advising is housed in the Student Success Center, which is located on the first floor near the main entrance. The Center also houses Academic Advising, Career Development Services, Transfer Services, and Wellness Services. Its mission is to foster collaborative student-advisor relationships that promote learning and empower students to make informed decisions to create meaningful pathways toward goal achievement.

In May 2014, the college transitioned from having faculty advisors with a primary focus on counseling to staff advisors focused on academic planning. This reorganization was prompted by extensive research, consulting services, and negotiations between the ECCFA and the Board and resulted in relocating faculty counselors to academic departments and creating separate offices for advising, transfer, and wellness. Since this time, the college has enjoyed steady gains in service excellence with shorter wait times in key areas and gains in student persistence, completion, and satisfaction. In fact, according to the Current Student Survey, our homegrown survey given each fall, the percentage of students who reported being satisfied with academic advising has grown from 66% to 76% since 2013. Over the same period, the number of students logging one or more visits to the Student Success Center has jumped from 54% to 74%.

Within the Student Success Office, Academic Advising employs 10 full-time and 3 part-time advisors, two of whom are bilingual. Students are divided among advisors, and advisees remain with their assigned advisor throughout their programs. Special student populations have designated advisors – athletes, Adult Education/ESL students, high school dual credit students, students in health professions, international students, and veterans. Many academic programs have retention staff, such as the Student Life Office, which houses the Triumph Program for minoritized males (see Subcomponent 3D1) and the TRIO Office. The Wellness Services Office employs two full-time counseling professionals and has plans to add two more over the next two years. Currently we have two professionals in the Transfer Services Office who collaborate with baccalaureate-granting institutions to provide articulation.

A hallmark of ECC's advising model is the use of an [advising syllabus](#) with descriptions of best practices and student learning outcomes that encompass cognition, behaviors, and values. ECC's case management approach makes it essential that advisors use data to track students and deliver tailored interventions. To that end, we increasingly rely on technology. We are pleased with near universal student usage of the Ellucian Student Planning Module, which we track and area able to report through Colleague extracts, and increasing faculty usage of Spartan Alert, which we use to 'flag' students who exhibit at-risk behaviors (e.g., missed assignments, etc.) or whose GPAs are in jeopardy per AP 1-102 (Standards of Academic Progress). For such students, academic advisors reach out proactively to design success plans and/or make referrals to tutoring, Wellness Services, or other offices.

The vendor supplying Spartan Alert is discontinuing the platform, and we are actively bidding services for a replacement in 2020. At this point, two vendors are in contention, and internal constituencies are discussing the features we would like in a new system. Our overarching aim is to strengthen case management and use predictive analytics to customize advising and support services. At this point, we have a hunch what matters for success – e.g., completion of gateway math, persistence to 20 credit hours during the first year, etc. – but we need technology to sift through data and guide customizations. We recognize that students' needs are varied – some may require mandatory interventions at key milestones, and others only occasional check-ins – and we look forward to being able to deliver services tailored to insights derived from student data.

3.D.4. ECC's maintains an infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning. The campus contains thirteen buildings, nearly all of which were built or modernized since 2009. Facilities foster classroom and co-curricular learning. In addition to classrooms and labs, the Visual and Performing Arts Center houses the state-of-the-art Blizzard Theater and is home to student performances, community ensembles, and nationally-known artists. ECC also maintains a sizable art and fossil collection. An onsite Early Childhood Lab School provides opportunities for students and local hospitals provide clinical sites.

ECC is working with a consultant to create a new campus master plan, as described in Core Component 5A. With final delivery expected in March 2020, the campus plan will inform future classrooms, labs, and office spaces, the layout of buildings, connectors and walkways, parking lots, and outdoor spaces. Through the process, ECC is simultaneously conducting a market gap study to better prioritize program growth and compliment needs analyses conducted during program reviews. The master planning process is already laying important groundwork needed to launch an Advanced Manufacturing Center, and ECC is considering options that include purchasing and refurbishing a light manufacturing plant located adjacent to Building K, the location where the Small Business Development Center is being relaunched. The Board of Trustees has reserved funds for future expansion in addition to funds appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly.

Technology infrastructure is strong and supported partially by a $5 per credit hour technology fee for students. ECC uses the Ellucian Colleague ERP to support student information systems, including admissions, registration, financial aid, student billing, testing, and advising. In addition to transactional processing and reporting, Colleague provides ADFS Single Sign-On to web content and supports push notifications/alerts for campus news and events. Self-service web-enabled systems by Ellucian and other providers include: login/account password management, ApplyOnline for new students, academic planning for current students, faculty and staff directories, catalog course and program searches (via LeapFrog), registration, course grades, address changes, online payments and payment plans, tax forms, and transcript requests (via WebAdvisor), and appointment scheduling (online, front desk, and walk-in) and appointment reminders via text (via CampusCast).

ECC maintains two free and fully redundant, high-speed wireless networks called 'public' and 'secure'. Both feature high-speed connections with 396 access points covering the entire campus. 'Public' is recommended for guests, community members, and students. 'Secure' is used by employees. Web-enabled computers are available in the Renner Academic Library, the First Stop student hub, and in computer labs. All classrooms are "smart" classrooms, equipped with computer lecterns connected to projectors. There are multiple purpose computer classrooms through campus as well. Since 2015, the Information Technology Office has upgraded audio-visual equipment in all classrooms and in 2020 will upgrade audio-visual capabilities in the Building E University Business Center, which serves internal and external clients.

In 2018, ECC upgraded its server infrastructure to "next generation" redundant firewalls with intrusion detection systems. The college operates a 10GB campus backbone network with 1GB connections to desktops. An IP phone system covers all offices, conference rooms, and classrooms. Faculty, staff and students are given storage space on the network accessible on- and off-campus and college-issued email accounts associated with Google Apps. In 2020, the college will launch Amazon Web Services for cloud storage. Faculty and students utilize D2L as the learning management system, and the Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Office provides assistance for faculty, lab coordinators, and students. A dedicated Helpdesk is available and assists faculty and students with technical issues. A technician is available for events held beyond normal operating hours.

Noteworthy technology accomplishments since ECC's 2015 assurance filing include:

- Implementing a multi-layered Rave emergency alert system and upgrading the campus-wide surveillance system. The college has 420 security cameras located throughout campus.
- Special physical remote access controls to a quadriplegic faculty member to open doors and operate elevators from a chair-mounted laptop
- A mobile app called Ellucian Go! that gives students access to campus news and announcements, course schedules, important phone numbers, account balances, the ability to register and drop sections, view class schedules, view grades, and create a virtual business card/profile

3.D.5. ECC employs professional librarians who provide reference services, bibliographic instruction, maintain library databases, circulation and periodicals, and support interlibrary loan. A dedicated distance learning librarian coordinates information literacy instruction and library resources for distance learning students. Librarians collaborate with faculty on library research assignments, host in-person workshops for classes, conduct student research appointments, provide one-on-one reference service, conduct research for faculty, staff, and administration, and provide bibliographic instruction as embedded librarians in online and hybrid classes. Students are able to use an online search of library resources as well as an instant chat feature. These skills are emphasized in many courses such as ENG-101 (English Composition I), CMS-101 (Fundamentals of Speech), and many other disciplines. Skills are also reinforced within several

general education courses. In 2018-19, students interacted with librarians 10,716 times through classes, embedded chats, and in-person instruction.

As of August 2019, the library's collection includes 67,981 print books and 24,909 e-books, and 6,043 non-print items (i.e., CDs, videos, medical models and DVDs). The library maintains print collection of magazines, journals, newspapers, course reserve materials, ECC archives, and online access to thousands of full text journals and magazines.

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- ECC Student Resource Guide
- ECC Students Disabilities Brochure
- ECC The Write Place
- ECC Wellness Svs Brochure
- Final Placement Recommendations Approved 2018-06-01
- Master Syllabus Template 2019 01-12
- Time Management Resources
- Working SEM Plan (Fall 2019)

3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

3.E.1. Co-curricular learning opportunities are abundant at ECC and offer a diverse set of opportunities to reinforce classroom instruction. Co-curricular opportunities allow students to build and transfer soft skills, cultivate emotional and social well-being, and identify purpose and a sense of belonging.

Coordination of co-curricular activities resides within academic programs and also within the Student Life Office. They are listed in the [ECC Student Handbook and Academic Planner](). The mission of the office is:

to promote student learning and success by providing co-curricular programs, student leadership opportunities, and an overall campus climate in which students can thrive.

This mission is carried out through programming in the following areas: new student programs and the First Year Experience Office; educational programming; clubs and organizations; culture; leadership; service/volunteering; entertainment; stress release; and civic engagement/governance.

The Student Life Office is located in the center of campus near the Jobe Lounge and cafeteria. The office has dedicated conference rooms and cubicles for student organizations, the Student Trustee, scholarship recipients, *[The Observer]()* student newspaper staff, legal clinics, and student creative work. In addition, a full-time Coordinator of First Year Programs and Spartan student peer leaders occupy the First Year Program Office within this space. Collectively, the Student Life Office averages 970 events per year, impacting nearly 25,000 students, employees, and community members. The office also oversees student clubs and organizations, which collectively hold 320 activities annually.

Some examples of co-curricular offerings in Student Life include:

- Honors Program Collaboration - Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the [Honors Program Office]() have collaborated since 2014, resulting in the adoption of a new course, CBS 199 (Honors in Action and Honors Capstone Portfolio) and an Honors Symposium,

as described in Core Component 2D. The 2018 symposium welcomed 26 entries, while the 2019 one welcomed 42 entries, a 62% increase over the prior year. Two Honors in Action essays garnered international awards, and one was published in the *Civic Scholar: Phi Theta Kappa Journal of Undergraduate Research* in spring 2019.

- Substance Abuse Awareness Day/Drunk Busters – Since 2010, the Human Services Program, Student Life Office, Student Government Association, and the ECC Police Department host this annual event to raise awareness of substance addiction. Human Services classes meet to evaluate the event and offer feedback.

- Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference - The Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference (www.skywayconference.com), founded in 1969, is both an athletic conference (per the National Junior College Athletics Association) and a venue for student co-curricular learning. At the annual conference, ECC and seven suburban Chicago community colleges supports a range of intercollegiate sports and along with a STEM Poster Competition and Exhibition, Writers' Competition and Festival, Jazz Band Competition and Festival, and Juried Art Competition and Reception.

- Illinois Community College Activities Association (ICCSAA) Statewide Essay Contest (www.iccsaa.net) – Approximately 30 students submit essays to the ICCSAA each year that are centered on student needs and interests. These are competitively judged for state scholarships, and evaluations inform future program improvements. Two successful student initiatives that derived from a recent ICCSAA Leadership Retreat include an active shooter training with ECC Police Department and a Wellness and Empowerment Summit.

In addition to the co-curricular learning programs sponsored regularly by Student Life, faculty have invested in creating robust opportunities that extend beyond the classroom. This includes the Speech Team and the Writers Center, for example, along with discipline-specific academic clubs, such as the Nursing Club (nursing), Human Services Club (human services) and EdRising (early childhood education). Building upon knowledge gained inside the classroom, faculty contributed to the design of a math history mural in Building D, a poetry wall in Building B, and work with students to contribute original student artwork in posters for campus events and journalistic articles in *The Observer* student newspaper. Additionally, faculty engage students regularly in activities that supplement course context, such as film screenings, the Socrates Café lunch series, and Humanities Center lectures.

Finally, ECC is a leading community college for international programs. The college offers 66 study abroad opportunities in more than 26 countries. International opportunities are developed and facilitated through the Center for International Education and Programs Office within the Learning Resources and International Education Division. ECC is a member of the Association of International Educators, Community Colleges for International Development, and the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs, one of the largest regional consortia of its kind, which ensures student access to global study regardless of background,

major, or income. The college sends approximately 40 students abroad each year, many with financial assistance.

3.E.2. Assessment of co-curricular learning is emerging at ECC, and we recognize a need for further growth. Presently we have been conducting a campus-wide audit of co-curricular offerings, methods for evaluation, and key learning artifacts. As various lists emerge, the Program Assessment Administrator, Manager of Outcomes Assessment, and academic deans formed a Co-Curricular Assessment Committee in 2019 that has begun mapping them onto general education outcomes. Gaps identified through this process will be used to define expectations for student learning and formulate a regular process of review. In the Operating Plan, we set Action 2.1 (*Identify synergies and gaps in co-curricular programming by mapping to general education and program learning outcomes*) to commit formally to this work.

At the program level, co-curricular assessment is further along. Many co-curricular offerings exist as part of courses, which are documented through MCOs and assessed through course assessment and program reviews. Examples include clinical service experiences in health and education programs; field trips taken in several business, arts, and humanities courses; and General Student Development courses, which we use to record experiential learning (e.g., GSD 150 – Volunteer Service).

We also track co-curricular learning outside of classes. One way this is done is by tracking participation in internships, campus events, and student clubs. For example, participation in the Illinois Skills USA competitions helps gauge students' industry-recognized skills in career-technical programs. Formal evaluations by external judges are shared with ECC faculty to inform modification to instructional practices. Finally, the college gauges effectiveness of co-curricular programming through curriculum funds. We incentivize curriculum modernization through grants offered to faculty from the ECC Foundation (approximately $15,000 awarded annually) and from the Global/International Studies Taskforce ($4,000 awarded annually), which indirectly shape the delivery of co-curricular offerings.

Perceptual feedback from students, faculty, and advisory committees is another means we use to monitor co-curricular programming. Focus groups are one example. In the 2018-19 academic year, the Student Success Infrastructure held focus groups with students of color, adult students, and LGBTQ students to inform actions in our Operating Plan. Another example is the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Every three years, ECC participates in this survey, which assess students' perceptions of co-curricular learning. Our 2017 report shows growth over the prior 2014 report on many co-curricular benchmarks – e.g., Student-Faculty Interaction jumped from 47.2 in 2014 to 50.5 in 2017, while Support for Learners jumped from 50.0 to 52.9 (benchmarks are standardized to have a mean of 50.0). Post-graduation surveys of career-technical alumni help gauge the quality of experiential learning. In the 2018 survey, 97% of responding alumni report being satisfied or very satisfied with their ECC courses; 91% believe ECC prepared them well for further education; and 89% for job preparation.

Lastly, the college's ability to learn from data and its willingness to reorganize services in co-curricular areas is testimony to its commitment. Through analysis of data, we have reorganized or added positions in Financial Aid, Career Development Services, and the Student Success Center. Relatedly and have submitted and received external grants to strengthen co-curricular support in career-technical programs.

