

Assurance Argument

Elgin Community College

Review date: 11-03-2025

Welcome Message for Review Team

Welcome to Elgin Community College!

We thank you for taking the time to review our Assurance Filing and share your insights and expertise. We also look forward to welcoming you to our campus in November.

This year, 2025, is an exciting new beginning at ECC. After saying farewell to our longest-serving president last year, the campus has reinvented itself under a new senior leadership team. New leaders in our Teaching, Learning, and Student Development Division, Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, Institutional Advancement and the ECC Foundation, Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs, and Institutional Success and Engagement (formerly Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office) areas were hired this past year. Each is eager to share stories with you, along with many longer-serving Cabinet members. Additionally, although not new to ECC, I am new to my role and also happy to share my own perspectives as a former associate dean, dean, vice president, and now president of this truly remarkable institution.

Elgin Community College (ECC), or Illinois Community College District 509, is located 40 miles northwest of downtown Chicago and serves portions of five counties adjacent to the Fox River (thus, the five points and the motion-like swooshes on ECC's logo). Our district of approximately 360 square miles is home to 444,209 residents who live in urban and rural communities, the largest being the city of Elgin itself (population: 114,701) which lies two miles to our northeast and gives our College its name.

Our region lies at the crossroads of the industrial Midwest, and you will see this context reflected in the programs we offer: industrial systems technology and supply chain management – and, of course, manufacturing, where our soon-to-be-completed Manufacturing Technology Center will ensure a solid future of productivity and sustainability throughout our region. Related initiatives include corequisite programs like Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) which weave together career-technical and Adult Education training, and robust non-credit programs with local businesses. Area industries gave rise to ECC over 75 years ago, and we proudly continue these relationships to ensure the College remains a leading educational provider for the trades.

We are also well-known for the quality of our transfer programs, with 136 transfer agreements with universities in Illinois and throughout the nation. In our Assurance Filing, you will read about the College's 19-year Alliance for College and Career Student Success, our formal partnership with four high school districts and 11 high schools that ensures curricular alignment from high school to college and a gateway to higher education for District 509 families. Additionally, you will read about innovative centers at ECC, like the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE), which awakens students' interests in community service, and the Center for Undergraduate Research, Innovation, and Creativity (CURIC), which ensures transfer students are prepared post-completion to engage in further baccalaureate and graduate research.

Across career and transfer pathways, ECC has a long history of providing educational opportunities for minority and underserved students in our increasingly diverse region. ECC's expansive portfolio of initiatives focuses on financial empowerment, workforce development, and Hispanic identity and servingness – each of which not only supports students directly but contributes to an ethos of equity and inclusion throughout our region of many cultures, languages, and demographics. An Achieving

the Dream Leader College of Distinction, an Aspen Top 150 College, and a Bellwether Award winner, ECC dedicates itself to student success, as reflected in our mission “*to improve people’s lives through learning.*”

Thank you for your service to the Higher Learning Commission and to ECC. As you prepare your reviews throughout October, if there is anything we can do to make this “preview month” easier for you, please do not hesitate to reach out to either our ALO, Phil Garber (pgarber@elgin.edu), or to me (pheinrich@elgin.edu), and we will get you what you need.

Again, we thank you. We are thrilled to share our self-study materials with you, and we look forward to meeting in person soon.

Peggy Heinrich, EdD
President

1 - Mission

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

1.A. Mission Alignment

The institution's educational programs, enrollment profile and scope of operations align with its publicly articulated mission.

Argument

Elgin Community College's (ECC) Mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides all college operations. The Mission statement is part of the College's MVP – Mission, (Shared) Values, and Philosophies. Principles reflected within these statements are discussed every day in classrooms, offices, and meeting rooms across campus. Statements are displayed on the College's public website (in an accessible format), hung on walls throughout campus, and in printed materials like the [Elgin Community College Strategic Plan 2023 through 2027](#), which is available in English and [Spanish](#). Employees can [order ECC Strategic Plan artwork](#) for their own workspaces and conference rooms and even ink pens to serve as reminders of why we exist.

Mission: Why We Exist

ECC's Mission, *to improve people's lives through learning*, has been in place for over 25 years when it was first approved in March 2000 and continues to be the primary driver of our work every day. In 2022, during the five-year strategic planning process, the College expanded the Mission statement to explain how it applies to key stakeholders, helping them grow from where they are to where they aspire to be ([see Strategic Plan, p. 4](#)). It now reads:

"To improve people's lives through learning. Through our decisions and actions, we empower: STUDENTS to reach their goals in an equitable and welcoming environment; EMPLOYEES to thrive and fully use their collective talents; and Our COMMUNITY to transform and enrich the world."

Shared Values, Philosophies, and Key Imperatives

Shared Values (p. 5) reflect what we expect from one another as we carry out our work and include: excellence, freedom of inquiry, ethical practices, accountability, collaboration, and holistic approach. Philosophies (pp. 6-7) are principles that serve as our ethical compass and the lens through which we look when making decisions. Philosophies include:

- Learning is a lifelong process that empowers individuals.
- Equity is ensuring everyone receives what they need to be successful.

- Diversity is all expressions of humanity.
- Inclusion is valuing what makes us unique.
- Justice is ensuring our structures and systems honor individual rights.

Finally, four Key Imperatives (pp. 8-11) are the main actionable priorities we have adopted to carry out our Mission until the end of 2027. They include:

- Teaching and Learning Excellence – Deliver instructional practices and curriculum to ensure student-centered learning.
- Lifelong Connections – Create a lifelong meaningful and mutual relationship with the College.
- ECC Experience – Cultivate a welcoming destination for students, employees, and our community.
- Fortify Our Future – Position the College to remain affordable while ensuring long-term financial stability and operational efficiency.

Documentation of Development

With MVPs as a foundation and Key Imperatives driving our focus, ECC delivers its mission and pursues its Vision (p. 4) to be the first choice for everyone to learn, grow and dream in a culture that ensures access, advances innovation, and fosters success.

The guiding statements contained in the ECC Strategic Plan were jointly crafted by students, community partners, and employees during the 2021-22 academic year. The Strategic Planning Team consisted of 26 employees (faculty, staff, and administrators) and two trustees, including the Board Chair and Student Trustee. A separate group of students served as advisors throughout the process. Because most of their work occurred during pandemic-related remote work, the plan was created almost entirely virtually using technologies like Zoom® breakout rooms, Google® Docs, Padlet®, surveys, and Piccles®. Our process was informed by the Achieving the Dream (ATD) Institutional Capacity Framework and the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT), conducted in fall 2021, and virtual roundtables with all 1,000+ employees. Internally, the College organized a Gallery Walk on campus with QR codes and notecards to gather input from internal constituencies (mostly students and campus visitors); and to ensure community feedback was incorporated into our strategic plan, the President personally invited 338 external stakeholders -- including donors, educational partners, and local business leaders -- to participate a virtual Gallery Walk and provide structured feedback through a survey.

We consider the plan to be our pledge to deliver high-quality learning experiences to nearly half a million individuals who live and work in Illinois Community College District 509. These statements and the ECC Strategic Plan were approved on June 14, 2022, enacted on July 1, 2023, and will remain in effect until June 30, 2027.

Alignment

The College links its annual goal-setting process to performance reviews. Administrative and staff employees (excluding faculty who use their own Faculty Evaluation Handbook) set

annual goals individually or as part of a committee, department, or division. Annual goals are aligned to one of the four Key Imperatives and used to structure meeting agendas of (19B) departments and committees and in individual employee/supervisor meetings. Goals are created in SMART goal format with measurable targets and timelines with check-ins throughout the performance year to monitor progress. Goal accomplishments are assessed at the end of the year based on outcomes achieved, demonstrating the critical alignment between daily work and the Mission.