Sources

- CCSSE Benchmarks Report - All Students 2017
- Civic Scholar 2019
- Civic Scholar 2019 (page number 66)
- Co-Curricular Inventory - template
- Co-Curricular Meeting Minutes 2019-08-26
- ECC Educ Abroad Leader Handbook
- ECC Student Planner 2019-2020
- Honors Program Handbook 2018-2019
- Observer Student Newspaper Article - ECC CTE Space
- Study Abroad Program Opportunities 2019-2020

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC is committed to ensuring that the education that students receive and the environment in which they learn are of the highest quality. The college achieves this, in part, through curricular policies and practices that have been established to provide consistent rigor across programs and courses. Practices described in Criterion 3 include the use of Master Course Outlines for each course, a faculty-led Curriculum Committee, curricular management software (CurricUNet) for tracking, and a robust program review self-study process. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) also provides support for ensuring the college achieves quality and maintains consistency in courses and programs and works collaboratively with the Illinois Articulation Initiative state program for transfer.

Support services at ECC augment its high quality educational environment. Services are free for students and used often through referrals from faculty, administrators, staff, or students themselves. They include support for academic and/or personal issues (e.g., tutoring, testing, Wellness Services, Spartan Alert, etc.) and a wide array of initiatives specifically designed for traditionally underserved student populations (e.g., the TRIO programs, Athletes Commit to Education Program for athletes, the Veteran's Resource Center, Triumph grant program, etc.). A highly visible and engaged Student Life Office enriches the learning environment with nearly 1,000 co-curricular offerings and events throughout the year.

Finally, ECC recognizes the importance of ongoing professional development for both faculty and support staff in improving service and support for students. Faculty have access to professional development through processes of the Faculty Development Committee and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Annual faculty sabbaticals, a Faculty Research Committee, and a regular faculty evaluation process guided by the Board/ECCFA contract and Faculty Evaluation Handbook provide additional support. Staff have access to professional development funds on a first-come/first-serve basis through the Board/SSECCA contract as managed by Human Resources. Ongoing professional development for both faculty and staff is also provided, internally, through regular workshops, classes and training sessions provided by the Professional and Organizational Development Office.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

4.A.1. All academic and service programs at ECC participate in five-year self-studies as required by the ICCB's state-mandated program review process. During the process, programs review and describe key aspects of program needs, costs, and quality, including an analysis of performance metrics. The process is overseen by the Curriculum and Assessment Office and supported by the Vice President of TLSD and the Deans Council. Each year, these offices formally introduce the process to faculty instructional coordinators, whose work is facilitated by an ICCB self-study template and the Institutional Research Office. The end product is the annual Program Review Report, which is presented to the ECC Board in late summer, submitted to ICCB, and posted on the college's website.

4.A.2. Course instructors are responsible for grading students' class work and assigning grades per AP 1-103. The Registrar is responsible for recording grades and calculating and recording GPAs. All courses assigned an incomplete grade must be completed by a due date designated by the faculty member. The college recommends completion within 120 calendar days after the last day of the semester, and a failing grade (F) is recorded for courses not completed within the date assigned. Faculty have one calendar year of the course-end date to complete all grade changes.

In addition to course grades, ECC recognizes that students may attain credits at other accredited institutions. The transfer process starts with an evaluation request made by students via www.elgin.edu. Students send ECC official transcripts to the Records and Registration Office, officially declare a program of study at ECC, and create an educational plan with an academic advisor. Courses transferred in must be successfully completed and applicable to the ECC degree or certificate a student is earning. ECC uses two external resources for evaluating student coursework at other institutions:

- www.itransfer.org for general education courses at participating Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) institutions
- http://tes.collegesource.com is a widely-used interactive database of course data from institutions of higher education

External course descriptions and course syllabi are reviewed and logged by ECC's Credentials Analyst to determine transferability, and further if information beyond what is provided in a course description is needed, it is provided by faculty instructional coordinators.

ECC credits also transfer to other institutions. As a member of the IAI, ECC's general education courses are articulated every five years during program reviews. For courses completed successfully as part of AA or AS degrees, the Board of Trustees guarantees acceptance of ECC credits at transfer institutions, backed by an offer of a refund of tuition for any courses not accepted (subject to the terms outlined in the College Catalog). Similarly, the Board provides a vocational skills guarantee. Students graduating with AAS degrees in occupational programs are guaranteed competency in technical skill areas, backed by an offer of up to 15 credit hours of retraining at no additional cost (subject to the terms outlined in the Course Catalog).

ECC also awards credit for learning experiences other than formal instruction for applied or enrolled students. AP 1-101 describes processes by which ECC evaluates and awards credit through Advanced Placement (AP) testing, CLEP testing, proficiency credit, non-college institutions, non-US credentials, foreign transcripts, and military experiences. ECC's website provides definitions of each category. Availability of credit is included in each course description, and each program determines the means by which credit may be granted (e.g., oral exams, written exams, portfolio review, or demonstrated skills, see Course Catalog). The Curriculum Committee regularly discusses and votes on proposed changes to the availability and types of proficiency credits.

Students begin the prior learning review process by consulting with an academic advisor or instructor, completing a proficiency request form to the appropriate dean, and paying the designated fee. The College Catalog contains proficiency information for every course.

Finally, in addition to written procedures, ECC provides students with tools to assist with credit evaluation. A class time calculator is available to determine section end times based on start times, required contact hours, and total number of sessions, and a credit/contact hour vs. schedule report is used to ensure schedules provide necessary minutes of instruction per ECC and ICCB requirements. These tools are used by deans, associate deans, and office coordinators as they build course schedules, and the college communicates any updates to credit policies, procedures, and/or tools during biannual TLSD Update meetings, held twice per semester. Recently, the college launched the TLSD Google Team Site with important new, updates, and reminders.

4.A.3. As described above, ECC accepts credits from other institutions. The Records and Registration Office uses standard external resources (e.g., www.itransfer.organd http://tes.collegesource.com), and course descriptions to determine transferability. During this process, all ECC courses numbered 100 and above and course grades from other institutions of A through D are used to determine cumulative GPAs for ECC students earning associates degrees. The academic residency procedure (AP 1-301) clarifies that a minimum of number of credits must be taken at ECC to earn a degree or certificate, which is verified during this process.

4.A.4. ECC uses the CurricUNET course management system to catalog and maintain master course outlines (MCOs) containing course descriptions, course topics, and learning outcomes. MCOs are approved by the Curriculum Committee as proposals are brought forth by faculty. Curriculum Committee bylaws state:

"The Committee will make recommendations for approval or denial (of proposals) by considering such criteria as the educational philosophy of Elgin Community College; the educational needs and goals of the academic discipline and programs; the educational needs of the students; the educational needs of the community; the graduation requirements of Elgin Community College; the transferability of courses; and the State guidelines and requirements."

At a minimum, ECC faculty review courses every five years when undergoing program reviews. However, course updates can also be made as needed to ensure that MCOs are clear and reflect rigor. Proposed changes to courses must be brought to the Curriculum Committee by a program faculty member, and support for crafting learning outcomes is provided by the Curriculum and Assessment Office following Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). Course syllabi reflect the content of the MCO from which they derive, a practice which was implemented in 2015 in response to feedback from ECC's Assurance Argument review.

To ensure course rigor and student preparedness, ECC relies on several methods. The first is ECC's policy on minimum competencies (AP 1-104) in reading, English, and math for IAI transfer-level courses. These requirements were formally adopted in 2006. Since then, many non-IAI

transfer and career-technical courses have adopted prerequisites or require concurrent enrollment in prerequisites and program courses. Additionally, the course mapping exercises done during program reviews and course assessment practices assist ECC programs in identifying appropriate prerequisites for their courses. Placement testing procedures in the Testing Center ensure that requirements are followed. Finally, special coding within ECC's Colleague ERP system aids the college in routing students to required prerequisites as they register and also aids the Records and Registration Office with enforcement of requirements.

After many years without a consistent approach to placement methods for college-level English and math, the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents approved in June 2018 the recommendations outlined by the Illinois Community College Chief Academic Officers (ICCCAO) and the Illinois Community College Chief Student Services Officers (ICCCSSO) to adopt on new state-wide placement methods and scores. These recommendations recognize multiple methods for students to qualify as college-ready and were prompted by already-existing standardized introductory college-level curricula adopted by the IAI. ECC was one of the first Illinois colleges to adopt the recommendations in summer 2019. Placement results and their impacts on success in courses are being collected now by ECC programs through the Institutional Research Office.

AP 5-103 outlines the standards ECC uses to ensure that faculty are appropriately qualified. As explained in Core Component 3C, qualifications to teach ECC courses vary by course type (e.g., transfer, career-technical, Adult Basic Education, Library, and performing arts courses), and if additional requirements apply to individual courses, details are specified in the MCO for that course. ECC conducted a comprehensive review of faculty qualifications in 2017 and, in that process, also created professional development plans for any faculty who did not meet minimum qualification. The college's qualifications are now in line with HLC, ICCB, and even ECC's own requirements.

ECC has offered high school dual credit for many years. Courses offered to high school students include: general education courses for students with at least a 3.0 GPA or in the top 10% of their high school class; technical preparatory courses for students with at least a 2.0 GPA who are interested in career-technical courses; and Accelerate College for full-time dual credit students with at least a 3.0 GPA and college-ready placement test scores. Like all ECC students, dual credit students are provided a suite of ECC support services, including use of the Library, tutoring, and D2L training. All are assessed and meet the same minimum competencies as other ECC students.

Prior to spring 2019, all dual credit at the college was offered only on campus and taught only by ECC faculty. Prior to that, ECC collaborated extensively with area high schools to outline expectations for offering in-high school dual credit for the first time, beginning with ENG-101 (English Composition I) and gradually expanding to include COL-101 (College 101), GSD-120 and GSD-160 (General Student Development), HIS-151 (History), HOS-101 (Hospitality), and PHC-111 (Physical Education).

The arrival of ECC dual credit in high schools ushered in new quality practices. First, ECC and partner high schools work together to ensure that dual credit courses align to National Alliance of Concurrent Programs (NACEP) accreditation standards. ECC also ensures, via a new [dual credit memorandum of understanding](#), that all dual credit instructors meet standards of AP 5-103. Relatedly, ECC requires dual credit high school instructors to complete an orientation, course-specific training, and annual discipline-specific professional development containing a review of curriculum, assessment methods and grading standards, philosophical and pedagogical practices, and college policies and procedures. Finally, ECC created the new position of Dual Credit Liaison to assist high school teachers and ECC faculty to develop and maintain course materials, develop and lead training, cultivate collaboration, and submit reports to meet NACEP standards and requirements of the dual credit memorandum.

Program review provides an additional means by which ECC ensures quality in dual credit. As part of the college's program review process, programs with dual credit students -- or any high school credits articulated to ECC -- must include disaggregated analysis as part of their self-studies. To this end, the Institutional Research Office provides enrollment figures and success rates of dual credit students disaggregated in [pivot tables](#). In addition, advisory committees in career-technical programs include teachers and administrators from secondary schools, and articulation agreements with high schools are reviewed minimally every two years. Finally, ECC provides an [annual report](#) to the four public high school districts in District 509 to highlight number of characteristics of students who take advantage of early credit opportunities.

4.A.5. Thirteen (13) CTE programs maintain specialized approvals with regional, state and/or national [accrediting agencies](#). They are listed in the College Catalog. ECC's substance abuse counseling program is the only one in Illinois to carry voluntary accreditation from the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission. Additionally, the following programs have certification exam preparation built into specific coursework: welding (WEL-218 and WEL-220); automotive services (AUT-296), computer and information sciences (CIS-256 and CIS-257); HVACR (HAC-220); magnetic resonance imaging (MAM-106, MRI-205); office administration technology (OAT-250, OAT-251, OAT-252, OAT-253); physical therapist assistant (PTA-250); radiography (RAD-240); and truck driving (BRG-201).

Various ECC offices support programs preparing for accreditation review, and ECC self-study program review process assists programs in defining steps needed toward initial or continuing candidacy. The Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and the Curriculum and Assessment Offices work with programs during self-studies and have been invited to interview sessions conducted by external reviewers. Additionally, the Registrar explains records procedures and the Library outlines resources available to students.

4.A.6. Programs assure their graduates are prepared for employment or further study in many ways. These include program reviews and assessment processes, discussions with advisory committees, and surveys of alumni and employers. During program reviews, a curricular mapping exercise is completed in which faculty explain how key knowledge and skills are introduced, practiced, or mastered in all courses of a program. Additionally, maps are completed

to indicate how program courses map onto general education outcomes. Mapping exercises encourage faculty to reflect on course content, ensure correct course sequencing, consider elective courses, and, along with advisory committees, discuss the success of their graduates.

Curriculum adjustments are made when feedback suggests areas for improvement. An example is ECC's Criminal Justice Program. Advisory committee feedback indicated that graduates' writing skills were insufficient for employment. Thus, the program examined writing course prerequisites and bolstered its writing requirement by using the English composition sequence (ENG-101 and ENG-102), rather than business writing (BUS-101 and BUS-142) as prerequisites. In another example, advisory committee feedback indicated that students in the Communications Design Program were starting to freelance in the marketplace, and curricular mapping did not show a distinct place to introduce business skills that graduates needed as freelance designers. Partnering with the Entrepreneurship Program, communications faculty designed a new course (CDN-217: Freelance Principles and Practice) to introduce concepts such as self-marketing and billing to students.

In cooperation with the Institutional Research Office, ECC programs receive data about, and follow up on, student success indicators appropriate for completion and employment in their disciplines. Completion metrics are compiled in three ways: (1) through the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS), which accounts for first-time, full-time and part-time students; (2) Achieving the Dream (ATD), which accounts for first-time students regardless of enrollment status; and (3) program review data, which includes first-time students by program according to declared intent or major. Employment is assessed via alumni surveys, analysis of labor market data, and enrollment and utilization of courses and career services designed to link students with employment opportunities.

Through IPEDS, ECC reports standard three-year completion rates for first-time-in-college students. The most recent data available (see [Performance Report, p. 5](#)) shows the graduation rate at 35% and the combined graduated and/or transfer rate at 51% for new full-time students -- both of which are higher than comparable institutions regionally. Similarly, the graduation rate of 21% and combined graduated and/or transferred rate for new part-time students is 28%, which are also higher than comparable institutions. With our ATD and [ILEA data](#), ECC has explored completion rates at differing time frames (e.g., using 2-, 3-, and 4-year windows), while also disaggregating data by race/ethnicity and Pell status. Finally, completion data are disaggregated to the program and course level during program reviews. For many programs, these analyses provide insight into whether graduates seek additional education after leaving ECC. From data supplied by universities, we know that ECC transfer students earn higher cumulative GPAs than other college transfer students (see [Performance Report, p.5](#)), and building upon this, we plan to mine data from the National Student Clearinghouse to determine the disciplines and types of credentials students earn after transferring. In addition to transfer enrollment, another indicator of successful completion in career-technical programs is the pass rate on state or national licensing examinations. Data reported in the [Performance Report (p. 13)](#) indicate that, in aggregate, ECC students pass licensure exams at rates that exceed state and national averages.

Each spring ECC surveys graduates from career-technical programs. A state-wide survey had been mandated by ICCB prior to 2016 but has since not been required. Nonetheless, ECC continues to administer a survey each spring to further understanding of graduate employment. ECC programs within their five-year program review cycle are invited to include additional questions on the survey for their self-studies. Additionally, ECC conducts an annual survey of transfer graduates, which aids our understanding of the achievements of these alumni as well. Together, both the survey of career-technical graduates and the survey of transfer graduates work hand-in-hand to provide insight into alumni experiences. In the 2019 career-technical survey report, 88% of respondents (N=578) report being employed, full-time (62%) or part-time (26%), and 73% report being employed in a field which is related to their ECC program. In the 2019 transfer alumni survey, 68% of respondents (N=158) told us that they had transferred to a college or university after attending ECC. Of those who transferred to a college or university after ECC, 90% reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the overall level of preparation they received while at ECC.

The success of graduates is monitored in other ways as well. Health programs are required by professional accreditors to monitor the employment of their graduates, and they do so through alumni surveys of their own. Many ECC programs have developed capstone courses focused, in part, on preparing students for post-graduation employment: art (ART-290); clinical lab technology (CLT-230); communications design (CDN-214 and CDN-217); computer-aided design/drafting (CAD-119); histotechnology (HST-113); massage therapy (MAS-250); nursing (NUR-224), radiography (RAD-240); music (MUS-155), paralegal (PAR-239); physical therapist assistant (PTA-250); and surgical technology (SGT-120). Finally, the Career Development Services Office assists students in choosing majors and careers through resume assistance, mock interviews, courses, and career counseling. Internships are overseen by this office as well.

Sources

- AP 1-101 Credit for Learn Experiences O/T Formal Instruction
- AP 1-103 Student Grades
- AP 1-104 Min Comps and Placement Testing
- AP 1-301 Academic Residency
- AP 5-103 Min Reqmts for Appt to Faculty
- Career Tech Exec Summ 2019
- Class Time Calculator
- College Source website
- Credit vs. Schedule Report
- ECC Performance Report FY2019
- ECC Performance Report FY2019 (page number 5)
- ECC Performance Report FY2019 (page number 13)
- ECC Program Review Kick-off FY2019
- ECC Program Review Report FY2019
- Final Placement Recommendations Approved 2018-06-01

- ICCB Program Review FY17-FY21 rev2019-06-13
- iTransfer.org - Website
- MOU Dual Credit - D300 2019 Mar
- Program Review Pivot Tables
- Program Review Template
- Programs with Specialized Accreditation
- TLSD Google Site
- U46-Dual Credit Summary AY2018-19
- Years to Degree

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4.B.1. ECC maintains stated goals for student learning at all levels -- in courses, programs, general education, support services, and extra-/co-curricular experiences.

The first level of outcomes occurs at the course level. Course learning outcomes are standardized across all sections of a course (regardless of section, modality, or instructor), are overseen by program faculty, and recorded in master course outlines (MCOs), which are archived and kept current in the CurricUNET repository. Deans' office staff conduct spot-check verifications of syllabi to ensure alignment to MCOs. Guidance needed to define, refine, and revise course learning outcomes is provided to faculty by the Manager of Outcomes Assessment during course assessments, within program reviews, and at any time as needed by programs.

The course assessment process is guided by a common template. The first part of the template provides a section to identify the course and related learning outcome(s) being assessed, a section for articulating assessment measures, and desired targets/thresholds for satisfactory performance (i.e., 75% correct on an exam). The template is submitted by faculty to their respective dean's office prior to the start of engaging in course assessment, and additional resources (e.g., data analysis or collection assistance from the Assessment Office) may be requested at this time. Assessment results are summarized on the second part of the template. In this part, faculty describe the data they have collected and analyzed, compare results against desired achievement levels, and discuss possible steps for improvement. Course assessment plans and reports are due on a sliding schedule, and each program is expected to assess at least one course each academic year. A multi-year guiding schedule is used as a tool for tracking.

The next level of assessment is at the program level. Program or discipline-level learning outcomes define the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes a student gains upon completion

of a collection of courses. These are defined at initial program approval and monitored within the program review cycle. Program or discipline outcomes are guided by advisory committee feedback and/or external accreditation, and curriculum maps are used to demonstrate alignment between courses and program outcomes. Program outcomes are also stored within CurricUNET, and as part of accreditation, several programs list program outcomes in student handbooks or on ECC's website (see paralegal program for example). To ensure transparency for students, program outcomes will appear in the course catalog beginning in academic year 2020-21 using newly acquired CourseLeaf software. This addition was recommended by the HLC visiting team during the college's 2015 reaffirmation.

General education outcomes are the next level of assessment. As explained in Core Component 3B, general education outcomes are defined for all ECC students regardless of program and are maintained, measured, and reported by the faculty-led Student Learning Assessment and Advisory Committee (SLAAC). ECC's philosophy on general education and general education outcomes themselves are published in the College Catalog. These outcomes are guided by external benchmarks (such as university articulation), ECC internal dialogue, and external research, such as the Association of American Colleges and University's Liberal Education and America's Promise framework. ECC's six general education outcomes -- communication, scientific literacy, quantitative literacy, critical thinking, information literacy, and global/multi-cultural literacy -- align to the LEAP framework, as demonstrated in this slide from SLAAC's orientation materials. Each outcome has undergone revision since ECC's 2015 reaffirmation. For example, reading and writing were previously defined as separate outcomes but are now combined into one communication outcome. Updates to the information literacy outcomes were recently made to reflect the revised standards of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a subdivision of the American Library Association.

During program review, each program is asked to create a curricular map to illustrate alignment of each course (or service area) to general education learning outcomes. Through mapping, programs rate alignment using a 4-point scale: high, moderate, low, and none. Programs also provide narrative examples within their curriculum. The ratings from curricular maps are recorded in an institutional database for further study and inquiry. This information is used by SLAAC for guiding the work of its subcommittees. In summer 2019, updates to CurricUNET allowed general education alignment ratings to be stored within this platform, meaning that they are now recorded on each course's master course outline as well.

Finally, the college embraces the idea that students learn outside the classroom, whether through student services (such as tutoring or advising), through participation in extra- and co-curricular opportunities (such Phi Theta Kappa or an athletic team), or attendance at a college-sponsored event. Learning outcomes for non-instructional activities are currently in place or have recently been developed in many student support service areas, but remain a work-in-progress for still other co-curricular activities. For example, each student support area (e.g., advising, athletics, disability services, etc.) has defined student learning objectives that are assessed in the Student Services and Development Annual Report, yet the college still recognizes an opportunity to define learning outcomes for smaller, less formal units of

programming, such as the Humanities Center and student clubs. ECC is actively taking steps toward this goal of a comprehensive co-curricular assessment plan (see Operating Plan Actions 2.1 and 2.2).

4.B.2.

a. Course and Program Assessment

The aims of course and program assessment are: to strengthen student learning by clarifying outcomes; to identify areas for improvement; and to highlight successes. As mentioned above, program assessment involves analysis of individual course outcomes, aggregation of course assessment results, and/or inclusion of additional indirect measures of learning. Course and program assessments are conducted by faculty, and faculty instructional coordinators receive stipends for additional responsibilities related to organizing assessment activities for their areas. Strategic and administrative support is provided by divisional deans and associate deans, and methodological and logistical support is provided by the Manager of Outcomes Assessment. A template for the analysis of course and program assessment results appears in [program review reports](#)**,** and a [schedule](#) is created to plan assessment with a five-year horizon. Deans monitor this work at the divisional level, and the Manager of Outcomes Assessment maintains an [Excel tracking tool](#) for all assessment plans and reports across the college.

Assessment is always a quest for continuous quality improvement. Although enthusiasm for assessment can vary, a number of ECC programs use assessment results regularly for decision-making. These programs are called upon by the Curriculum and Assessment Office as exemplars of best practice. For example, in health fields and Adult Education, external accreditation and grant requirements make the collection of assessment data a part of everyday practice. In these programs, a challenge can be not in deciding what or how to assess, but in knowing how to balance what the college wants with what external accreditors mandate. Adult Education employs a pre/post-test methodology to demonstrate learning gains students make as they progress through various levels. Health programs, fire science, and EMT programs rely on competency-based assessments -- wherein students demonstrate skills, receive feedback, and remediate until attaining mastery. The English and Math Programs serve as exemplars of transfer-oriented programs that have developed strong assessment practices of their own through departmental leadership and a desire to share assessment findings among faculty and find new ways to bridge developmental to college-level courses. These two programs assess their courses above and beyond ECC's requirements and hold regular meetings where assessments and results are discussed (see [English](#) and [math](#)). Additional highlights of findings from specific assessment actions are contained in Subcomponent 4B3.

The college recognizes an opportunity to ensure that effective learning assessment occurs in *all* student-facing programs. Turnover in divisional leadership, competing strategic priorities, and smaller programs led by fewer numbers of full-time faculty have contributed to a lack of consistent participation in *formal* course assessment processes. While assessment is practiced

by all departments, the formal documentation of such activities and their findings for broader dissemination has been inconsistent. Some faculty express confusion about assessment and a lack of awareness or understanding about assessment expectations. The Manager of Outcomes Assessment continues to build awareness around course assessment, and in outreach to programs, stresses its value for quality-focused organizations. She was invited to address faculty in the Sustainability, Business and Career Technologies Division at their spring semester kick-off meeting to discuss practices, timelines, and expectations. Additionally, in summer 2019, the college filled the position for Director of Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, which had been vacant the prior semester. The new CETL Director has been able to provide an additional layer of support. In fall 2019, the CETL Director and Manager of Outcomes Assessment conducted a workshop on assessment as part of new faculty orientation. Additionally, the associate deans and key administrative staff in the Curriculum and Assessment Office convened a taskforce in 2019 to review current assessment practices, identify and overcome barriers, encourage wider participation -- and most critically, shift the college's collective mindset from one of *compliance* to one of *improvement* when it comes to assessment.

b. General Education Assessment

Assessing general education outcomes is the responsibility of the SLAAC. Formerly this committee was responsible for administering standardized CAAP exams (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Performance from ACT, Inc.) for general education, which ECC reported in its 2009 HLC focused report and visit. While standardized data was certainly valuable, SLAAC found the results to be ineffective for course-/program-level decision-making and the administration to be very resource-intensive, and thus switched from standardized to authentic assessment of student artifacts. The college's periodic administration of the CCSSE and the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI still provide benchmarks for external comparison, but in moving to more authentic measures, SLAAC is able to design rubrics and examine each general education outcome independently. To date, rubrics have been developed for the outcomes of communication, critical thinking, quantitative literacy, and global/multicultural literacy.

In 2017 and 2018, SLAAC piloted rubric usage for three general education outcomes (critical thinking, quantitative literacy and global/multicultural literacy). All faculty were invited to participate, and 13 faculty submitted student classwork. In total, 273 student artifacts were assessed, which provided an opportunity for SLAAC to discuss the use of rubrics overall for general education. For instance, in analyses of the critical thinking outcome, gathered from 177 students in 7 courses, faculty gave slightly higher ratings on students' ability to interpret and analyze evidence than their ability to draw conclusions. For quantitative reasoning, gathered from 51 students in 3 math sections, faculty gave slightly higher ratings on students' understanding of mathematical representations than their ability to perform calculations. Notwithstanding the limitations one can make with relatively little data, discussions of these rubrics and these preliminary results are ushering in a new round of data collection. For example, faculty have recently expressed interest in exploring quantitative literacy in non-mathematically-inclined disciplines and analyzing data from students who complete more versus

fewer credit hours. SLAAC has used this pilot to discuss potential improvements in the rubric rating process, promoting greater participation in use of the rubric, and opportunities for expanding general education data collection to include assessment data that has already been collected.

Throughout the year, assessment discussions and activities for each outcome are documented on a template that follows the NILOA framework. The SLAAC committee also formed three standing subcommittees to ensure forward momentum: Rubric Subcommittee, the Evidence of Student Learning Subcommittee, and the Faculty Resource Subcommittee. Each subcommittee summarizes their progress per NILOA recommendations and includes them in the General Education Outcomes Summary Report.

c. Co-/Extra-curricular and service Assessment

Student learning outcomes in student service areas were established in 2016, and since 2017 have been included in the Student Services and Development Annual Report. Presently the report contains figures on student participation in support services and co-curricular areas, and moving forward, the college expects to include measures of student learning. As a place to start, a short evaluation feedback survey is being conducted with attendees at co-curricular events, and ECC recognizes an opportunity to pursue additional formal means. For example, in the 2019-20 academic year, a new student-led group called We the People is beginning a year-long education campaign to build up to the 2020 presidential election. The group is offering discussions of political issues and arranging visits by locally elected officials. The Manager of Outcomes Assessment has offered assistance to the group, such as gathering feedback from participants and organizers, as a way to begin to assess the outcome of global/multicultural literacy.

d. Other

While course assessment focuses at a course level regardless of modality, faculty, or section, ECC has recently explored opportunities for section-level assessment as well. The college employs multiple voluntary programs for faculty to receive funding for section-level assessment. One example is the Faculty Research Community, described in Core Component 3B. An initiative through the Student Success Infrastructure, the Faculty Research Community encourages faculty to conduct individual assessment projects with the potential to expand understanding of pedagogy and student learning. Other examples of section-level assessment include GIST grants for cultural infusion and the ECC Foundation's Foundation of Excellence program. In each, faculty receive a small stipend to conduct action research in their classrooms with their own students and use funds to redesign assignments, classroom activities, or pilot new assessment methods.

4.B.3. The primary purpose of assessing student learning is to make improvements and thereby fulfill the college's mission; however, the college recognizes that this is often the most challenging part of quality improvement. An institution with high expectations, ECC is

sometimes uncomfortable with less-than-perfect results and has a tendency to lose faith with assessment results that involve a subjectively "small" number of students or courses. This tug-of-war was the theme for February 2019's Annual Assessment Diaries conference. As ECC moves toward more comprehensive and integrated assessment, there is an emerging need to re-calibrate our expectations of assessment and improve data literacy, so that coming up with "statistically significant findings" does not negate the value of "informative findings," as had been the case. Some examples of assessment findings that have helped, even if in a less-than-statistically-significant manner, inform decision-making at various levels include:

a. Course Assessment

- The most recent assessment of the developmental literacy course, LTC-099, found inconsistent writing analysis results across different sections, which led to the development of common assignment instructions across all sections and a common rubric for grading.

- A recent assessment of the cultural anthropology course, ATR-220, serves as an example of an assessment activity that confirmed expected student learning. This example is used by the Manager of Outcomes Assessment to remind faculty that often the purpose of course assessment is *not* to go searching for fault or failure but to confirm that what faculty are already doing is as effective as they think it is.

- A course assessment summary for medical ethics and law, RAD-230, was used as an opportunity to confirm the effectiveness of a new learning method for students that was then incorporated into additional classes.