The College's intentional alignment of Mission and actions is also quantified through the PACE Campus Climate Survey, which is sent to all employees in early spring. Results from spring 2025 show that the Institutional Structure factor yields the highest ratings of 4.098 out of 5.000 points (compared to the PACE norm of 3.087); and the specific survey question of "*the actions of this institution reflect its mission*" yield an average rating of 4.256 (compared to 3.892), represented 89% of respondents in agreement. The College also administers the ATD ICAT from time to time, which helps identify strengths and challenges in seven key capacities needed to drive equitable outcomes (e.g., organizational agility, community connectedness, etc.). In the College's 2021 administration of the ICAT (p. 2), the top strength identified was, "*does the institution's strategic plan focus on a clearly defined set of student success goals*," which earned an average rating of 3.65 out of 4.00.

Budget and Resource Allocation

ECC's planning and budgeting priorities align well to the Mission. The planning and budgeting cycle is overseen by the interdisciplinary Budget Council, using a structured approach for prioritization to ensure expenses are in service of the four Key Imperatives that drive the Mission. Questica, our budgeting software, includes a link to the ECC Strategic Plan to which every budget officer must demonstrate alignment. The Budget Council introduced a New Project Scoring Matrix in 2024, which was revised in 2025 to prioritize recommendations based on strategic and thoughtful assessment. Given that the bulk of the College's budget is payroll, the Cabinet also uses a New Positions Scoring Rubric to ensure objectivity and systematicity for prioritizing and approving positions to fill. The College's long-standing process for requesting monies outside a department budget, the Universal Funding Request Process, was moved to digital in 2023 along with its own scoring rubric. In all instances, rubrics allow us to rate how closely funding priorities align to Key Imperatives, Annual College Goals, and the Mission.

Enrollment Profile

After enrollment declined during the pandemic (2020-21), counts have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels – a 33% increase in five years. During academic year 2024-25, the College enrolled 17,161 students, up from 11,892 in 2020-21. ECC's student body is 55% female and 45% male. The Hispanic/Latinx population, our fastest growing demographic segment, has increased by 90% over that period and currently represents 52% of students. Asian and Black populations have also grown over this period at 18% and 28%, respectively. While the White population is still the second largest ethnicity at 32%, this population has declined over the last five years by 4%. ECC's fall 2025 enrollment at the census (tenth) day shows that:

- English as a Second Language programs increased 616% in five years (fall 2020 to fall 2024), representing 15% of students.

- Adult Basic and Secondary Education programs increase 90% in five years, and 14% in one year (fall 2023 to fall 2024), representing 2% of students.
- New enrollments increase 62% over five years, representing 21% of students.
- Students currently in high school increased 134% in five years, with a 29% increase in one year, representing 15% of students.

These trends exemplify ECC's Mission to serve community populations who have been historically marginalized in higher education.

Recruitment Materials

Employee Recruitment. MVPs are incorporated into Human Resources recruitment materials to ensure alignment between the College's core values and new hires. To ensure candidates understand ECC's priority to promote a workforce that is not only qualified but also mission-aligned and equity-driven, most job postings include language that emphasizes the College's commitment to *equity, diversity, and inclusion*. Phrases such as, "*Elgin Community College is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment*" and "*we seek candidates who share our dedication to student success, equity, and innovation*" are commonly used to communicate our commitment to prospective employees. Additionally, job announcements reference ECC's role as a learning-centered institution and encourage applications from individuals who are "equity-minded," "student-focused," and "committed to continuous improvement."

These priorities are reinforced through the College's Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) statement (pp. 8-9), which reflects ECC's strategic objective of cultivating a respectful and inclusive environment. Some postings also include brief descriptions of ECC's recognition as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and its commitment to serving first-generation and underserved student populations directly tying recruitment language to the College's Mission and community-centered identity.

Internally, ECC follows search committees guidelines to ensure employees participate in training before joining a search committee. Since 2012, ECC requires search committees to complete a four-hour workshop on "Seeking Cultural Consciousness and Competence in Hiring" to heighten awareness and encourage members of search committees to understand the importance of selecting candidates whose experiences and dispositions match the College's Mission and ECC Strategic Plan components. Employees must maintain their training every three years to remain eligible to serve per the policy (pp. 4-5). Not all ECC employees participate on search committees; however, those who do must complete this training. To date, 501 employees have completed this workshop; 261 employees are compliant with required refresher training; and 240 have until the end of the 2026 calendar year to complete the training to remain eligible.

Student Recruitment. The Recruitment and Outreach Department plays a central role in advancing ECC's Mission of *improving people's lives through learning* and supporting the institution's strategic priorities, particularly around access, equity, student success, and community engagement. Our materials and presentations to potential new students are carefully designed to reflect this alignment in both content and delivery. The full Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan was updated in June 2025 to coincide with the remaining years (2025, 2026, and 2027) of the current ECC Strategic Plan.

ECC recruiters work intentionally with high school students and families. They highlight ECC's inclusive identity by showcasing the College's designations and support services: Military Friendly Campus, Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction, and Aspen Top 150 College. These distinctions are included in PowerPoint slides and printed materials. Talking points affirm ECC's commitment to serve historically underserved populations and to create a sense of belonging. Recruiters also regularly present information on resources that reflect ECC's Annual College Goal 1 on completion, Goal 2 on student learning, Goal 3 on credit attainment, and Goal 5 on the student experience. Specifically, services that recruiters mention include TRiO Student Support Services for first-generation and low-income students; Wellness Services and Access and Disability Services; tutoring and academic advising; student cocurriculars and clubs; and study abroad programs. Presentation materials walk prospective students through steps to enrolling -- from admissions and placement testing to orientation and registration – ensuring they understand and feel supported. Sample recruiting events include:

- Experience ECC Open House - Attendance doubled from 2023 to 2024, with over 50 academic and student service departments participating. Presentations and tours provided opportunities to highlight ECC's mission through direct engagement and faculty/student connections.
- College Night - With over 600 students attending, this event reflects ECC's strategic goal to be a regional hub of educational access. It allows students to see ECC as a viable, high-quality option alongside national universities.
- Kinder to College Initiative - This early outreach effort aligns with ECC's Annual College Goal 7 on community engagement and Key Imperative on Lifelong Connections, reinforcing the mission by planting seeds among District 509's youngest learners.

In its messaging and delivery, the Recruitment and Outreach Department plays an essential role in reinforcing ECC's Mission, Key Imperatives, and Annual College Goals. Our materials and events are not only informative -- they are purposefully aligned to encourage access, equity, student readiness, and community connection.

Sources

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1.B. Mission and Public Good

The institution's operation of the academic enterprise demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good.

Argument

Commitment to Serving the Public Good

ECC's Mission has been *to improve people's lives through learning* since 2000. In the ECC Strategic Plan for 2023 through 2027, the College expanded this statement to illustrate how it applies to our three primary constituents: students, employees, and the ECC community. For each group, we pledge that the decisions we make and the actions we undertake allow them to grow and thrive from wherever they are to wherever they aspire to be. For students, we pledge that they will achieve their learning goals. For employees, we pledge that they will grow professionally. For community members, we pledge that they will transform the world around them, whether that is a family, neighborhood, city, state, country, or the globe. The compounding impact is truly limitless.

Each January, ECC publishes a Community Report, which appears on elgin.edu and is mailed to 1,200 residents and businesses in District 509. It contains data and stories about how ECC serves the public good. ECC's healthcare programs are an example. Since 2020, the Pipeline for the Advancement of Healthcare Workers (PATH) Grant has allowed us to close labor market shortages in key fields, such as Basic Nurse Assistant (BNA) and Phlebotomy. Historically, ECC was challenged to increase enrollment in these programs due to limited availability of clinical sites. During the last five years, however, we have expanded clinicals in the BNA program alone by 35% -- including Highland Oaks in Elgin, the Michealsen Health Center in Batavia, and Northwestern Medicine in Huntley. Because these relationships are so strong, many ECC graduates, upon completing coursework and licensing exams, are hired into entry-level positions at their clinical sites. Anecdotally, ECC health professions faculty report as many as 50% of their students are incumbent workers who are upskilling in their fields.

A related example comes from our respiratory care program. Prior to 2024, any student interested in this field enrolled at institutions outside of District 509 because ECC lacked a program. After careful research to develop a program and after the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CARC) site visit in November 2024, this program was approved in January 2025, launching its first cohort of 15 students that spring. By adding this program, the College addresses the needs of students as well as the community's demand for more healthcare professionals.