- A recent course assessment report for business statistics, BUS-140, highlights the value of the assessment process itself. Faculty conclude this report by stating: "*This assessment process was productive because it showed me information that I was not able to see only looking at students' grades. I was not surprised by the findings, but they allow me to confirm my intuition regarding students reaching learning outcomes.*"

b. Program Assessment/Program Review

ECC's program self-study process provides faculty the time and space to prioritize their thinking of "big picture" analyses of curriculum and learning goals. Historically important and gaining new momentum is the concept of professional behaviors within career-technical programs. Since career programs prepare students for direct employment, it is critical that learning outcomes in these programs encompass the behaviors and attitudes needed by employers. In ECC's 2019 ICCB Program Review Report, several career-technical programs discuss curricular updates to build employability skills. The Accounting Program, for instance, notes that Excel/spreadsheet skills are valued by employers, and, as such, began providing additional exposure to spreadsheets in its courses. The inclusion of CIS-242 (Spreadsheet Applications) allows accounting students to achieve Microsoft Excel Certification and is completed during the course's final exam. A related course, CIS-244 (Database Applications) is

an elective that allows students the same certification in Microsoft Access. These credentials not only strengthen student learning but also convey to employers what ECC students have learned.

Another example comes from ECC's Welding Program, which recently identified a need to improve safety training in labs. In this case, the program used assessment results to guide curricular improvements. When beginning-of-term assessments in the Welding II course demonstrated a need for additional safety training, faculty used the program review process to make a case for linking end-of-term assessments in Welding I to the entry assessments in Welding II. During its analysis, the program had considered adding a credit hour to Welding I (currently already 3 credit hours), but given the additional cost and time for students, the program re-engineered its curriculum to reallocate more clock hours to teaching lab safety in Welding I while remaining within the program's credit-hour allotment.

c. General Education

While general education assessment has been enhanced by the development of common rubrics for outcomes, general education decision-making is still an opportunity for improvement. Faculty members of SLAAC are sincere and passionate but express concerns with finding time to conduct or develop assessments in addition to teaching classes, attending to students, and participating in departmental routines. Still, the committee is hopeful that momentum can be built around a few projects that appear promising:

- The Faculty Resources and Communication Subcommittee believes that one barrier to full participation in assessment is a lack of connection between effective assessment and greater student learning. During summer 2019, the Curriculum and Assessment and Academic Systems Offices developed a google site to house important information for college stakeholders, and within it, a dedicated place for SLAAC. With an electronic "home base" now established, attention can move to promoting rubrics and other tools.

- The Finding Evidence Subcommittee is actively seeking ways to reduce the burden of additional data collection associated with assessment. The group is beginning to audit efforts being used college-wide, and as it does, will begin to share data across the institution to help not only programs having difficulty gathering data or using rubrics but also programs that have yet to make serious inroads with assessment.

- In September 2019, SLAAC devoted one of its meetings to a webinar from Desire2Learn/BrightSpace. These consultants illustrated how our current platform could be leveraged through carefully designed hierarchies to systematically pull data for general education (or program) assessment from the grading tasks already being done in the regular operations of a course. The webinar was positively received, although questions still remain. Additional resources from the vendor will be shared with SLAAC and discussed with the deans. The package could provide streamlined assessment data

for other programs and projects, such as the Honors Program or the Library in regard to information literacy instruction.

- ECC faculty and employers alike are united in their quest to ensure employability and professional behaviors, and comparing these qualities to the general education learning outcomes yields a good deal of overlap. ECC's Operating Plan Action 2.2 formally establishes a connection between employability skills and general education -- and, in this sense, a platform from which to systematically gather and reflect upon these qualities in course-level and co-curricular learning.

d. Co-/Extra-curricular and Student Support Services

As explained earlier, the [Student Services and Development Annual Report](#) provides a foundation from which the college could begin to assess student learning across functions. Examples of service areas where the college is poised for growth include:

- Spartan Alert. A new software for case management, as explained in Subcomponent 3D3, will allow ECC to tailor the delivery of success interventions to students. We expect data from this platform to inform which skills are most in need of remediation and which are likely to yield improvements.

- Testing. The acquisition of new placement measures has prompted the Testing Center to refocus its delivery of practice exams. We expect to see increased scores and/or decreased re-takes as a result of these focused sessions and individualized supports.

- Student Wellness. The Wellness Services Office is using pre/post-testing for students who participate in group or individual support sessions. Recent findings indicate that 100% of students participating in the 2019 Anxiety Support Group reported a reduction in symptoms of anxiety, supporting the office's learning outcome of actively practicing healthy coping strategies to manage stress.

e. Other

As noted earlier, ECC is expanding early college credit opportunities for high school students. ECC faculty and high school instructors are increasingly relying on assessment frameworks to ensure program integrity. The process and responsibilities within the in-high school dual credit program involve establishing and communicating specific, measurable, and robust course outcomes, agreeing on standard assessment methods, and devising and implementing sound data collection protocols. If planned and executed well, data will affirm the learning occurring in high schools and in dual credit courses at the college and ensure that learning in both environments is equivalent. Similarly, gains and acceleration within a program/course sequence should be evident.

4.B.4. In 2006, ECC created the Manager of Outcomes Assessment position. This administrative position leads efforts around assessment campus-wide, including guiding faculty professional

development, consulting with instructional coordinators and deans, organizing events, and compiling reports and data. The manager presents at several key assessment-related organizations, including the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education, the Assessment Institute, the Innovations Conference (League for Innovation in the Community College), and the Community College Conference on Learning Assessment (Valencia College). The manager is a founding member of The Assessment Group, which sponsors the annual Illinois Community College Assessment Fair. The manager reports to the Assistant Vice President of TLSD and maintains a close working relationship with Institutional Research Office.

ECC's approach to assessment is faculty-led and faculty-driven and administration-supported. There is a common commitment to the idea that assessment data is not a tool to evaluate individual teaching but rather a means for fostering understanding and improving the quality of learning. Responsibility for program review and assessment is outlined in the Board/ECCFA contract. It should be noted, however, that responsibility for assessing or utilizing assessment results for improvement is *not* delineated for adjunct 1 instructors (those with less experience, less seniority, and who teach fewer hours) and that adjunct 2 instructors (those with more experience, more seniority and who teach more hours) are no longer required to *write* assessment reports.

SLAAC is a standing faculty committee under the authority of the Vice President of TLSD. The chair of the committee is elected from ECCFA members, and members are also elected for two-year terms, which are renewable. Membership includes faculty from all major TLSD divisions and the Library and is staggered to ensure a mix of new and experienced members, as outlined in SLAAC bylaws. Due to the limitations of full-time faculty within the Adult Education division (ABEC), an administrator may serve if faculty are not first nominated. Administrative members include the Distance Learning Office and an administrator from the Student Services and Development Division. An annual orientation meeting is provided by the SLAAC and the Manager of Outcomes Assessment. Unit-adjunct faculty are encouraged to participate, and throughout the committee's history, one or more has always served. In addition to the Manager of Outcomes Assessment, the college provides a budget for SLAAC, which is overseen by the Assistant Vice President of TLSD, who also attends SLAAC meetings. More recently, the Assistant Vice President is helping to oversee SLAAC's Resources/Communication Subcommittee and regularly provides feedback on progress to the Vice President of TLSD, to whom she reports.

In reviewing ECC's 2009 HLC Focused Report, the visiting team strongly encouraged ECC to "find additional ways to document and bring forward assessment success stories" and "ways to celebrate and recognize assessment success." To this end, we have established an internal conference called the Assessment Diaries, which allows faculty and staff to share experiences, triumphs, and frustrations along the journey of improving student learning through assessment. First held in February 2010 (and funded through the Student Success Infrastructure), the event is now permanently part of the college's Annual Budget and grows in participation each year. For the past several years, an Excellence in Course Assessment Award has been featured at the conference, and a winning report is recognized.

Another opportunity for faculty to share assessment efforts has been "10 Minutes with A Professor," a biannual volunteer presentation hosted by the President during each semester's opening convocation. At these presentations, faculty share a particular teaching practice or idea with an audience consisting of the entire college. Fall 2019 featured two presentations which provided examples of integrative learning by students. One example illustrated a new team-based learning activity designed by a music instructor to synthesize the skills learned in the Music Production Certificate Program. Another showcased how Honors in Action capstone projects provide an opportunity for students to develop research and leadership to support community service.

Best practices in assessment also extend to national surveys. We have used the Ruffalo-Noel Levitz SSI since 2007 to assess satisfaction with campus services and programs and administered the CESS in fall 2018. In spring 2020, the college will administer the CCSSE for the fourth time, and during this administration, will also include the faculty portion (Community College Survey of Faculty Engagement). Other national instruments ECC uses include the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) to assess student motivation, learning skills, and self-regulation abilities; the Educause Student Technology Survey to understand students' use of technology; and the FOCUS 2 to help students identify careers and majors. Finally, local or homegrown surveys are used for surveying various groups of strategic interest and are developed through either Institutional Research or the Curriculum and Assessment Offices.

Sources

- Assessment Diaries Program 2019
- Course Assessment - Template Fall 2018rev
- Course Assessment Evolution Meetings
- Course Assessment Instructions - MTH112
- Course Assessment Report ATR220 FA2017
- Course Assessment Report BUS140
- Course Assessment Report LTC099 SP2017
- Course Assessment Report RAD230 SU2018
- Course Assessment Reports - Sample of Nominated
- Course Assessment Schedule - Template
- Course Assessment Tracking Tool
- Course-Program Assessment Discussion within Program Review
- Curricular Map Example (PAR)
- CurricUNET Example of Gen Ed Alignment
- Div of Student Svcs and Dev Report AY2018-19
- ECC Program Review Report FY2019
- ECCFA-Contract - Job Descriptions Pages
- ENG and LIT Program Assessment Memo
- FRC Recruitment Flyer 2018
- Gen Ed Annual Report FY2019

- Gen Ed LEAP Alignment
- Gen Ed Mapping
- Gen Ed Outcome Summary Form
- Gen Ed Updates
- Learning Outcomes from Massage Therapy Handbook
- MAGIC Survey Form
- New Faculty Orientation
- Paralegal Accreditation (Program Outcomes)
- Program Outcomes in CurricUNET
- Program Outcomes Map shell
- Sample Master Course Outline - Sample BIO108
- SBCT Slides and Notes 2019 January
- SLAAC Bylaws rev2018-08-28
- SLAAC Membership 2019-20
- SLAAC Minutes Rubric Pilot 2018-09-11
- SLAAC Orientation FA2019
- SLAAC Responsibility
- SLAAC Rubrics

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1. ECC's Strategic Plan defines goals for student retention, persistence, and completion. In the plan, four long-term strategic goals frame 14 actionable strategies. Goal 1 encompasses three strategies around learning and equity (1. creating meaningful learning environments; 2. developing students' self-advocacy; and 3. modeling teaching practices). Other goals follow suit. Goal 2 contains three strategies on delivering effective programming; Goal 3 contains four strategies on strengthening community partnerships; and Goal 4 contains four strategies on providing excellent service. All strategies are measured annually with success metrics/performance indicators that, collectively, "move the needle" on retention, persistence, and completion. Examples are explained later in Core Component 4C but, in general, include: graduation, transfer, and attainment of employment (Goal 1); clarity and satisfaction with courses and programs (Goal 2); alignment of programs to community needs (Goal 3); and clarity of processes for students and employees (Goal 4). Goals, strategies, and key indicators are contained in the ECC Strategic Plan itself and reported in the annual Performance Report.

Progress in advancing student retention, persistence and completion is guided by a number of key initiatives. The Student Success Infrastructure and Achieving the Dream (ATD) are the college's primary ones, which together ensure the institution stays focused on systemic transformations. Another key initiative is Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA), a statewide effort, similar to ATD, which focuses on minimizing achievement gaps for students of color and low-income students. Other voluntary initiatives help frame ECC's efforts to improve retention, persistence, and completion: the Voluntary Framework of Accountability, a national consortium that focuses on completion metrics beyond IPEDS for community colleges; the Consortium for

Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), a consortium of two-year colleges and baccalaureate institutions that examines completion, persistence, and retention on longer, ten-year timelines; and the HLC Student Success Academy, which allows ECC to revamp institutional practices that impede completion, retention, and persistence and strengthen synergies among course-level, program-level, and institution-level metrics.

Operationally, priority areas that guide student success are contained in the Operating Plan. Within it, individual committees and departments engage via committee meetings and dialog; discussions on disaggregated student data; and statistical modeling done in the Institutional Research Office and the Data Rangers. In 2018, a series of student focus groups sponsored by the Student Success Infrastructure helped to obtain first-hand accounts of the obstacles faced by ECC students and potential opportunities for reducing them. In addition, phone callback campaigns held in spring and fall 2019 ask the same sorts of questions for non-returning students or "stop-outs." This qualitative feedback is used to inform Operating Plan priorities. Gaps that exist through disaggregated analysis help define targets, which in the past and to date include: first-generation students, students placing into developmental education, and students of color. Each year we reevaluate targets for accuracy.

A data-based Decision Making Model has been developed through our ATD work to guide committees, departments, or individuals on the evaluation of initiatives. Posted in conference rooms throughout campus, the model outlines expectations for moving projects from concept to scale, restructuring committees or programs, and allocating budgets. It encompasses eight cumulative steps: (1) defining the issue; (2) establishing targets; (3) identifying resources; (4) implementation; (5) analysis of results; (6) reflection; (7) sharing findings; and (8) deciding about institutionalization. A visual representation of program evaluation, the model is a detailed version of the Plan-Do-Study-Act model that frames the ECC Strategic Plan.

4.C.2. A member of the ICCB system, ECC completes a number of annual, system-mandated data submissions that focus on student success. ICCB verifies and then submits these on our behalf to the Department of Education (IPEDS), and many additional reports are collected for ICCB directly. Metrics established for state reports include measures related to retention, persistence, and completion at both the student/individual record level and also for term-specific/point-in-time credit and non-credit seatcounts. ECC utilizes the state's reporting frameworks to establish internal databases for trending of retention, persistence, and completion. Additionally, the college uses publicly shared ICCB data for benchmarking against state aggregate or specific peer institutions. For each metric, data are disaggregated by demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, age) and socioeconomic (Pell grant) status. This information is shared annually campus-wide to facilitate discussions around priorities and actions for the upcoming year.

Additional student completion metrics come from ATD reports and are evaluated annually by Student Success Infrastructure:

- Completion of developmental courses and progression to credit-bearing courses

- Completion of first college-level gateway courses in math and English
- Completion of all courses with a grade of C or higher
- Persistence from term to term and year to year
- Completion of credentials

Our recent participation in ILEA is providing additional opportunities to analyze retention and completion data. As a member institution, ECC provides historical student credit attainment, retention, and completion data annually to the National Student Clearinghouse through a [Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP)](#) agreement. The first submission was completed in fall 2019, but analysis is already helping to shape [ECC's ILEA Equity Plan](#), in progress**.** Similar to how we report to the ICCB, PDP data allows important benchmarking against other ILEA institutions. As noted earlier, national and voluntary data reporting consortia (e.g., VFA and CSRDE) provide additional opportunities to collect and analyze student information on retention, persistence, completion and overall success.