In addition to the Health Professions Department, ECC's Workforce Development and Continuing Education (WDCE) Department demonstrates how the College serves the public good. In WDCE's Committee of the Whole Presentation in 2024, for example, the department showcases how its annual goals that year expanded outreach to middle school students through STEAM Camps, a summer career exploration camp held in collaboration

with the Sustainability, Business and Career Technologies (SBCT) Department. What began in 2023 as a single manufacturing-focused camp for 14 middle school students expanded in 2024 to include a firefighting camp, serving a combined total of 30 students. By 2025, a second manufacturing camp and a computer science camp increased participation to 68 students.

WDCE also houses ECC's Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning Office, which oversees US Department of Labor apprenticeships in several fields: industrial manufacturing technology, industrial maintenance technology, HVAC, firefighting, EMT/paramedic, certified nurse assistant, and culinary arts. This office hosts Apprenticeship Expos annually during National Apprenticeship Week in November:

- The 2023 Expo (November 16, 2023): Included 29 apprenticeship employers, intermediaries, and sponsors, with approximately 150 attendees exploring apprenticeship opportunities.
- The 2024 Expo (November 21, 2024): Led by ECC, the event opened with an employer information session attended by 40 local businesses and included 21 apprenticeship-related organizations, including employers and trade unions. Partnering with the local Education for Employment (EFE) office, the event drew over 300 high school juniors and seniors from 11 high schools and an additional 75 community members.

In addition to formal apprenticeships, ECC has developed and delivered short-term pre-apprenticeship programs since 2023. Intended for high school students, nine cohorts have enrolled 80 individuals with a 98% credentialing pass rate – thus creating seamless transitions into apprenticeships or entry-level employment.

Finally, WDCE also administers ECC's allocation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Grant to defray costs for wraparound support for unemployed and underemployed residents. In the last three years, the number of WIOA-eligible programs has grown from 33 to 70, allowing more low-income students to pay for their classes. In 2022, for instance, only one student in our Nursing Program was served by WIOA; but today, 15 nursing students were recruited and are currently supported through WIOA, and 100% of them are transitioning into the workforce.

Like WDCE, SBCT is another department where outcomes demonstrate a commitment to the public good. Its Truck Driving Program has a 90% success rate for completion and employment. In the program, students earn a commercial driver's license (CDL) and proceed directly into the workforce. Another example is the ECC's Municipal Training Academy, launched in November 2023, which is a preferred training destination for local emergency service providers. In partnership with area fire departments, EMS, and emergency 911 providers, ECC is their “first stop” for certification and non-credit training. The number of students completing basic operations firefighter certification in 2023-24 increased by 80% from the previous year and 394% since 2020-21. Growth is the result of changes by the Office of the State Fire Marshal to expand certification eligibility and the so-called “silver tsunami” of retirements, prompting local fire stations to recruit and train early-career candidates. In fact, ECC now offers “on demand” sessions during summers for this program, and advisory boards and local hospital are requesting ECC expand its EMT paramedic program as well.

Across all departments, ECC relies on key strategies to build awareness and grow programs:

- increasing internal and external marketing, including social media
- increasing efforts to solicit input from industry partners about their needs
- establishing organic pathways to get younger career-focused candidates onto career paths, and
- establishing flexible training options for incumbent workers.

As an example, ECC's job fairs help build youth interest in trades:

- A Fall 2024 Job Fair (September 20, 2024), held in Building J, featured 90 registered employers (plus 4 unregistered who attended) and welcomed more than 250 ECC students, alumni, and community members.
- A Spring 2025 Job Fair (April 29, 2025): attracted 100 employers (98 registered, 2 unregistered) and over 400 attendees, further strengthening local employer partnerships and student employment pathways.
- Relatedly, our Taking Back the Trades Initiative, launched in 2024, offers high school students access to classes that lead to at least one industry-recognized credential. We started with 75 students participating in summer career-exploration camps to 351 in summer 2025, completing 473 industry recognized credentials. ECC also placed 260 high school students into internships.

Recognizing the power inherent when ECC leaders, students, and business partners work together, ECC launched its Powerful Partners Marketing Campaign in 2024 to promote ECC's business partnerships in forward-facing manner. It coincided that same year with the FY2025 Annual College Goal 7 to build a Community Ambassador Program. To date, Powerful Partners has fostered greater collaboration around simple improvements – updating language on elgin.edu to reflect industry-recognized terminology; building a tracking repository for more accurate data entry and reporting (which we intend to upgrade to Salesforce CRM in the future); and engaging in strategic team-building to bring different types of partners together, such as those who serve on advisory boards or lead corporate training and those who support student clinicals and work-based learning activities. Since 2022, breakfast events have grown in popularity (from 10 employers to over 80 in 2025). In 2023, ECC's soon-to-be-completed Manufacturing Technology Center was the focus of that year's breakfast. Employers participated in a short presentation followed by a group discussion to assess current needs and to advise deans and faculty.

Finally, in addition to educating new and credentialed workers, ECC also supports local businesses, whether they partner with the College or not. The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is housed at ECC to support local entrepreneurs. In 2024, the SBDC met or exceeded targets for its FY2024 annual goals (e.g., number of business starts, number of new jobs created, etc.) by offering training and advising. In addition to attending approximately 20 partner events each month, the SBDC offers its own training events for local business owners. From 2020 to 2025, the SBDC welcomed 808 attendees at events that included:

- Better Your Business events in both 2024 and 2025, averaged more than 150 attendees per event.
- Co-hosted by the Northwest Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, SBDC's October 2024 event celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month was offered in English and Spanish.

Beyond training events, SBDC also advises local CEOs on ways to promote and scale their businesses. From July 2020 to August 2023, the SBDC provided 643 hours of advising (17.86 average hours per month) to 198 unique clients; and from September 2023 to June 2025, the Center provided 1,834 hours (152.83 average hours per month) to 329 unique clients. Together these constitute a 756% increase in average hours per month and a 66% increase in new clients. In 2024, SBDC also introduced one-on-one advising and business classes in Spanish.

Sources

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1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

Opportunities for Civic Engagement

ECC's programs, services, committees, and cocurriculars provide opportunities for ECC students, employees, and community members to learn and grow in a globally connected world.

Equity is one of ECC's Philosophies through which we pledge to provide support to those who need it. Many examples, listed below, exemplify this Philosophy by encouraging us to give equitably to others:

- Student Life's [Annual Spartan Giving Tree](#) allows ECC students' families to enjoy the holiday season by receiving food donations from the Northern Illinois Food Bank, ECC Spartan Pantry, and gift cards from a local grocery store.
- [ECC Spartan Pantry](#), led by Phi Theta Kappa students, provides food, toiletries, and essential supplies to students in need. During academic year 2024-25, the pantry welcomed 7,483 visits. Additionally, last year the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) launched the state's first [Feed the Need Food Drive](#), a friendly competition among all 39 Illinois community colleges to collect the most nonperishable food items from mid-October through the Thanksgiving holiday. Last year, 17,917 individual items were collected by ECC constituencies, enough for the College to earn second place in Illinois.
- [SERVE \(GSD-150\)](#) is a free course designed to expose ECC students to community service through volunteering. Students who complete 48 volunteer hours at a local nonprofit and write an essay about their experience receive one free college credit upon completion. In 2024-25, 15 students enrolled.
- [Project Backpack](#) is ECC's long-standing back-to-school program that provides school supplies and backpacks for students anywhere within District 509 boundaries. In fall 2024, 382 families attended, and 874 backpacks were distributed. In fall 2025, 572 families attended, and 1,275 backpacks were distributed.
- [Make a Difference Day](#) allows volunteers to give back on three levels: personal, on campus, and in the community. Students can use the time to make a gratitude card for a loved one, plant flower bulbs on campus, and help people find winterwear at the Elgin Community Crisis Center. In 2024-25, 132 individuals participated.
- The Student Experience and Engagement Center (formerly the Office of Student Life)

partners with Vitalant to provide three blood drives during the academic year and one during the summer. Donors are entered into a drawing to win a \$10,000 gift card. During 2024-25, 134 individuals participated.

Two additional Philosophies at ECC are diversity and inclusion, in which we recognize our common bond while celebrating what makes us unique. Several ECC committees (e.g., Multicultural and Global Initiatives Committee or MAGIC, and the Global and International Studies Team or GIST); various student clubs; the Student Experience and Engagement Center; and the Institutional Success and Engagement Office (formerly the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) work together to lead multicultural programs. Popular programs include heritage months that recognize and honor the past, present, and future struggles diverse groups often face:

- Black History Month (February)
- Women's Empowerment Programs (March)
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April)
- Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month (April)
- Pride Month and the Elgin Pride Parade (June)
- Latinx Heritage Month (September)
- Diwali Celebration (October)
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)
- International Week (November)
- Native American and Indigenous Peoples Month (November)

For each event, students, community leaders, and educators convene to raise awareness through ethnic foods, storytelling, artistic and musical performances, student field trips, and guest lectures and panel discussions. Additionally, several clubs are organized around cultural identities:

- Asian Filipino Club
- Black Student Achievers
- Organization of Latin American Students
- United Students of All Cultures
- Triumph Male Mentoring, a mentorship program designed to help young men of color successfully navigate college through workshops on leadership development, community service, and career exploration. Upon induction, Triumph Scholars wear specially designed cardigan sweaters.
- Student Welcoming Groups consist of returning students who organize welcome receptions for new students of similar backgrounds; current groups include the Black

Student Connection, Rainbow Pride, Latinx Bienvenida, and Celebr-Asian. Similarly, affinity groups are becoming popular among ECC employees and include the Black Employees Support Team (BEST), the Queer Employees Support Team (QUEST), and the Veterans Higher Education Affinity Group (VHEAG).

From time to time, student clubs co-offer programs, especially when significant national events capture the attention of multiple groups. Recently, the Black Student Achievers and Organization of Latin American Students co-hosted an event to show solidarity with those affected by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) raids. Similar co-programming occurred years ago with the Israel/Palestine War and the MeToo Movement.

Center for Civic Engagement (CCE). When it comes to national issues, ECC is a national leader in developing civic engagement among youth. Our campus houses the student-run Center for Civic Engagement, created especially to reawaken interest in democracy and community vibrancy. A 2025 Bellwether Finalist, activities in the CCE include voter registration drives like Fur the Vote!, tracking and reporting via TurboVote software, attending Model United Nations and Illinois General Assembly meetings in Springfield, providing logistical support for early voting and the Kane County Early Voting Mobile Unit, and hosting candidate forums Elgin Township Supervisor Candidate Forum and ECC Board of Trustees Candidate Forum. Advised by an ECC faculty member from our History and Political Science Program, the CCE provides learning opportunities for students and their families and a venue where locally elected officials can meet and dialog directly with voters.

ECC Arts Center. Finally, ECC's Arts Center provides a venue to foster creativity and exposure to the arts at a location that is more accessible and affordable than the arts scene in Chicago. Housed in the newly remodeled Building H, the Center intentionally designs programs representative of District 509 through a range of genres – theater, music, dance, variety entertainment, and family shows. In addition, the Center collaborates with local high schools and community arts groups, including five in-residence ensembles specializing in orchestra, choir, youth and adult theater, dance, Mexican ballet, and visual arts. Beyond practice and performance spaces, the College provides office space for these organizations as well (see Arts Center Auxiliary Plan, p. 16).

Focusing on accessibility and affordability, the Center has launched several recent initiatives to reduce barriers, such as offering free tickets to ECC students, which led to a 688% increase in student attendance (from 49 in 2022 to 386 in 2024). A trial program with Elgin Township's Senior Access Pass saw attendance grow from 79 in the first six months to 570 the following year. The Center supports its programming through grants as well. A grant-funded Chicago Tap Theatre series was quite popular, increasing youth attendance from 3% to 15% last year and up to 27% for first-time attendees, a new ECC record. This particular performance also yielded a net profit of \$5,421, demonstrating how diverse programming can be both culturally and financially successful. Students, employees, and community members alike learn and grow through many Arts Center programs and events.

Sources

- 1C.01 Spartan Giving Tree Sign Up
- 1C.02 Spartan Pantry Flyer_FA24
- 1C.03 Feed the Need
- 1C.04 SERVE-syllabus-sp25

- 1C.05 SERVE-reflection
- 1C.06 Project Backpack Infographic
- 1C.07 MAD-poster
- 1C.08 Blood Drive-flyer
- 1C.09 230132 BHM 25 flyer 20250130
- 1C.10 whm-poster
- 1C.11 SAAM-poster
- 1C.12 AAPI Month
- 1C.13 Elgin PRIDE Parade
- 1C.14 LHM 24 FLYER
- 1C.15 Diwali
- 1C.16 DVAM Poster
- 1C.17 2024 International Week Poster
- 1C.18 NAHM 2024 Flyer_Final REV
- 1C.19 - Asian Filipino Club
- 1C.20 BSC SP25 Flyer
- 1C.21 OLAS ECC
- 1C.22 USAC ECC
- 1C.23 6080 TRIUMP FLYER 20200916_REV2023_small 2
- 1C.24 TRIUMPH Workshops List
- 1C.25 Triumph Induction Photo
- 1C.26 BSC 2024 and 2025 Flyers
- 1C.27 Bellwether Digital Binder
- 1C.28 Fur the Vote
- 1C.29 TurboVote
- 1C.30 Elgin Candidate Forum
- 1C.31 BOT Candidate Forum
- 1C.32 113457_Arts Center 2023_2024 Season Brochure
- 1C.33 FY26 Arts Center Auxiliary Unit Business Plan FINAL (003)

Criterion 1 Summary

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

Argument

ECC grounds its work through its Mission established in 2000: *to improve people's lives through learning*. Updated in 2022, the Mission now explicitly highlights three constituencies—students, employees, and the community—each empowered to grow and thrive through ECC's decisions and actions. The Mission is widely displayed across campus along with Shared Values (excellence, freedom of inquiry, ethical practices, accountability, collaboration, and holistic approach) and Philosophies on learning, equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice. These principles accompany four Key Imperatives: teaching and learning excellence, lifelong connections, cultivating a welcoming campus experience (ECC Experience), and fortifying our future through financial stability.

Strategic planning involves students, trustees, employees, and community members through virtual roundtables and surveys. Annual College Goals align to the Key Imperatives and are assessed annually through performance reviews with measurable outcomes, ensuring that our daily operations connect directly to ECC's Mission.

Enrollment trends reflect ECC's commitment to improving lives. After pandemic declines, enrollment has rebounded to over 17,000 students in 2024–25, a 33% increase in five years. The student body is now majority Hispanic/Latinx (52%), with significant growth in English as a Second Language programs, high school dual enrollment, and Adult Education. These shifts highlight ECC's role in serving historically underserved learners.

Recruitment of employees and students emphasizes alignment with ECC's Mission. Job postings reference diversity, inclusion, and equity, and search committees undergo required cultural competence training. Student outreach stresses ECC's recognitions—such as being a Hispanic-Serving Institution—and showcases supports like TRiO, disability services, and wellness programs. Events such as open houses, College Night, and Kinder to College introduce ECC to future learners and their families.

Beyond academics, ECC demonstrates its commitment to the public good through healthcare programs, workforce development, apprenticeships, and business partnerships. Health clinical sites, the launch of a respiratory care program, and career training in areas like firefighting and truck driving address local labor needs, and the Workforce Development Division runs camps, job fairs, and the Illinois Small Business Development Center, which provides bilingual advising and training for local entrepreneurs.

ECC fosters civic engagement and cultural awareness as well. Programs like Project Backpack and Make a Difference Day lend support to local residents, and heritage month celebrations and student clubs foster multicultural understanding. The Center for Civic Engagement leads voter registration and political candidate forums, and the ECC Arts Center provides cultural programming through free student tickets and senior passes. Overall, ECC integrates its mission into planning, budgeting, programming, and outreach.