In addition to various external agencies, the college also analyzes and annually reports progress in reaching a wide variety of performance indicators in the [Performance Report](#). These are indexed in the Board Policy Handbook and include:

- Mastery of student learning outcomes
- Success in developmental courses
- Success in gateway courses
- Program and degree completion rates
- Persistence from term to term and from year to year
- Tenth day-to-midterm completion
- Completion of developmental courses
- Transition rate from Adult Basic Education/ESL to college
- Transition rate from developmental education to college
- Placement of graduates into the workforce
- Number and percentage change in annual degrees and certificates awarded

Again, many metrics are disaggregated by demographic characteristics, and results are used to set goals and prioritize future projects. In most instances, national or state comparison data (such as ICCB, IPEDS or NCCBP data) are incorporated into each metric for benchmarking. As noted earlier, ECC is also able to utilize aggregate data reported from other institutions participating in ATD or ILEA for comparison, and actively uses such information for analyzing student success.

Beyond federally-/state-mandated and voluntary reporting of student retention and completion data, ECC programs and committees examine retention and completion data specific to their respective areas. For example, since 2012, the Admissions Office has tracked conversion rates along the "[enrollment funnel](#)" (from prospects into inquiries, and from applicants into registrants) to set annual enrollment goals for new students. Through this process, we have been able to identify gaps in student onboarding to mitigate withdrawals and foster completion.

The Math and English Programs have also incorporated statistical modeling into their regular discussions about student retention and success in developmental courses, as described later in this section.

ECC has observed gains in retention and completion over recent years through these collective initiatives. For example, three-year IPEDS completion rates for first-time, full-time students have increased substantially over the last decade -- from 17% for the 2005 new student cohort, to 29% for the 2010 cohort ,and to 37% for the 2014 cohort (the most recently available). This compares favorably to our IPEDS peer cohort, which has seen graduation rates of 16% (2005), 18% (2010), and 28% (2014) for this same time frame. The 2014 cohort's completion rate also ranks ECC in the 87th percentile nationally among NCCBP-participating institutions. Similarly, the three-year completion rate of first-time, part-time students for the 2014 cohort was 15%, which falls within the 83rd percentile among NCCBP-participating institutions. We also find that fall-to-fall retention rates for full-time students has consistently hovered at 75% for many years, with an IPEDS peer institution cohort rate of 70%. When examining retention rates for part-time students, the college has seen a sizable increase for the last decade -- from 40% for the fall 2004 cohort, to 43% for the 2009 cohort, to 51% for the 2016 cohort. This compares favorably to our IPEDS peer institution cohort, which has seen part-time retention rates of 38% (2004), 40% (2009), and 45% (2016) over this same time frame.

4.C.3. Long-term improvements in graduation and retention reflect the college's continuous efforts to improve student success. Essential to our process is the compilation of easy-to-understand logic models which outline the components necessary to ensure successful deployment of initiatives. Logic models are roadmaps that articulate short- and long-term goals of a project, interim/formative and summative metrics, data sources, intended results, short- and long-term impacts, and descriptions of how results inform ECC Strategic Plan goals. We intentionally focus on interventions that target fulfillment of short-term (formative) milestones (e.g., completing developmental coursework within first two years), as both internal statistical modeling analysis and external literature has shown that attainment of early milestone "momentum points" is predictive of longer-term (summative) successful completion (Adelman, 2006; Tinto, 2012).

The following examples illustrate how ECC utilizes formative and summative data to improve student retention, persistence, and completion and improve institutional decision-making.

[Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS)](). The ICAPS Program at ECC offers contextualized career-technical education courses for Adult Education students. Previously known as Accelerating Opportunities, ICAPS has scaled from 29 students in 2012-13 to 49 students in 2018-2019. Currently, the college offers contextualized instruction in seven career fields:

- Welding
- Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator
- Dental Assisting

- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration
- Basic Nursing Assistant
- Clinical Lab Technician
- Integrated Systems Technology

Since spring 2012, 252 total students have participated in ICAPS out of 831 total students enrolled in the programs listed above. This represents 30% of the entire target population. Our analyses show ICAPS to be a promising initiative. Over the year the college has offered this program, 62% of ICAPS students earn program certificates within one year compared to 32% of a matched sample of non-ICAPS participants in these programs. The success of ICAPS has led to additional growth. The program began in 2012 with welding and CNC Operator programs and has since expanded to encompass the programs listed above.

Transition Academy (TA). The Transition Academy is emerged from ECC's Alliance for College Readiness. The TA program aims to help 9th through 12th grade students increase their problem-solving abilities and communication skills and, ultimately, improve their academic success and college/career readiness. Students in the TA participate in monthly courses that focus on socio-emotional development and critical thinking and receive mentoring support provided by local community leaders. The program expanded from 48 students in 2012-13 to 122 students in 2018-19, and tabulated resulted appear promising for further scaling:

- Recent pre- and post-test comparisons on the LASSI, a standardized assessment of non-cognitive attitudes and practices, shows that high school juniors and seniors in the TA have significantly diminished levels of academic anxiety and improved levels of information-processing following their participation in the TA. In aggregate, their scores on the Academic Anxiety Subscale of the LASSI placed them into the 52nd percentile at pre-test and the 62nd percentile at post-test. Their scores on the Information Processing Subscale placed them into the 55th percentile at pre-test and the 66th percentile at post-test.

- Analysis of college-going rates for high school seniors finds that TA-participating students are much more likely to attend college after high school than their peers. Between 2013-14 and 2015-16, 82% of seniors who participated in the TA enrolled in college after graduation, compared to an aggregate of 69% for all other graduating high school seniors in our service district during that same time frame.

Student Life Coordinator for Targeted Populations. ECC created a new position of Student Life Coordinator for Targeted Populations in academic year 2016-17 to serve as an advocate and point person for underserved students. The creation of this position was informed by quantitative examinations of historical retention and completion trends conducted in the Student Success Infrastructure, which showed long-standing gaps in course success, retention, and completion rates among subpopulations. It was also informed by feedback from student focus groups, wherein students advised us that better coordination of existing services was

preferred over creating new or additional services. The position itself was an intervention and, as such, a logic model was created to outline the goals and expected outcomes of this role.

A current focus of the coordinator is the success of African-American students, who persistently demonstrate gaps in disaggregated data. To minimize gaps, the position is spearheading a peer mentoring program for students of color and strengthening engagement with student support services through referrals to the Student Life Office, Tutoring, Financial Aid, and others. Since being hired, the coordinator has:

- Increased participation in Black Student Achievers student club from 8 students in 2015-16 to 62 students in 2017-18.

- Improved fall-to-spring and fall to-fall retention metrics by almost 30% for students that this position has worked with directly when compared to other African-American students.

- Established a Black Recognition Ceremony in 2019 to formally recognize the academic achievements of current and graduating African-American students.

- Established an African-American student peer mentoring program, The Exchange, which included 23 students in the first cohort in 2018-19.

Triumph Program. The Triumph program, established in 2014 at nearby Triton College, addresses the challenges minority males face as they attempt to navigate the educational system. As a Hispanic-Serving and Minority-Serving college, ECC was invited to participate in a federally-funded expansion of the program in 2018. A Program Coordinator was hired in spring 2019 and is currently developing programming to:

- Address the significant opportunity gap for minoritized males who are the first in their family, and often first in their community, to pursue higher education;

- Ensure post-secondary persistence, completion and/or transfer through intensive mentoring and targeted workshops designed to increase social, emotional and non-cognitive barriers to success;

- Establish a 90% three-year graduation rate and a 85% transfer rate to four-year partners with the original cohort of scholars;

- Serve 250 total minority male students over the course of the five-year grant period.

Financial Smarts. ECC recognizes that financial literacy is a critical, but often overlooked, component to student retention and completion. The College's Financial Smarts Financial Literacy Program is a financial education program first implemented in 2009 to help teach critical financial literacy skills. It reflects a joint partnership between the College's Financial Aid office and the Student Services and Development Division to educate students, families, and

community members about financial literacy – how to prepare a budget, how to manage debt, and improve understanding of financial aid and student loans. Prior to its launch, ECC students were borrowing more through student loans; the cohort default rate was rising; and students were struggling to remain enrolled due to financial barriers. Mandatory one-on-one loan advising for all students seeking student loans was added to this program in 2012. Today, Financial Smarts encompasses precollegiate non-profit youth organizations and individual presentations at area high schools that work closely with ECC's Alliance for College Readiness. This program has seen a nearly 60% reduction in both the number of and total amount of student loans taken on by current students between 2009-10 and 2017-18. The 3-year student loan default rate has similarly been cut approximately in half since the program was first implemented.

Accelerating Developmental Pathways. For several years, ECC has delivered accelerated models of developmental education that reduce time and cost for students who place into developmental math, reading, or English. Gains made by the college with made in these programs continue to inform future scaling and institutionalization, and many are reported in the college's 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence application.

Hybrid Math (MTH-099). The MTH-099 course at ECC blends separate basic and intermediate algebra courses (each four credit hours) into a single 6-credit hour hybrid course. Students placing on the higher end of the ALEKS math placement test but below college-level are eligible to take MTH-099 and thus save time and tuition. First implemented in fall 2011, ECC has found that students taking this course are as successful as students in stand-alone developmental courses. Over the 8 years that MTH-099 has run, approximately 140 students enroll each year in it versus in stand-alone MTH-096 and MTH-098 courses. Results show that students in MTH-099 are not only more successful than similarly-placed students in stand-alone courses (71% earn grades of C or higher versus 64% among students who enroll in MTH-096) but they are also less likely to withdraw (8% withdraw from MTH-099 versus 16% for MTH-096, on average). Moreover, 70% of students completing MTH-099 have gone on to enroll in a college-level math course versus only 31% of students in the traditional MTH-096-to-MTH-098 sequence.

Practical Math (MTH-095). Similar to MTH-099, the MTH-095 (Preparatory Math for General Education) course serves as an alternate to the traditional MTH-096-to-MTH-098 developmental sequence. This course is specifically intended for students who only intend to enroll as far as MTH-102 or MTH-104, the college's general education college-level math courses. MTH-095 was first implemented in fall 2016, and ECC has found students who complete the course are successful. Over the 3 years this course has run, approximately 150 developmental math students enrolled in it each year instead of in the MTH-096-to-MTH-098 sequence. Students enrolling in MTH-095 have a slightly higher average course success (67% earn grades of C or higher compared to 64% for MTH-096) and lower withdrawal rate (10% for MTH-095 versus 16% for MTH-096, on average). Finally, 40% of students completing MTH-099 have gone on to enroll in a college-level math course versus only 31% of developmental students in the traditional MTH-096-to-MTH-098 sequence.

Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). Since 2013, ECC's ALP program combines developmental and college-level writing courses back-to-back in a single term. Rather than taking two semesters to complete ENG-098 and ENG-101, students who place into ENG-098 are eligible to enroll in a hybrid section of ENG-101 and ENG-098 together. The ENG-101 section is a traditional offering of college-level writing that includes students who place directly into ENG-101 and students who elect to enroll in the ALP program. The ENG-098 class section always meets immediately following the ENG-101 class, and is framed a source of additional support for material learned in the ENG-101 portion of the course.

Over the 6 years that this course has been offered, the success rate (grades of C or better) of students in ALP sections of ENG-098 has been similar to or higher than comparable success in traditional stand-alone ENG-098 sections. When comparing the aggregate success rate in ALP sections of ENG-098 (77%) to that of traditional ENG-098 sections (74%), we see that students in the accelerated course are not adversely impacted by the accelerated nature of the combined course. We also find that less than two-thirds (62%) of students who complete the traditional ENG-098 course ever move on to enroll in ENG-101 in a subsequent semester. Due to the co-enrolled sequencing of the ALP program, 100% of students in ALP ENG-098 courses enroll in the first college-level English course. Finally, in their ENG-101 coursework, students in the ALP program are just as successful as students who move on to ENG-101 from a traditional ENG-098 course. The aggregate success rate for ALP students in ENG-101 has been 75%, compared to the aggregate success rate of 78% for students following the traditional course sequence. Given the program's success, all ENG-098 offerings transitioned to ALP sections beginning in the 2018-19 academic year.

College Literacy (LTC-099). LTC-099 is an additional accelerated literacy course which combines four developmental courses for reading and/or writing into a single 5-credit hour course. This course was first offered in fall 2016 and is especially advantageous for students who place two levels below college-level in reading and English. For such students, it is possible to meet ECC's minimum competency requirement for college-level English with just one course (5 credit hours) and in one semester instead of the four courses (12 combined hours) and at least 2 semesters that the traditional developmental course pathway would have required. In [evaluation of the effectiveness of LTC-099](#)**,** the college has focused on student performance in high-enrolled, freshman college-level courses that have college-level reading and writing requirements as prerequisites. Our analyses show that students who place into both developmental reading and writing are much more likely to enroll in a college-level course within the first two years (86%) than students who enroll in the traditional developmental sequences (67%). We also find that students who place into both developmental reading and writing are more likely to be successful in their subsequent college-level courses if they complete LTC-099 (74%) than if they complete the traditional developmental course sequence (64%).

4.C.4. ECC methodologies for analyzing student retention and completion reflect commonly accepted best practices. In addition to mandatory IPEDS and ICCB reporting, which is used to explore broad retention and completion metrics in comparison to peer institutions, ECC also relies on additional voluntary efforts mentioned earlier. These efforts include national initiatives

or consortia such as ATD, ILEA, NCCBP, VFA, CSRDE reporting, and each highlight the analysis of disaggregated student success data. Most long-term retention, persistence and completion metrics reported as a part of these voluntary programs are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and Pell status. In general, metrics that we have found to be most indicative of long-term success for our students are those that we report to these voluntary efforts (e.g., ATD), and we use them routinely in decision-making.

Many ECC disciplines also rely on industry-specific metrics which support overall retention and completion. For instance, career-technical programs reporting into the Perkins Vocational and Technical Act (US Department of Education) rely on postsecondary skills attainment through GPAs, course and program completions, industry-recognized tests, and success among non-traditional and tech prep high school students. Health occupations, Human Services, and Paralegal Programs rely on metrics defined by their professional accreditors; and Adult Education relies on the National Reporting Standards (NRS) of the ICCB. Each organization reflects current best practices.

Sources

- Achieving the Dream - Webpage
- Aspen Nov 2019 Submission FINAL
- AtD Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement
- Call Center Results - April 2019
- Data Rangers Goals FY2018
- ECC Decision Making Process
- ECC Performance Report FY2019
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- Financial Literacy Brochure b-011314
- Financial Smarts (Bellwether Legacy Application)
- ICAPS Brochure 20180411
- ILEA Equity Plan Guide 03012019
- LASSI Pre- and Post-Test Comparisons (2018)
- Postsecondary Data Partnership PDP - Website
- Student Focus Group Exec Summary 2018
- Student Life Coordinator Logic Model
- Student Life Coordinator Success Metrics
- Success in 1st-Year College-Level Coursework by Developmental Pathway
- TLSD Request for New Positions Worksheet FY17 - Student Life Coordinator
- Transition Academy Program - Webpage
- Triumph Grant Program Page
- VFA Brochure
- XEDD Funnels

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC has established a culture of evaluation and continuous improvement that demonstrates the college's commitment to providing high quality educational programs and support services to students. Assessment is a faculty-led and faculty-driven process at ECC, with the institution providing support and infrastructure to departments, primarily through the work of the Curriculum Committee, the Student Learning Assessment Advisory Committee (SLAAC) and the Manager of Outcomes Assessment. Current assessment practices have been established with a goal of ensuring consistency in assessment practices, while still allowing for flexibility in the selection of measures and methods.