Through education, workforce preparation, equity initiatives, and civic engagement, the College serves as both a learning institution and a responsive community partner.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A. Integrity

Actions taken by the institution's governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures.

Argument

Adherence to Established Policies and Procedures

The ECC Board of Trustees and ECC employees and students abide by formal policies and procedures. At the highest level, ECC abides by HLC Criteria and Assumed Practices and relies on them to ensure quality of programs and services. ECC became accredited by the HLC in 1968 and has been continuously accredited ever since.

At the state level, Illinois recognizes ECC and all Illinois public colleges through the Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/2-12f and 805/2-15). After launching in 1949 as an extension of Elgin High School, ECC became formally recognized in 1965 with the passage of this Act and subsequent creation of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), our state governing body. That year, and every five years since, ECC recertifies its status with the ICCB upon state review of ECC's compliance with the standards and rules contained in the Recognition Manual for the Illinois Public Community College Districts. The College's last Recognition Report and Visit occurred in 2022-23 and its next will be in 2027-28.

Other state laws coincide with ECC's recognition and define how trustees and employees act and make decisions. They include:

- Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ILCS 220), passed in 1973, which facilitates collaboration between state agencies, enabling them to share resources and services. For instance, this Act allows ECC to share broadband network services with Northern Illinois University.
- Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1), passed in 1984, grants the public a right to access records held by ECC. Details on how ECC shares data with requesting parties appear in Core Component 2E.
- Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act (PA 102-1088), passed in 2022, mandates that Illinois public entities form committees to study and report on ways to strengthen efficiencies. When ECC reviews its annual Performance Report, for instance, the Decennial Committee, consisting of ECC trustees and public members, participates in the Committee of the Whole meetings to review historic results and

improve future goal setting and measurement.

Beyond the state level, the ECC Board of Trustees formally declares its own policies in ECC Board Policies. These are reaffirmed each summer during the Board's Retreat. The Policies include Board-adopted rules around:

- Governance processes (GP)
- Board-President relationship and oversight
- Executive parameters
- Annual goals

Evidence that trustees act according to stated policies is clear from the nature of the actions raised and voted on at Board meetings. For example, with Action 085-F-25 from the Board's November 2024 meeting, trustees voted to approve course and lab fees for next fiscal year, as they do each fall. This action stems from GP2 (Board Job Description) Item 4, which states that the Board is responsible for setting these fees. In addition, the Board defines its own annual goals in conjunction with the College's annual goal setting process, which follows the fiscal year (July to June). The ECC President, departments, committees, and employees set goals according to this same cycle.

At the College level, President Heinrich, in collaboration with her Cabinet, establishes Administrative Procedures that define all facets of college operations. Each procedure is labeled with a starting digit of 1 to 7 that corresponds to core business categories (Instruction, Finance, Administration, Student Services, Human Resources, Physical Resources, Information Technology). They also link numerically to ECC Board Policies, and the Board-College crosswalk appears as a header in all procedures to show how the College's procedures align to the Board's policies. Also contained in headers are the dates that procedures are reviewed and the dates they are approved or reapproved. The entire corpus of procedures is posted on my.Elgin, our employee portal, and procedures pertaining to student or community interests are posted publicly on elgin.edu as well.

Beyond college-wide procedures, individual divisions and departments memorialize their own operating practices in writing and share them throughout the College. For example, the Teaching, Learning, and Student Development (TLSD) Division – ECC's largest division encompassing academic departments, student services, and workforce development – maintains a centralized intranet TLSD space on my.Elgin that serves as a reference hub for materials related to teaching and learning, faculty evaluation and development, curricular updates, learning outcomes assessment, and other practices germane to its work.

Similarly, offices like Human Resources, Information Technology, Emergency Operations and ECC Police, Food Services, and the ECC Foundation and other departments engaged in exceptionally regulated practices abide by federal, state, or local regulations related to areas such as cybersecurity, data privacy, Title IX, emergency crisis training, campus safety, food handling and sanitation, gift receiving, and other legal matters.

Finally, at the level of individual employee groups, labor contracts define working conditions and expectations for faculty, support staff, ECC police officers, and building engineers and electricians. Ongoing meetings between union leaders and administration (e.g., between the

Vice President of TLSD and the President of the Faculty Senate or between the Chief Human Resources Officer and the President of the Support Staff) occur every two weeks to ensure oversight and compliance with these contracts and to mitigate disagreements before they escalate. Additional evidence that labor agreements are followed comes from: minutes on union websites (SSECCA and ECCFA) detailing decisions made and actions taken through collaboration between administration and union leaders; regularly scheduled closed sessions where union matters are discussed by trustees, the President, and General Counsel; and all-campus communications from Human Resources about contractually-sanctioned meetings; and publicly available and signed agreements between unions and administration about compensating supplemental assignments. With the exception of closed meetings minutes – where notices and rationales are made public but where the minutes themselves are sealed for confidentiality – all other compliance matters have established protocols for making information public.

As an extra precaution, and through the Board-President Relationship document, the President is required to call out instances where she finds Board members overstepping their stated policies. Because the Board's position on check-and-balances is so clear, this rarely happens. In fact, the Board has established its own internal practices to ensure each trustee understands their roles and boundaries. For example, when trustees seek information, they always make requests to the President and never to individual employees. Similarly, when the President conveys information to the Board, she messages the Board Chair only, who then relays the message to other trustees. Whenever an issue becomes too complex to handle via email, the Board Chair calls for an open meeting. The College's Internal Audit Office conducts regular audits of administrative procedures and practices and prepares Board reports and Finance Committee presentations four times a year (May, October, December, and March) for the Board's Finance Committee. Additionally, external audits reports are presented each fall (usually in October or November) to the entire Board.

In sum, through multiple layers of oversight and checks, ECC trustees, employees and students adhere to and remain guided by formal policies and procedures, and they help frame and guide the work we do.

Sources

- 2A.17 SSECCA and ECCFA Minutes
- 2A.01 Illinois General Assembly - 110 ILCS 805_ Public Community College Act
- 2A.02 About ICCB
- 2A.03 FY2021-2025_Recognition_Manual_FINAL_Sept_2023
- 2A.04 ECC SELF-EVAL FOR ICCB RECOGNITION REPORT - June 2022
- 2A.05 Elgin Community College Recognition Certificate 2023
- 2A.06 Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ILCS 220)
- 2A.08 Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act Reports
- 2A.09 2024 Spc Mtg Agenda Retreat Jun 25 and 26
- 2A.10 Governance Process Board Job Description
- 2A.11 Board President Relationship
- 2A.12 Executive Parameters
- 2A.13 Annual Goals
- 2A.14 Action 085-F-25

- 2A.15 admin-procedure-2.401-crosswalk
- 2A.16 ECC Board Goals and Strategies 2023-27 - for 2025-26
- 2A.17 SSECCA and ECCFA Minutes(1)
- 2A.18 TLSD Space
- 2A.19 BOT closed session-061625-061725 (18)
- 2A.20 REMINDER SSECCA Membership Meeting
- 2A.21 Revised-Supplemental-Chart-12.11.24-with-CY25-L2S2-Hourly-Schedule
- 2A.22 May 25 FY25 R2T4 Internal Audit Report
- 2A.23 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes - MAY24
- 2A.24 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes - OCT24
- 2A.27 single-audit-report-2024
- 2A.07 FOIA, 5 ILCS 140-1 to 140-11
- 2A.26 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes 031025
- 2A.25 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes - DEC24

2.B. Transparency

The institution presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public with respect to its educational programs and any claims it makes related to the educational experience.

Argument

Accurate and Complete Educational Experience Representation

ECC stands behind its public messaging through data and evidence. Recognizing that most members of the public learn about the College through its website or mainstream and social media, the College is steadfast in ensuring what we say is reflected in what we do. Public information on elgin.edu about academic and career programs, enrollments, activities, and success outcomes is culled from our Colleague Student Information System (SIS) and mirrors what we say in our course catalogs and program review reports, which are also posted online. Similarly, information about administrative procedures matches the actions community members and students will see ECC employees perform “on the ground” in real life. Additionally, claims we make about fulfilling the annual goals are detailed each year in the summary [Performance Report](#). Similar claims can be made about all forms of reported information – net price and gainful employment; audits and financial reports; jobs and hiring information; workforce partnerships; and so on. Finally, [ECC’s Student Right to Know](#) page is updated annually each spring in advance of the federal deadline of July 1.

Beyond the information we advertise publicly, information provided to students and employees by individual departments is equally accurate and complete. For students, information about Library resources, computer labs, tutoring, advising, career services, testing, student wellness and counseling – including hours, locations, emails/phone numbers, and types of software or content – are all up to date. Appointment requests, course schedules and registration, campus events, student clubs, club calendars, and information about most student services are available through our [ECCExperience mobile app](#) (powered by Campus M). Brightspace D2L, our learning management system, contains course-specific information, syllabi, assignments, assessment and feedback, grades, and links to learning resources.

For employees, the my.Elgin portal contains essential information needed to perform their jobs. It contains links to Human Resource information and personnel forms, Business and Finance information and forms, registration information for professional development and continuing education training, salary and benefits records, budgets and funding requests, marketing and technology forms, and Tableau data dashboards. Department heads ensure the accuracy and timeliness of this information as part of their job duties, as articulated in [position description questionnaires \(PDQs\)](#) for each employee.

Regular audits ensure the accuracy of information. Administrative procedures are reviewed every other year as stipulated within the procedures themselves. Information about academic programs is reviewed annually during program health reviews and every five

years through formal program reviews by ECC and the ICCB. Information about student services is reviewed and reported annually in the Student Services and Development (SSD) Divisional Report posted on elgin.edu. Employee directory information, office locations, phone numbers and emails are updated by supervisors during employee onboarding and offboarding.

Beyond scheduled audits, we have additional mechanisms in place for anyone, internal or external, to provide feedback on the quality of information we share on elgin.edu or my.Elgin. We offer an online Community Suggestion Box under the About page on elgin.edu, where we also maintain a page that contains all tools publicly available to report different types of feedback (e.g., student complaints, employee misconduct filings, etc.). Finally, under my.Elgin, we offer a website feedback form and use the ECC Requests Portal (powered by Atlassian Jira) to request any updates to college-wide web content and to make requests of Institutional Research, Information Technology, Distance Learning, Human Resources, and other ECC departments.

Sources

- 2B.01 FY24 Performance Report Final
- 2B.02 Students Right to Know
- 2B.04 PDQ Template
- 2B.05 Community Suggestion Box-Planning _ Elgin Community College (ECC)
- 2B.06 2025SSDAnnualReport
- 2B.07 Filing Report or Complaint _ Elgin Community College (ECC)
- 2B.08 ECC Request Portal
- 2B.03 MyECC Experience _ Elgin Community College (ECC) (1)

2.C. Board Governance

In discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution's governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves.

Argument

The ECC Board is apolitical by design. Article 3 of the Illinois Community College Act states that "the election of the members of the Board of Trustees shall be non-partisan and shall be held at the time and manner provided in general election law." ECC trustees are elected pursuant to election rules and nomination petitions signed by voters of the district, as it would be for any measure placed on an election ballot. The Act goes on to state that "boards are to remain free from undue influence with regards to contracts and business arrangements and in all matters."

The Board's own practices further its objectivity and transparency in governance. First, ECC trustees commit to an annual Affirmation of Service, which is recited aloud by all trustees, including the Student Trustee, in April as newly elected trustees are seated. The Affirmation requires trustees to publicly declare their intent to serve ethically, openly and honestly; vote by conscience over special interests; and abide by majority decisions. Additionally, trustees and all ECC administrators at or above the level of director/dean annually sign and submit Economic Interests Statements (EISs) per Illinois's Government Ethics Act. EISs ensure that state employees disclose financial interests to the Illinois Secretary of State by May 1 of each year or pay fines and penalties that may include forfeiture of employment.

ECC's Board institutes other practices that underscore its respect for Core Component 2C. First, a day prior to each Board meeting, trustees gather with the President and senior leaders for the Committee of the Whole, a public forum where trustees ask questions and seek further details about topics they will vote on, and, in dialog with campus leaders, raise new ideas for future consideration. At each COTW meeting, the President assigns presenters to showcase their work, discuss implications for Board governance, and align strategies to college-wide goals and key performance metrics. COTW meetings are popular and well-attended forums that allow trustees and employees alike to reflect on emerging issues. The Board Chair leads these meetings, and although the President attends, she herself does not present; rather, she listens and learns along with other attendees. Nearly all directors, deans, and senior administrators attend. Students, staff, community members, and reporters from local media sometimes attend as well.

A long-standing tradition the ECC Board uses to exemplify their fiduciary roles is to recite the ECC Vision, Mission, Shared Values, and Philosophies (our MVPs) at the start of every Board meeting. This practice has been in place for decades and serves as a reminder that, no matter their background and personal circumstances, ECC trustees exist to serve students and the community. Finally, the ECC Board holds lifelong learning in the highest regard. It sends representatives each year to Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) and Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) meetings,

conferences, and taskforce meetings to learn about current issues facing colleges. We regularly present our work at the ACCT Conference each fall. Several trustees have gone on to receive specialized training on matters pertinent to the ECC Strategic Plan goals -- including policy governance, DEI matters, fundraising, budgeting, data analytics, and student success. Each February, trustees meet federal representatives in Washington, DC; each May, they attend state lobby days in Springfield, our state capitol, with assistance from the Executive Director of Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs.

Finally, the Board retreats for two days in June to update or reaffirm many of the documents shared here as evidence, including their annual goals and policy statements. The Board selects and hires its own outside facilitator to lead this training. During retreats, the Board evaluates the President's performance and self-evaluates its own performance as well. The lone exception to ECC trustees' practice of routing requests through the President is when the Board Chair invites Cabinet members each spring to complete the same evaluation of the President that the trustees complete. Cabinet members submit their completed forms anonymously to the Board Secretary.

Sources

- 2C.01 Illinois General Assembly - 110 ILCS 805_ Public Community College Act (1)
- 2C.02 Affirmation of Service April 2017
- 2C.03 Economic Interest Statements
- 2C.04 3-409-state officials employees ethics act
- 2C.05 COTW Agenda (05-12-25)
- 2C.06 Board-book-051325 Mission, Vision Etc
- 2C.07 ACCT Accessibility Presentation 10-24-25
- 2C.08 Board Retreat agenda-06161725
- 2C.09 2024 Evaluation Form - Board Blank(1)

2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The institution supports academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of knowledge as integral to high-quality teaching, learning and research.

Argument

ECC values academic freedom and freedom of expression in all college operations. Freedom of inquiry and ethical practices are shared values of the ECC Strategic Plan (along with excellence, accountability, collaboration, and holistic approach). Academic freedom is defined in the [ECCFA/Board Contract \(p. 14\)](#), and a definition appears in [AP 4-407 \(Academic Integrity\)](#) along with examples of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, fabrication, complicity, multiplicity, and misconduct) and associated consequences for violations. Thus, our position is clear to anyone who teaches, learns, or conducts research at ECC.

As an Illinois public body, ECC is subject to and complies with the [Illinois Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\), 5 ILCS 140/1-140/11](#) and shares information upon request. We freely share summarized findings of our initiatives and share data with external entities through public reports and Tableau dashboards. For non-summarized or individualized/identifiable data, we require written [non-disclosure agreements](#) to ensure our data is used responsibly and limiting its use and distribution. These agreements are signed by the requesting party and the either the President or the Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Technology. Finally, [AP 3-905 \(Data Privacy Policy\)](#) explains the types of data we gather and store as well as the data gathered by our business partners.