ECC's commitment to continuous improvement in relation to student learning is evidenced by the college's continued involvement in multiple national initiatives, such as Achieving the Dream, Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative, and the HLC Student Success Academy -- each of which emphasize a data-based approach for understanding student learning. Additionally, regular participation in state and national data collection efforts, such as the National Community College Benchmark Project, Voluntary Framework of Accountability, and the Consortium for Student Retention Data, provide multiple opportunities for ECC to gauge progress in institutional efforts to support and foster student learning and goal attainment through comparison to peer institution metrics. In combination, each of the practices and initiatives highlighted throughout Criterion 4 emphasizes the college's data-informed approach for institutional decision-making and, in turn, helps to extend a culture of continuous improvement for all institutional processes related to student learning.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1. ECC began as an extension of Elgin High School in 1949 and joined the American Association of Junior Colleges in 1950. Since 1966, it has existed as a community college under the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/) and has been accredited with the Higher Learning Commission since 1968. As a member of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), ECC adheres to the Illinois General Assembly's Illinois Administrative Code Section 1501, which defines operating standards for students, programs, administration, and fiscal and human resources. ECC is officially reauthorized ("recognized") as a publicly supported entity every five years by the ICCB. Recognition consists of a thorough review of instruction, student and academic support services, finance/facilities, and administrative functions.

Fiscal Resources. The college has operated with balanced budgets since 1949 and currently maintains a Aaa credit rating with Moody's and a AA+ rating with Standard and Poor's, one of only three Illinois community colleges to achieve this level. The college has never received a qualified audit opinion. For 16 consecutive years, we have received national Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The Board Policies Handbook outlines long-term financial planning

principles related to budgeting, financial condition, and asset protection. The district's tax base is strong with commercial retail development, and the college maintains outstanding relationships with many corporate, educational, and community partners.

Human Resources. The Cabinet monitors the college's human resource needs by reviewing justifications for new and reallocated positions and unit reorganizations. As of fiscal year 2019, the college employed 1,050 individuals in four major employment categories, the largest being faculty. Administrative positions include senior Cabinet members, deans and associate deans, and directors with supervisory authority.

From July 1, 2015 through August 31, 2017, Illinois garnered attention for operating without a state budget; as a result, ECC received no state appropriations during this period. For years, ECC had operated with less and less state support (currently we receive just under 7% of operating revenues from the state, which is half of what we received just five years ago). Prudent budgeting allowed us to weather the budget impasse, yet fiscal years 2016 and 2017 were difficult, forcing a hiring freeze for non-faculty positions and a layoff of some staff. With funding restored, we are now slowly increasing staffing levels.

Fall Semester Employee Counts by Type: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2019

ICCB Employment Class	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
Teaching Faculty	601	577	530	510	524
Administrative	44	45	47	46	48
Non-Teaching Professional/Technical Staff	285	289	281	252	255
Classified Staff	239	233	206	228	223
TOTAL	1,169	1,144	1,064	1,036	1,050

The Human Resources Office strives to recruit diverse candidates for open positions. Each year the office fulfills Illinois legislative requirements by reporting progress in recruiting, hiring, and promoting African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, and bilingual employees. In 2014-15, the office worked with an outside consultant to audit and map employee onboarding processes. Our eTalent system is the result of this process. In addition, we hired a new Chief Human Resources Officer in August 2019, who is rapidly ushering in improvements in position management, hiring, and employee retention.

Physical Facilities. ECC's 217-acre Spartan (main) campus in at the center of District 509. The campus is within 15 miles from most in-district homes and workplaces and contains 1.1 million square feet of space. Buildings A through O house classrooms, student study spaces, and academic laboratories in computer science, heath and sciences, welding, auto mechanics, advanced manufacturing, photography finishing, and art production. The campus also contains medical clinics and simulation rooms, multiple art galleries, two theaters, two auditoriums, the

Renner Academic Library, a sporting events center, an Early Childhood Lab School and playground, Spartan Terrace Restaurant, a large University and Business Center, athletic fields, and a large grounds maintenance building.

Roughly a third of the Spartan campus was built since 2009 through a voter-approved $178 million referendum for capital growth. Modernization efforts included the Renner Academic Library, Building A (Health and Life Sciences), Building K (Workforce Development, TRIO, and Adult Basic Education), renovations to existing buildings and grounds. The buildings are modern in design with several receiving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) recognition.

In fall 2019, we are preparing a new campus master plan with a 10-year horizon. Working with planning and architectural consultants, we intend to modernize facilities to support growth in career-technical fields. In addition, the plan will inform the college about ways to maximize current classroom, laboratory, and common spaces, and includes a space utilization analysis. Per the ICCB, we have submitted a Resource Allocation Management Plan (RAMP), which contains requested construction costs associated with this expansion. We have already received $1.3 million in donated equipment for advanced manufacturing, added new programs in logistics/supply chain management and computer numerical control operations, and new labs to support the programs in cybersecurity.

In addition, through the passage of the long-awaited Illinois Public Act 101-0029 in June 2019, the college received an additional $500,000 from state appropriations in 2020, which we intend to use for programs in mechatronics and an optician program and laboratory. Adding to the state's contribution, the Board of Trustees has designated capital project funds from financial reserves to accommodate new programs and an expanded fitness center.

Beyond the Spartan campus, ECC operates the Education and Work Center and the Center for Emergency Services, as described in Core Component 1D. The Education and Work Center primarily serves Adult Basic Education students, although we offered a credit course in our office administration technology for the first time this fall as approved by the HLC substantive change process. The Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership also offers an on-site WorkNet® at the Center. The Center for Emergency Services offers programs in public safety communications, emergency medical services, criminal justice, and fire science and is used by local firefighting professionals as a training center with a well-equipped forensics lab, burn tower, and pond for search and rescue training. The Center for Emergency Services was built with referendum funds and began operating in 2016.

Technological Resources. The college's Information Technology Department serves as a strategic partner to all college's departments, oversees technology needs, and maintains the status and workflow of multiple technology initiatives. The department manages, completes, maintains, and supports these projects through three related divisions: Technology Services, which includes the help desk, academic/office computing, and audio-visual services; Administrative Systems and

Application Development, which maintains the Ellucian transactions and reporting platform and related systems; and Network Operations and Information Security.

Technology divisions are overseen by a Chief Information Officer, who also relies on specialized analysts, who work as employees within various college departments and serve as liaisons to Information Technology staff to translate business needs into technological solutions. Finally, deans and academic support staff work alongside professionals in Information Technology to identify and prioritize technology related needs and instructional equipment.

The college's Ellucian Colleague ERP is comprised of integrated modules related to curriculum, student records, finance, financial aid, student accounts, and human resources. These map onto the roles played by analysts. Desire2Learn is the learning management system. Ellucian Self-Service modules offers students and advisors a "one-stop" shop for course registration, monitoring satisfactory completion of requirements, and tuition payments. An Ellucian Go! mobile application provides access to these same features. The list of new self-service features grows each year and is supported by a $5 per credit hour student fee.

5.A.2. ECC does not have a superordinate body to which it distributes revenue. The college operates as a political subdivision of the state of Illinois with a locally elected Board that oversees the college's resources, revenues, and expenditures. In the current 2020 fiscal year, 61% of operating revenues come from local property taxes, 30% from tuition, 7% from the state, and the remainder from grants, auxiliary services, and other sources. Details on how we estimate revenues are contained in Core Component 5C.

On the expenditure side, 57% of income is spent on instruction and student services, another 36% on institutional support, and the remainder on other operating costs. Expenditures are projected from the ECC Strategic Plan – specifically, by tallying the sum total of all items coming through department plans that align to the Operating Plan and, in turn, to the ECC Strategic Plan. These plans contain all costs needed for a fiscal year, inclusive of personnel, equipment, technology, space, and professional development. No revenues or expenditures are allocated to or from any other source beyond what we have in our plans. Details on how budgets are planned is also contained in Core Component 5C.

Evidence the college maintains sufficient financial resources is found in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and end-of-year audits. The percentage of our operating budgets allocated to instructional programs and instructional support (57% in fiscal year 2019 vs. 56% in fiscal year 2014) has remained stable even with declines in enrollment and state support. In fiscal year 2019, for example, the college operated with $83 million in operating revenues and almost $62 million in unrestricted operating reserves, or about 75% of total costs. ECC's financial ratios are strong with a total CFI at 3.65 in 2019 vs. 3.30 during our 2015 reaffirmation. Finally, we have maintained fiscal stability despite implementation of GASB 75, which required a significant, recorded liability for retiree health plans. Our net position (total assets minus total liabilities) now stands at $103 million, of which $44 million is unrestricted (or about half of our operating budget).

Other examples that ensure primacy of our core academic mission are various safeguards built into budgeting through the ICCB Fiscal Management Manual. These include independent audits, rules on levying taxes, using restricted funds, unrestricted funds, and fund balances. Transfers between funds are allowable only with Board approval, and even then are limited to 10% or less of total fund availability. The Board requires six months' worth of operating costs contained in fund balances and the college is currently at ten months due to conservative investment. Separately, administrative procedures, explained in Criterion 2, protect the distribution of revenues, purchases, and use and accounting of assets. Related procedures govern technology use, travel, student refunds, grants and contracts, and the acceptance of gifts. Practices related to debt management, cash management, investing, taxing/revenue capacity, and risk management are detailed in the CAFR.

5.A.3. Budgets are realistic and follow directly from the ECC Strategic Plan. To determine the fit between budgets and goals, the Board and college self-assess progress in both quantitative and qualitative ways.

Quantitatively, the college prepares an annual Performance Report, which contains indicators for each strategic goal. Seventy five (75) separate metrics in the report cover student success (e.g., persistence, completion, transfer, and progression from pre-collegiate/development levels to college), financial stewardship, satisfaction, and operational efficiencies (e.g., unit costs, professional development expenditures, etc.). Each year current values are compared to prior values and external benchmarks, with results color-coded to show at-a-glance where the college is on target (shaded in yellow), above targets (shaded in green), or below targets (shaded in red). An example of a success metrics the college is particularly proud of is success for Latinx students, ECC's largest ethnic subpopulation. Gaps between Latinx versus White or Asian students have been narrowing steadily in regard to course success (grades of C or higher), persistence, and completion. An example of a metric we hope to improve through our Operating Plan is the success of African-American students.

Qualitatively, the Performance Report also contains annual summaries of accomplishments, which the President and Board use to assess if ECC is over- or under-performing. Through discussions during Cabinet and Board meetings, we build consensus and understanding on actions to scale, revise, or eliminate. Any actions where results are promising are scaled, and we revamp where results are mixed or less than expected. An example of an accomplishment recently scaled is contextualized instruction, as described in Core Component 4C, in which developmental and college-level courses are delivered concurrently. An example where accomplishments were not as promising as intended was our effort to create a central office for undocumented students. Data gathered from student focus groups did not indicate centralization to be beneficial over strengthening and coordinating the resources we already have.

A final means we use to determine if goals are realistic is by examining survey data on employee perceptions on the efficiency of planning. Per the Achieving the Dream Institutional Capacities Assessment Tool (ICAT) on items pertaining to planning and student success are rated 3.5 on

scales of 1 to 4 (e.g., "*Does the college's strategic plan focus on student success?).* In addition, as noted in Core Component 1A, CESS survey items pertaining to planning and the involvement of faculty and administrators in planning are rated higher than many peer colleges.

5.A.4. Personnel in all areas are appropriately qualified. AP 5-103 outlines minimum qualifications for instructional faculty teaching baccalaureate transfer, career-technical, and pre-college courses, as well as criteria for Library faculty. The Board/ECCFA contract contains job descriptions for full-time and adjunct/part-time faculty, which are called upon when recruiting, screening, and hiring faculty candidates, as well as during job evaluations. Faculty, instructional coordinators and deans are directly involved in recruiting faculty, and the Vice President of TLSD approves all faculty appointments. The Board/ECCFA contract (pp. 63-67) contains salary schedules for full-time and adjunct faculty at each qualification level, which is determined by years of education and experience. Review of faculty by deans and faculty peers occurs regularly according to schedules described in the Faculty Evaluation Handbook. A separate Faculty Development Committee selects and evaluates professional development, lane movement, and sabbatical eligibility of adjunct and full-time faculty. Sabbaticals for full-time and adjunct faculty are approved by the Board.

ECC faculty are supported in their professional development by CETL, which, through a faculty advisory committee, organizes learning and pedagogy workshops throughout the year. Non-faculty employees are supported by the Professional and Organizational Development Office, which offers in-person and online training focused on a number of topics critical to our Operating Plan, including cultural competency, civility, customer service, and leadership training. In 2018-19, this office offered 76 events and feedback on ICAT and CESS indicates that employees feel well-supported by professional development. Employee satisfaction ratings in response to the CESS question "*I have adequate opportunities for professional development*" were significantly higher than the national peer benchmark (3.61 vs. 3.43 on a 5-point scale).

For all employees, the Human Resources Office monitors employee onboarding/off-boarding, retention, performance evaluations, professional development, and employee relations. Qualifications are consistent with levels of responsibility listed on PDQs for administrative and support staff positions and in the Board/ECCFA contract for faculty. Job classifications for administrative and staff positions are carried out quarterly by the Hay Method Committee and used to set salary levels (see Board/SSECCA contract [pp. 42-45]). The Board/ECCFA and Board/SSECCA contracts are renegotiated every three years. Evaluations for administrative and staff employees are conducted annually by supervisors and used to guide professional development. The CESS suggests that professional development is strong but that ongoing accountability for performance evaluations is an area for future improvement. For instance, ECC employee satisfaction ratings in response to the CESS question "*My supervisor helps me improve my job performance*" were lower than the national benchmark (3.67 versus 3.75 on a 5-point scale).

5.A.5. The college's process of budgeting and monitoring expenses is described in Core Component 5C and the Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative, which remains largely

unchanged since the 2015 HLC Quality Initiative Report. To protect the academic core and delivery quality, we also maintain verification practices noted earlier in Core Component 5A. The college engages in regular reviews in academic areas and auxiliary areas, which are used to identify and fund needs. Finally, budget practices adhere to the GFOA's Best Practices in Community College Budgeting, which ECC and peer colleges jointly authored in 2015.