ECC actively encourages inquiry and innovation. ECC is one of the few community colleges in the nation to have a center dedicated solely to undergraduate research, the [Center for Undergraduate Research, Innovation and Creativity \(CURIC\)](#). Our annual [Symposium](#), held each spring, is a celebration of original student research on cutting-edge topics in human development, technology, and sciences (see [Honors Program Handbook](#)). In spring 2025, ECC students and their faculty sponsor discovered a new antibacterial chemical compound, beta zinc oxalate, that was accepted into the International Powder Diffraction Database (patent pending). Conducted by CURIC, their study builds upon a 2022 study [conducted by a prior cohort](#) of ECC students.

For faculty and students alike, we create safe spaces (e.g., [Socrates Café](#)) and trainings (e.g., [Safe Zone](#)) to engage in free discourse without defensiveness or fear. In 2020, for example, when several students marched from our campus to downtown Elgin to join a city-wide protest on police accountability, several ECC campus police officers joined them – both to show solidarity and also to protect them along their two-mile route. Many student organizations, cocurricular activities, the Student Experience and Engagement Office, the Student Wellness Office, and faculty offer various experiences and assignments that provide outlets for diverse thinking and expression.

Faculty are required to compile professional growth plans during their annual self-assessments and are nurtured and encouraged by peers along the way. The Faculty Development Committee is faculty-led and meets regularly to evaluate proposals for advanced training, sabbaticals, and scholarly activities and to provide recommendations to the Vice President of Teaching, Learning, and Student Development and, to the Board. The Faculty Equity Research Community works alongside this committee and the Student Learning Assessment Advisory Council (SLAAC) to guide analysis and interpretation of insights from data (see HLC Quality Initiative on general education assessment). Further, the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, Assessment, and Learning (CETAL) hosts a series of Teaching for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE) Chats each semester to foster open conversations about innovations in teaching and learning.

Beyond faculty and students, all employees are encouraged to freely orchestrate their own learning, reading, attending events, and expressing themselves. Events offered by the ECC Humanities Center, ECC Arts Center, ECC Writers Center, Bill Pelz Global Speakers Series, Multicultural and Global Initiatives Committee (MAGIC), and many others are open to students, employees, and community members alike. The College maintains a budget for professional development which is large enough to allow all faculty, administrators, and many professional-technical employees to attend one conference annually; and we allow additional travel if employees are conference presenters or officers of their professional organizations. Adjunct faculty can attend conferences upon approval by the Faculty Development Committee.

Sources

- 2D.08 Honors Program at Elgin Community College
- 2D.09 ECC STEM team take first place at Illinois Skyway Competition _ ECC
- 2D.10 Socrates Cafe _ ECC
- 2D.11 Safe Zone _ Elgin Community College (ECC)_Redacted
- 2D.12 Annual Self Assesments
- 2D.13 Faculty Development Committee Membership 2025
- 2D.14 Faculty Equity Research Community
- 2D.15 2019-qi-assessment-of-gened6
- 2D.15 QIReportElginCCIL
- 2D.16 TIDE
- 2D.17 Events
- 2D.01A ECCFA-contract
- 2D.02 4-407-Academic-Integrity
- 2D.03 FOIA, 5 ILCS 140-1 to 140-11
- 2D.04 Nondisclosure Agreement Form - One Way - rev2015Apr
- 2D.05 3-905-data-privacy-policy
- 2D.06 CURIC-annual-report-2024-2025
- 2D.07 Symposium-program-2025
- 2D.08 Honors Program at Elgin Community College(1)
- 2D.09 ECC STEM team take first place at Illinois Skyway Competition _ ECC(1)
- 2D.10 Socrates Cafe _ ECC(1)
- 2D.11 Safe Zone _ Elgin Community College (ECC)_Redacted(1)

2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

The institution adheres to policies and procedures that ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

Argument

ECC provides a supportive environment for students to learn with truth and honesty. Faculty librarians in ECC's Renner Academic Library and Learning Resources Center provide tutorials to ensure originality and avoid plagiarism when preparing course assignments. Librarians teach in-person and online and are often invited to instructors' classes to introduce topics related to information literacy. Finally, curated research guides on the library's website provide links to articles and video tutorials on researching and writing in various disciplines, which many faculty incorporate into course materials (e.g., see guides related to art, current events, and fact-checking).

Further assistance comes from The Write Place, ECC's writing lab. A Guide to Writing at ECC, a manual written by ECC faculty, is used college-wide and available in print from The Write Place and the ECC Bookstore and via download from Brightspace D2L, our LMS. Assistance is provided on a walk-in basis, by appointment, or through a free non-credit Writing with Integrity video tutorial offered through The Write Place. Finally, a standard statement on academic integrity is a contractually required segment of ECC's master syllabus template that ECC faculty include word-for-word in course syllabi.

Each practice is supported by formal policies, most notably AP 4-407 (Academic Integrity). Meanwhile, AP 4-402 (Student Code of Conduct) explains ECC's position on appropriate behavior regarding using college resources, personal demeanor, and the respectful treatment of others. Students are introduced to these practices during student orientations, our introductory College 101 course, the student web portal, and the MyECC Experience mobile app.

While we strive to avoid violations of our policies, they do arise on rare occasions. When this happens, faculty and the Dean of Students use an online Academic Integrity Violation Form to track behaviors toward remediation. Per the Student Disciplinary Committee Hearing Process, consequences include verbal or written warnings; mandatory completion of the Writing with Integrity tutorial; a rewrite or revision of an assignment; a grade reduction or failure of an assignment or course; or other specific sanctions determined by faculty in their course syllabi.

We also recognize the importance of allowing students to express counter views. Several related procedures, listed below, allow students to appeal faculty and administrative decisions:

- AP 4-401: Complaint Procedure
- AP 4-403: Appeal of Final Grade

- AP 4-404: Placement Test Appeals
- AP 4-408: Appeal for Complaint Procedure

Further, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Institutional Complaint System is linked to the College's homepage.

Data on student complaints, appeals, and resolutions are kept on file by the Dean of Students using Maxient software. The Dean logged 69 student complaints during the 2024-25 academic year and 71 the prior year. Of these complaints, the majority were based on a college policy that the student disagreed with, such as tuition and fees. Only 44 of the violations arising in 2024-25 were related to AP 4-407 (Academic Integrity), and all but one were resolved by having students complete *Writing with Integrity* and submitting a written apology to the instructor. Since 2022, several violations have involved the unapproved use of artificial intelligence (AI) in some way. To this end, CETAL includes sample syllabus statements related to the use of AI for faculty to use. An AI Governance Group is forming in spring 2026 to explore best practices in teaching and learning using AI.

In general, the numbers of complaints and appeals are relatively low given an annual student body of over 17,000 enrollees. All complaints receive thorough investigations, often requiring coordination by faculty, administrators, staff, and students across departments. Due process is always provided, and we strive to use a restorative justice approach to allow hearings between students and others involved. Nonetheless, if reconciliation does not work, repercussions include probation, suspension, or dismissal from the College.

Beyond students, academic integrity applies to faculty, administrators, and staff as well. All who associate with ECC are expected to follow best practices when engaging in inquiry. ECC receives, on average, four research requests per year from internal faculty and six from external researchers, typically graduate students at nearby universities. The Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) Office provides support for these individuals as they gather their data. Additionally, each year, the College and the ECC Foundation award, on average, 12 mini-grants for new strategic initiatives; once awarded, grant recipients outline their project goals and data gathering activities in consultation with the PIE Office. This office also supports them throughout the project lifecycle, from proposal to implementation, analysis, and status reporting.

AP 3-103 (Data Collection Involving People at ECC) contains procedures for anyone interested in gathering original data (in either quantitative or qualitative form) from students, employees, or affiliates of ECC. Per this procedure, researchers submit requests using a standard research intake form and participant consent forms. Completed forms are routed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of elected faculty and key administrators. Reviews take three weeks on average. If approved, the IRB prepares a formal approval letter signed by the Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness and Technology that names a point person (typically a dean) to facilitate logistics and timeframes for data collection.