Financial monitoring is carried out by the Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SPBC). The SPBC meets throughout the year to review spending across departments and committees and is supported by the Business and Finance Office, which prepares expense reports quarterly by object code, by fund type, and by grant source, along with a summary of available cash. The Business and Finance Office also monitors accounts and receivables through Colleague reconciliation software and bank statements. ECC has 69 budget officers/cost centers, and general ledger reports are available through a common Colleague interface. Requisitions for purchases are submitted through Colleague software, and invoice approvals through ImageNow software.

SPBC ensures that all spending is aligned to stated goals. With help from the Budget and Finance Office, the SPBC hosts budget workshops for employees and Board members. Additionally, in early spring, the committee assists with mid-year budget assessments to ensure spending remains on track. At that time, SPBC considers the redistribution of unneeded funds. Because we budget in a zero-based fashion, contingencies are minimal. Finally, as noted previously, the ECC Foundation, GIST, and the Student Success Infrastructure support mini-grants for innovations, which are awarded throughout the academic year.

Beyond the SPBC, departments and committees do their best to monitor spending. Academic programs, Operations and Maintenance, and Information Technology regularly monitor instructional equipment and maintenance needs, and usage of computers and printers in classrooms and labs is monitored via an Academic Computer Usage and Usage History Report. A newly formed committee for vetting capital improvements outside of planned maintenance will begin meeting in January 2020. Moving forward, we also intend to bring CETL and Professional and Organizational Development into closer strategic alignment.

Sources

- 110 ILCS 805 - Public Comm College Act
- Agenda FY2021 Budget Open Forum
- AP 5-103 Min Reqmts for Appt to Faculty
- Article - Swiss Auto Donation to ECC - Herald
- BOT Action 085-F-20 Transf btwn Funds
- Computer Use by Room Report - F205 (sample)
- ECC CAFR 19
- ECC Center for Emerg Svcs Business Plan FY20
- ECC Educ and Work Center

- ECC Master Plan Workshop 3 Presentation - Core-Advisory
- ECC Performance Report FY2019
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- ECC-EWC Change Panel Action Letter 12-07-18
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31
- ECCFA Contract 2017-01-01 to 2019-12-31 (page number 63)
- Employment Plan FY18 - African American
- Employment Plan FY18 - Asian American
- Employment Plan FY18 - Bilingual Needs and Pay
- Employment Plan FY18 - Hispanic
- Faculty Eval Handbook 2017-19 rev2018 May
- GFOA Best Practices in CC Budgeting
- Grant Item E-1 FY20 Approp Gen Assembly Action
- ICAT Inst Capacities Assessment Tool
- ICCB Fiscal Mgmt Manual FY2016
- Job Performance Eval Form
- Public Act 101-0029 (Illinois)
- QI Purposeful Budgeting - HLC Feedback and ECC Report 2015
- QI Purposeful Budgeting - HLC Feedback and ECC Report 2015 (page number 44)
- QI Purposeful Budgeting - HLC Feedback and ECC Report 2015 (page number 47)
- Ramp Report for FY2020
- RuffaloNL College Employeee Sat Survey CESS
- SPBC Presentation to BOT June 2019
- SSECCA Contract 2017-07-01 to 2020-06-30
- SSECCA Contract 2017-07-01 to 2020-06-30 (page number 45)
- Substantial Change App Final - ECC EWC Credit Courses - 20180821

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1. The Board of Trustees operates under the principles of policy governance. As described Criterion 2, the Board sets all policies, executive parameters, and limitations, and the President, as the only employee directly accountable to the Board, sets administrative procedures needed to enact the Board's policies and manage operations (Board/President Relationship).   The leadership structure outlined below describes how the President enables the Board meet its financial, academic, legal, and fiduciary responsibilities:

President's Cabinet. The President maintains an executive Cabinet (see ECC Organizational Chart) which consists of the following senior leaders and the Senior Executive Assistant to the President:

- Vice President of Teaching, Learning and Student Development/Chief Academic Officer
- Vice President for Business and Finance/Chief Financial Officer
- Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Technology
- Chief Human Resources Officer
- Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
- Chief of Police
- Executive Director of the Institutional Advancement and the ECC Foundation
- Managing Director of Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs
- General Counsel

Deans Council. The Vice President of Teaching, Learning, and Student Development oversees the Deans Council, which includes senior leaders of all academic divisions, the Library, and student affairs. She also supervises the Assistant Vice President, who, in turn, oversees the Curriculum and Assessment Office and Student Academic Systems Office. The Deans Council provides leadership for academic and student support units by executing administrative

procedures; supervising faculty; overseeing academic committees; developing academic and student service goals, curricula, and student learning outcomes; and monitoring assessment practices. Deans Council consists of these academic units:

- Adult Education & English as a Second Language
- College Transitions & School Partnerships
- Communications & Behavioral Sciences
- Health Professions, Math, Science & Engineering
- Learning Resources & International Education
- Liberal, Visual & Performing Arts
- Student Services & Development
- Sustainability, Business & Career Technologies
- Workforce Development & Corporate and Continuing Education

Faculty interests are represented through the Elgin Community College Faculty Association (ECCFA), Local 3791 of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, which engages in "any and all activities that promote educational processes and the welfare of its members." ECCFA participates actively in the American Federation of Teachers and other national labor organizations. Every tenure-track full-time faculty member and librarian is represented by ECCFA, as are part-time faculty members after fulfilling a minimum number of service hours. Elected ECCFA representatives participate on all college councils, and their interests are represented on the Cabinet by the Vice President of TLSD, the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), and the President, with whom ECCFA leaders meet regularly. A formal contract between ECCFA and the Board is carried out by college administrators. Voluntary assignments not otherwise contained in the contract are separately negotiated through memoranda of understanding by ECCFA leadership, the Vice President of TLSD, and the CHRO.

Support Staff. Staff interests are represented through the Support Staff of Elgin Community College Association (SSECCA), which is affiliated with the Illinois Education Association – National Education Association. SSECCA is the sole and exclusive negotiating agent for full-time and part-time educational support professionals. The organization elects an executive board of area representatives and seven officers/leaders, who meet in an advisory capacity with the President, CHRO, and the Managing Director of Labor and Employee Relations.

Building Engineers. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), AFL-CIO, Local Union 117 is the governing body for a team of ten building engineers (including one lead building engineer) at ECC and also maintains a formal contract with the Board.

Police. The Board recognizes the Union (The Metropolitan Alliance of Police - Chapter #735) as the sole and exclusive collective bargaining representative for all employees of the college employed as full-time police officers below the rank of sergeant, and excluding all supervisory, managerial, confidential, short-term employees as defined in the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (115 ILCS 5/).

Students. The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the voice of the student body. It consists of current students elected annually by peers for positions of President, Vice President, Vice President of Student Organizations, Secretary, Treasurer, and 16 senators. The Association interacts with students, clubs, and organizations to solicit feedback about college operations, satisfaction, and recommendations for improvements that impact student success. SGA shares information to administration and notifies students of legislation that may impact them. The SGA holds weekly business meetings with club and organization representatives to share goals, objectives, and accomplishments. SGA members also serve as members to the Student Affairs Discipline Committee.

A student member of the Board of Trustees (Student Trustee) is elected by peers in April to serve on the Board and to serve as ECC's student representative on the [Illinois Community College Board Student Advisory Committee](). In addition to serving as a liaison between the Board and students, the Student Trustee is expected to attend and contribute to SGA business, meetings, and legislation.

5.B.2. We explain in Criterion 2 how Board policies, open meetings, and the use of administrative procedures encourage broad participation in governance. In addition, [Committee of the Whole (COTW)]() meetings provide opportunities for constituencies to stay informed and ask questions about resolutions, actions, or purchases under Board consideration. Held a day prior to formal meetings, COTW meetings are discussion-based and well attended by Cabinet members, faculty, staff, students, and, at times, by community residents and members of the media. All Board members and the Student Trustee also attend. COTW meetings are a key part of governance at ECC during which time employees and the Board introduce new ideas, review data, and explain and clarify decisions and actions.

Finally, the [Board's Annual Planning Calendar]() provides designated times for constituencies to prepare reports on a monthly, quarterly, or annually basis. Key reports on the calendar include:

- Strategic Plans and Performance Reports
- Academic Program Review Reports
- Auxiliary Business Plans and Reports
- Budgeting and Grant Monitoring Reports
- Student Activities Reports
- Community Reports and Engagement and Legislative Affairs Reports
- Human Resources Reports
- Legislative Activities Reports
- ECC Foundation/Institutional Advancement Reports

5.B.3. A key to the success in our governance system is formalizing participation at all levels. Our labor agreements and job descriptions are well detailed and followed meticulously by union and non-union personnel. We allow staff to negotiate and handle contractual matters during their regular paid time. We define roles and responsibilities for faculty and staff on committees and councils. Finally, we provide checks and balances through

formal procedures on employee grievances, student complaints and appeals, ethics and whistleblower advisors, and FOIA requests.

Various ECC committees oversee all major academic and institutional needs. Several committees exist by virtue of job roles of Board members, President, Vice Presidents, and senior leaders in Student Services and Development, Enrollment Management, Institutional Research, and Information Technology:

Name	Led by	Focus
Committee of the Whole	Board of Trustees	College strategy
Finance Committee	Board of Trustees as supported by the Vice President of Business and Finance	Financial oversight
Cabinet	President	Senior leadership
Administrative Team	President	Administrative leadership
Deans Council	Vice President of Teaching, Learning and Student Development	Academic leadership
Strategic Planning Committee	Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Technology	Strategic planning
Institutional Review Board	Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Technology	Research review
Strategic Planning and Budget Council	Comptroller as supported by the Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Technology	Operational planning and budgeting
Strategic Enrollment Management Team	Managing Director of Enrollment Services	Enrollment strategy
Alliance for College Readiness	Dean of College Transitions and School Partnerships	High school partnerships
Data Rangers	Managing Director of Institutional Research	Program/project evaluation
Analysts Group	Managing Director of Administrative and Web Systems	Software systems development
Hay Methodology Team	Chief Human Resources Officer	Position classification
Behavioral Intervention Team	Director of Student Success and Judicial Affairs	Student behaviors

| Grants Collaboration Committee | Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and the ECC Foundation | Grant development |

Other committees are formalized in labor agreements (e.g., ECCFA contract or in letters/memoranda of agreement) with negotiated release time or stipends:

Name	Led by	Focus
Faculty Senate	President of ECCFA	Faculty affairs
Support Staff Executive Board	President of SSECCA	Staff affairs
Curriculum Committee	ECCFA faculty, supported by the Associate VP of TLSD	Curriculum development
Student Learning Assessment Advisory Committee	ECCFA faculty, supported by the Manager of Outcomes Assessment	Student learning
Faculty Development Committee	ECCFA faculty, supported by the VP of TLSD	Faculty development
Student Success Infrastructure	ECCFA faculty, supported by the VP of TLSD	Equitable student support and Achieving the Dream
Multicultural and Global Infusion Committee and Global/International Studies Team	ECCFA faculty, support by the VP of TLSD	Multicultural and global understanding

Finally, project-based or short-term committees are put in place to respond to specific needs. These are led or co-led by administrators and faculty and at present include:

HLC Student Success Academy Steering Committee	Leads ECC's involvement in the HLC Student Success Academy
ILEA Steering Committee	Leads ECC's involvement in the Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative
Honors Committee	Leads Honors Program
Academic Procedures Review Team	Reviews administrative and PETALS procedures that support TLSD

Distance Learning Advisory Committee	Leads program development and assurance quality for distance learning

Additionally, from time to time, the President holds informal meetings to gather feedback from employees. He and many Cabinet leaders maintain open-door policies whereby anyone can request individual meetings.

Sources

- Annual Planning Calendar 2019 Aug
- AP 3-804 Whistleblower Protection
- AP 4-408 Appeal for Complaint Procedure
- AP 5-401 Employee Grievance
- BOT Policies BPR 2019
- BOT Policies GP 2018
- BOT Policies GP 2018 (page number 4)
- ECC Organizational Chart - Nov 2019
- ECCFA Supplemental Assign Chart - revJul 2019
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).pdf
- IBEW Contract 2017-2020
- ICCB Student Advisory Handbook 2018-2019
- IEA Mission History
- MAP 735 Contract1 - ECCPD 11-13-18 to 06-30-22

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

5.C.1. The Annual Budget is compiled over a multi-month planning/budgeting period outlined in the Annual Board Calendar. The process starts in late fall and continues through early spring. During this period, the Board and college develop goals and budgets through systematic and integrated activity, and budget workshops are offered by the Business and Finance Office. The backdrop for these discussions is the annual Operating Plan, which is set each spring by the Cabinet. The Operating Plan is posted on the employee portal by the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office and updated regularly as progress ensues. The Operating Plan provides a broad lens from which college budget officers and committee chairs outline goals in any given year. The 2020 Operating Plan contains 25 actions nested within the 14 strategies of the ECC Strategic Plan, and 2020 actions build upon actions from 2019 and those, in turn, from 2018.

Department-level or committee-level goals are recorded in different ways by departments or divisions, and all align to the Operating Plan. Academic and student service departments are recorded by deans using a SharePoint team site. Auxiliary service areas prepare business plans and budgets using a Board-approved template, and examples are provided in Core Component 5D. Cabinet-level departments report their goals to the President and collectively oversee the entire Operating Plan. Each year, the President assigns Cabinet members to serve as "champions" for subsets of Operating Plan actions. As described in Core Component 5B, Cabinet-level departments include Teaching, Learning and Student Development; Human Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness/Information Technology, Marketing and Communications, ECC Foundation/Institutional Advancement, ECC Police Department, Legal Affairs, and Community Engagement/Legislative Affairs.

In their department plans, budget officers identify personnel, space, marketing, equipment, and all other needs, as informed by prior cycles of program review and Operating Plan Progress Updates. Budget officers finalize their plans and budgets (Budget Planning Calendar) in late

February for review by the Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SBPC). SBPC reviews commence in March and continue weekly until May when the ECC Annual Budget is posted publicly, which occurs a month prior to Board approval in June and the start of the fiscal year in July. To prepare for review, budget officers submit detailed budget worksheets with expenses aligned to object codes and goals. Any requests for large expenses or deviations up or down from the prior year's budget require additional separate justifications. Requests are routed to appropriate review bodies/committees per the Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative Expense Review Chart.

Budget input worksheets are standardized and include a delineation of all expenses and, for cost centers, revenue streams and/or fees. In their worksheets, budget officers classify each line item according to the Operating Plan or department goals to which they align. They also indicate whether requests are for ongoing/operational or special one-time projects, and they prioritize them into one of three levels for SPBC deliberations:

- 1 indicates that the funding request is essential for current operations.
- 2 indicates that the funding request enhances current operations and is tied to new Operating Plan or department goals.
- 3 indicates that the funding request enhances but does not significantly impact operations.

The college's 2015 Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative in 2015 helped to improve the quality of budgets dramatically. From it, ECC departments budget in a "zero-based" manner - i.e., from scratch and without assumptions from prior years. Consequently, ECC increasingly uses data and reasoned approaches to anticipate needs, and budget officers are becoming adept at budgeting specifically for stated goals. We use an enrollment simulator to forecast enrollments and state-reimbursed credit hours. We also monitor historical taxation, equalized assessed values of properties, consumer price indices, historical tuition and fees, expected grants, hiring needs, and anticipated reimbursements from ICCB to forecast revenues (Statistical Forecasts appear in Section 3 of the Annual Budget). Costs for conferences and travel are allocated proportionally to department staff size and professional development needs. Funds for extra-contractual faculty assignments, capital improvements, and instructional equipment undergo in-depth review by separate subcommittees whose reviews inform SPBC decisions.

5.C.2. Because of Purposeful Budgeting, the college is intentional about linking planning and budgeting to results of assessment and program reviews. The new Program Development Guidelines, described in Criterion 3, include review by the SPBC and Cabinet in addition to the Curriculum Committee. Review by SPBC is especially helpful in ensuring that all planned costs are accounted for -- particularly instructional costs, credit hour estimates, and course and lab fees. The program development process also includes labor market analyses, proposed curriculum and alignment to strategic goals, assessment methods, and plans for continuous review. Program reviews encompass analysis of course and program assessment, but admittedly, the link between learning assessment and budgeting is indirect.

Faculty instructional coordinators and deans tasked with program reports are expected to incorporate findings from reviews into their budget justifications and future planning/budgeting cycles. The annual [program health review scorecard](#) helps in this regard. During this new process, programs scoring lowest receive a [deeper dive analysis](#) to highlight challenges or document special circumstances. While only one cycle has ensued, we already notice the quality of discussions becoming more strategic. We have recently decided, for example, that lower-scoring programs will receive targeted attention during budgeting and are currently defining the outcomes we expect to see from program improvement.

Another example of connecting planning and budgeting to student learning comes from innovation funds awarded by the Student Success Infrastructure. Throughout the academic year, the Infrastructure requests ideas for [pilot programs](#) that improve student learning and equity (ECC Strategic Plan Goal 1). These projects are closely monitored by the SPBC during budgeting. If trial funding yields success, projects are renewed for another cycle, and successful beyond that, are institutionalized permanently in department budgets. The [Project Assessment Administrator](#) and Data Rangers assist the Student Success Infrastructure and the SPBC with this process. Project evaluation is rigorous and require reflective checklist and logic models. Many of ECC's most noteworthy endeavors -- such as the Financial Smarts Financial Literacy Program and the Assessment Diaries Conference -- began as new initiatives under the Infrastructure.

5.C.3. The creation of strategic plans at ECC is a [lengthy process](#) that encompasses gathering and vetting ideas from internal and external constituencies. The current ECC Strategic Plan was created beginning in October 2016 and approved in final form on October 2017 for a January 2018 launch. The entire process was well-planned and included recurring series listening sessions with employees and students. From these sessions, [101 distinct ideas](#) emerged by late fall 2016, and we used an [inquiry framework](#) matrix to categorize ideas into areas of importance, strengths, and opportunities.

Through web survey with internal constituencies, the list was further refined into five themes and numerous sub-themes, which eventually became the 4 goals and 14 strategies of the current plan. Collectively, the college synthesized input from 23 regional or national studies and numerous internal annual reports prior to plan adoption. Once themes were documented, smaller sub-teams worked to further refine key areas (e.g., learning and equity, community engagement, etc.), and a writing team worked throughout the summer and early fall of 2017 to produce all drafts.

The perspectives of external constituents shaped the current set of strategic goals as well. In early spring 2017 we conducted two large-scale studies to further refine the goals and strategies – a [Community Survey](#) of 463 area residents and [ECC 2017 Environmental Scan](#) of demographic and employment trends and projections. Finally, we held two large public forums where over 100 external partners – education leaders, business leaders, community leaders – helped us review these external reports, provide formal input, and refine the five themes. These forums were vital to our process. A [poster gallery walk](#) held at the forums allowed attendees to circulate among various "[stations](#)" to hear mini-presentations on emerging goals and to sort and rate

priorities within them. The <u>visual word clouds</u> resulting from this exercise were created in real time and prompted further reflections from attendees. A <u>broad timeline</u> of the entire planning process appears on page 10 of the ECC Strategic Plan.

5.C.4. ECC budgets in a conservative manner with a sound understanding of institutional resources. Careful monitoring of revenues and expenses safeguards against fluctuations. Academic program reviews, program health scorecards, student success initiatives plans and reports, auxiliary business plans and reports, and Operating Plan Updates are the primary methods we use to ensure spending remains aligned to stated goals. Additionally, the quality of budget requests and their close alignment to stated goals is another means by which we monitor spending. Upon adopting Purposeful Budgeting, we soon noticed an uptick in the number of budget officers providing written justifications with their budget workbooks. For the fiscal year 2021 planning/budgeting cycle, the SPBC created the budget justification form noted above.

According to the Illinois Public Community College Act, a third of operating revenues for Illinois community colleges was to come from state government; another third from local property taxes; and the remaining third from tuition and fees. However, in reality, only 6% of the college's estimated fiscal year 2020 operating revenue is expected from the state -- and even those funds are typically received late in the fiscal year. To compensate, ECC maintains healthy reserves – enough to operate as is for almost full year without any revenue. Other means we use to safeguards college operations are derived from state or local requirements. On the state level, the Illinois Public Act limits the level of collected tuition and fees to a third of the college's per capita costs. The college is well below this limit (currently tuition is about 20% of per capita costs) and to keep tuition as low as possible. Additionally, the Board of Trustees has adopted a practice of not approving the Annual Budget until all other budget adjustments are considered. The law also places limitations on the annual growth of property tax collections of most local governments, including ECC. The ICCB Fiscal Management Manual requires fund transfers do not exceed 10% of the total fund amount set forth in the budget. At the college level, the college maintains fund balances in excess of Board required amounts. Finally, ECC's financial stewardship has garnered exemplary credit ratings and recognitions as we reported in Core Component 5A.

Historic trends in annual surpluses (i.e., the sum total of funds requested but unspent at the close of each fiscal year) were decreasing for four years following the adoption of Purposeful Budgeting – a fact that demonstrates spending according to plan. However, when Illinois entered a two-year budget impasse in fiscal year 2016, ECC lost $3.7 million in state revenue. We credit Purposeful Budgeting for allowing ECC to fare better than other colleges during this period, and we ended that year sustaining a loss of only $0.37 million. However, when state appropriations were delayed again in fiscal years 2017 and 2018, the college continued to budget extremely cautiously – to a point where we netted $10 million in surplus for fiscal year 2019. This year and beyond, we are optimistic that the state's issue are resolved and are proceeding with more confidence that revenues will accurately flow from budgetary parameters.

5.C.5. ECC planning/budget cycle is designed to anticipate and respond to changing factors. First, in setting the ECC Strategic Plan, Strategic Planning Committee members were guided by a variety of resources listed in Subcomponent 5C3, which, collectively contribute to the selection of strategies of the plan. Secondly, during budget reviews, the SPBC assures the reasonableness, consistency, and relevance of budgets to the Operating Plan. In addition to cost figures contained in program reviews, program health scorecards, and Student Success Infrastructure projects, the SBPC accounts for salary increases, contractual obligations, costs for employee benefits, ongoing software and technology maintenance, deferred physical maintenance and capital needs, and auxiliary unit operating parameters. In fiscal year 2020, for example, the college is budgeting for a nearly year-long migration away from Spartan Alert to a new predictive tool for student services, and the SPBC has already earmarked those funds. The college is also budgeting for extensive modernization of audiovisual equipment used in meeting rooms throughout campus.

The prioritization by budget officers is an important mechanism for redirecting funds throughout the year. When budget requests exceed available funding, SPBC depends on the rankings provided by budget officers (see Subcomponent 5C1) and starts by excluding items ranked a '3' priority. If funds are unspent, or if new funds become available, the SPBC circles back to unfunded projects and redirects as contingencies arise. Additionally, during late fall/early spring, the SPBC conducts a mid-year budget assessment (see Budget Planning Calendar) of the current budget year to ensure spending is on track and to redistribute funds no longer needed as planned. The council pools large requests marked 'P' (for projects) in the budget worksheets to review and vet them separately with experts in various areas (e.g., Information Technology or Operations and Maintenance) to ensure the viability and timely execution. After each budget cycle, the SPBC shares the list of projects, which remain unfunded but still under consideration.

Sources

- Agenda FY2021 Budget Open Forum
- Annual Planning Calendar 2019 Aug
- Budget Justification Form FY2021
- Budget Planning Calendar 2021.pdf
- Capital Request - Form and Instructions
- Cont Ed Business Plan FY2020
- ECC Annual Budget FY2020.pdf
- ECC Annual Budget FY2020.pdf (page number 13)
- ECC Community Survey Results Presentation - April 2017
- ECC Environment Scan and Highlights
- ECC Operating Plan Prog Updates FY2019 July 2019
- ECC Program Develop Guidelines FY20 ver1.0 6.4.19.0 6.4.19
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- ECC Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (page number 10)

- Enrollment Forecast Model - Final Report
- New Initiative Proposal - Forms
- Notes Combined 10-13 to 11-01-2016 - Diversity Equity Inclusion
- Paralegal Program Health Summary
- PDQ Project Assessment Admin
- Photo - Gallery Walk 2017 Apr
- Posters - Gallary Walk 2017 Apr
- ProgramViabilityScorecardFY20
- Projects 2020 Budget Year
- Review Processes for Funding Requests - Update111819
- Review Processes for Funding Requests_Update111819
- Strat Plan Themes Survey Fall 2017
- Strategic Plan Processes 2017-2022 Nov
- World Clouds - Public Forums 2017 Apr

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

5.D.1. ECC documents its operational performance in formative and summative ways. Formatively, we use data summits, focus groups, and surveys to gauge usage and satisfaction. In another example, data analysts and Information Technology developers use SharePoint team sites to manage workflows, communicate across departments, and make adjustments. Finally, all departments, committees, and auxiliary areas use tracking software to set and monitor goals. In spring 2020, we plan to centralize this work even more by customizing eTalent to connect department goals to performance appraisals and professional development.

In sum, formative reports are numerous and used increasingly to guide internal operations. Examples of key reports include: auxiliary business plans and reports, internal audit reports, operating plan updates, student success project updates, program reviews and program health reports, strategic enrollment plans, and Student Services and Development (SSD) Annual Reports (which include the following student service areas: Academic Advising, Admissions, Career Development Services, Disability Services, Registration and Records, Transfer Services, Student Life, Student Wellness, and Veterans Services).

In addition to formative approaches, we also compile summative reports of progress. These are publicly available on our website and include: Performance Report, CAFR, Community Report, and the Student Success/Achieving the Dream Annual Report. The Performance Report, as mandated in the Board Policies Handbook, is ECC's annual compilation of quantifiable indicators (e.g., graduation rates, financial ratios, etc.) benchmarked against external metrics. Sources of metrics include the US Department of Education (IPEDS), NCCBP, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI and CESS, and the Achieving the Dream ICAT. We also compare institutional performance regionally through the HLC Student Success Academy the HLC Annual Institutional Data Update, the Northern Illinois P-20 Network, other regional consortia, and program accreditation. At the state level, we participate in all ICCB data submissions, the ICCTA, ILEA, and Illinois College2Careers data and nationally through Achieving the Dream, the Government Finance Officers Association, and other frameworks.

5.D.2. The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model in the ECC Strategic Plan reflects how we learn from past practices and apply insights to new advances. The model is a simplified version of the Data-Based Decision-Making Model used by the Student Success Infrastructure, ILEA, and

several other committees. It is also used to report Operating Plan updates, academic program review, and learning outcomes assessment reports. According to the model, major actions begin with *planning* – i.e., outlining short-term and long-term outcomes of engaging in activity. Planning requires consensus on purpose, a deep understanding of data and current practice, and articulating targets or endpoints. To guide the course of planning, we employ logic models, flowcharts, and justification forms. Once planned, we engage in alternating phases of *doing* and *studying* – piloting through careful deployment and testing/assessing for impact. The last phase of the model is *action*, where we make a decision to do something with what we have learned – to scale an activity up or down, to continue at current levels, or start anew. ECC has become intentional about using data to assess performance, and the diligent work of Data Rangers and personnel in Institutional Research and Curriculum and Assessment Offices to integrate data into every major campus discussion.

Recently, our involvement in the HLC Student Success Academy and analysis of CESS survey results led us to reexamine an array of operational practices needing refinement. In August 2019, our President launched a Process Improvement Team to direct this effort. Using campus-wide listening sessions, individual meetings, and web surveys, the team is creating a master database of processes, underlying purposes, impacts, and consequences if modified. Although still fairly new, we have already identified inefficiencies that the President is now addressing or soon will. An example of one we are eliminating is charging course fees for online courses. Through its analysis, the team identified how fees impose a barrier for students. An example of a practice we intend to scale is capital funding. In January 2020, we will launch a capital improvement committee to prioritize smaller-scale space improvements (e.g., new carpet) that arise outside of deferred maintenance schedules. A host of potential improvements is being tracked by the team, which will undergo scrutiny during upcoming budgeting cycles.

Sources

- Auxiliary Business Plans FY2020 - All
- Div of Student Svcs and Dev Report AY2018-19
- ECC Operating Plan 112219
- ECC Report to the Community 2018
- HLC-ECC Institutional Update 2018-2019
- ILEA Equity Plan Guide 03012019
- Northern Illinois P-20 Network
- PDSA Piece of the PIE - Feb 2018
- SOAP Audit Report - Final w CAP
- Student Success Academy Overview 2018

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC's resources, structure, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve educational quality, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

First, the college maintains physical, human, financial, and technological resources, and grows/reduces them to ensure program quality. This is exemplified by the fact that a third of the main campus is less than a decade old, and the institution is preparing a new ten-year master plan on facility usage and efficient use of existing spaces. It is also illustrated in how the college closely matches its personnel to program and services needs, adding employees to areas where it makes sense to do so and reducing when outcomes do not support a need for expansion. Human Resources, Information Technology, and the Business and Finance Offices oversee policies and practices to support operations and sustain growth.

Second, governance and administrative structures support leadership and collaboration. The ECC Board of Trustees is committed to student success and is knowledgeable about the institution and the work of internal constituencies. It leads and supervises the President in creating administrative structures to guide operations.

Third, ECC engages in systematic and integrated planning. Strategic planning is well understood by constituencies and informs the Operating Plan and budgeting process. Resource allocations are closely monitored by the Strategic Planning and Budget Council and the Cabinet. Learning outcomes inform these processes as well, as do indicators and metrics of the Performance Report. Healthy unrestricted fund balances and contingency planning allow the college to plan for external uncertainties.

Lastly, the institution works systematically to improve performance in all areas. Formative and summary reports are numerous, presented to the ECC Board and public, and used in tandem with the Plan-Do-Study-Act model of the ECC Strategic Plan to guide operations.

Sources

There are no sources.