Related practices underscore the College's position to ensure an environment that safeguards free expression, including:

- AP 3-301: Copyright
- AP 3-409: State Officials and Employees Ethics Act

- [AP 3-803: Conflicts of Interest](#)
- [AP 3-804: Whistleblower Protection](#)

Each procedure outlines the College's definitions, general guidelines, compliance provisions, and 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 are articulated locally through negotiated contracts. For example, intellectual property rights are detailed in the [Board/ECCFA Contract \(p. 65\)](#).

Methods for reporting violations of these policies appear on elgin.edu's [dedicated Filing a Report or Complaint page](#). Depending on the nature of the instance, complainants are asked to report internally to the Dean of Students, General Counsel, or Human Resources, or to an external agency (e.g., HLC, IBHE, etc.); however, for greater anonymity, the College uses [Navex Global](#), a third-party hotline provider, to track and report instances. Within the past two years, the College received 42 complaints through internal channels and 10 anonymous complaints through Navex (for 52 total). We have resolved 51 and are currently acting upon the remaining one. Complaints focus on a range of issues -- from safety concerns to employee misconduct to improper use of technology.

Sources

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Criterion 2 - Summary

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Argument

ECC operates in compliance with established policies at federal, state, and institutional levels. Accredited continuously by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) since 1968, ECC follows HLC Criteria and Assumed Practices. At the state level, the Illinois Public Community College Act and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) govern ECC's operations, with recognition reviews conducted every five years. ECC also complies with statutes such as the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, Freedom of Information Act, and the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act. ECC provides accurate and complete information on its website, Catalogs, program reviews, and student services sites, brochures, and reports. All reporting is carried out from verified systems and is subject to internal and external audits, program reviews, and annual reporting. Finally, public feedback mechanisms, such as website Community Suggestion Box and systems for gathering complaints and appeals, are in place and well established.

The ECC Board of Trustees codifies governance through Board Policies, which are reaffirmed annually. Administrative Procedures at the College level further operationalize Board Policies for employees and students. Divisions and departments also maintain additional written practices, and employee groups for faculty and staff follow collective bargaining agreements. ECC's Board is elected under nonpartisan state law and remains free from undue influence. Trustees annually affirm ethical obligations, disclose financial interests, and participate in ongoing professional development. Governance practices include public Committee of the Whole meetings, annual retreats, and formal evaluations of the President.

Freedom of inquiry is one of ECC's Shared Values. ECC affirms academic freedom through contractual and administrative policy. It also supports employee innovations through professional development, innovation funding, research support provided by the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) Office, and student inquiry through the Center for Undergraduate Research, Innovation, and Creativity (CURIC). Research involving ECC stakeholders requires Institutional Review Board approval, ensuring ethical compliance. Academic integrity is codified through Administrative Procedure 4-407 and a codes of conduct is in place for students. Students receive instruction on information literacy and writing integrity, and violations are addressed through restorative approaches. Additional policies on copyright, conflicts of interest, anti-harassment and discrimination, and whistleblower protection safeguard institutional integrity. In sum, through layered governance, compliance with state and federal law, accurate public representation, protection of academic freedom, and ethical knowledge practices, ECC demonstrates compliance with Core Components 2A through 2E.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

3.A. Educational Programs

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

Argument

ECC establishes and maintains student learning outcomes and goals at the course, program, and general education levels. First, the College administers mechanisms to ensure rigorous and appropriate oversight of these outcomes and their interconnected alignment in courses, programs, cocurricular experiences, and general education. Additionally, learning outcomes in programs with additional admissions and/or external credentialing demonstrate alignment to both ECC curricular and professional standards. Finally, we ensure college-level rigor for dual credit instruction.

Levels of Learning Outcomes and Oversight

ECC establishes and maintains student learning outcomes and goals at all levels. Internally, the College relies on faculty expertise, program reviews, the Curriculum Committee, the Student Learning Assessment Advisory Committee (SLAAC), and the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, Assessment and Learning (CETAL) to provide reviews of courses and programs. Externally, the College relies on the [Illinois Articulation Initiative \(IAI\)](#) and statewide panels of discipline-specific faculty reviewers.

Course-level learning outcomes (CLOs). Course-level learning outcomes are an integral part of [master course outlines](#), which are maintained in ECC's curriculum management software, CurricUNET. New courses and updates to existing ones originate through faculty, working closely with deans and the Curriculum Committee (see Core Component 3F). CLOs are defined upon initial course creation and are reviewed every five years through program reviews and as needed through the Curriculum Committee. Outcomes are revised to update topics with current trends, in response to accreditation needs, or through articulation agreements, such as the IAI. Faculty support for course development is provided by CETAL through new faculty orientations, pedagogical workshop series such as Backwards Design and the Transparency in Learning and Teaching Framework, and on-demand resources (e.g., [Teaching Foundations Resources](#); [Bloom's Session](#) ; [ACUE Action Verb Resource](#)).

Discipline-specific resources are also provided. In the Liberal, Visual, and Performing Arts (LVPA) Division, for example, we compile teaching/learning resources for adjunct faculty into a single helpful guide. Additionally, the College has created a separate guide to distinguish between course outcomes and course objectives. Outcomes are assessed after completing an entire course, whereas objectives are assessed after an individual lesson. Where relevant, learning outcomes are aligned across levels (such as program and course levels) to build both depth and breadth. Once approved, new course proposals are re-reviewed, approved, and finalized by the Vice President of Teaching, Learning, and Student Development (TLSD) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

For transparency and consistency, CLOs are a required feature on all syllabi and are the same regardless of course section, modality, or location (ECCFA/Board Contract, Article 4.31; Syllabus Template and Guide). Verification checks are carried out in the instructional division offices. Programs also make updates to curricula based on feedback from advisory committees. For example, the Computer Information Systems Program revised its course sequences to emphasize Python programming, as its advisory committee noted increased demand for this coding language over others (see Curriculum Committee minutes of October 18, 2024). Courses with either General Education or Major codes per IAI Process Documentation are subject to periodic reviews to ensure their continued alignment to their code and seamless portability upon transfer, per ittransfer.org. In instances where feedback suggests strengthening learning outcomes, ECC faculty work to improve and resubmit them for IAI approval. In 2021, for instance, the Criminal Justice Program updated CLOs in the CRJ-101 (Introduction to Criminal Justice) course to ensure the IAI code was maintained. In another example, the Math Program ensures their course meet IAI requirements and transfer to baccalaureate programs, such as the Engineering Program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign [see the MTH-240 (Linear Algebra) course on the Curriculum Committee Agenda of November 3, 2023].

Program-level learning outcomes (PLOs). Program-level outcomes define learning for a specific sequence of courses culminating in a certificate or degree. They also are used to reflect scaffolded learning across subsets of courses – such as developmental math pathways, the English composition writing sequence, or the Global Scholar transcript designation. PLOs are established at the onset of a program per Program Development Guidelines (see Core Component 3F); once approved, many programs publish their PLOs in student handbooks (e.g., Nursing, p. 8 and the Clinical Lab Tech Program); on program web pages (see Paralegal); and in the Course Catalog (see Fire Science). Processes to establish and maintain PLOs follow the same Curriculum Committee and CETAL review and approval processes as CLOs. Through five-year ICCB program reviews, faculty complete a curriculum map (e.g., Supply Chain Management) to demonstrate progression from introductory to mastery levels, and any updates to PLOs are made during the review process. This is especially true for programs with stackable certificates leading to higher credentials and programs with concentrations within them, such as Culinary Arts, which has core outcomes along with additional outcomes based on sub-specialty (Culinary, Pastry, or Hospitality). Programs with professional accreditations, such as the Paralegal Program, align their PLOs to external standards and certification/licensure content.

Cocurricular learning outcomes (CCLOs). Having well-articulated outcomes statements for cocurricular programs has gained momentum at ECC over the last five years, and as such, we have been intentional about distinguishing between cocurricular and extracurricular experiences. The following language was crafted by the Assessment Strategy Team in

2022-23 to further outline this new level of assessment:

“ECC sponsors structured learning opportunities for defined subsets of students, beyond the classroom, which complement the formal curriculum and support the institution’s Mission. Cocurricular programs and activities develop students’ skills across General Education Learning Outcomes and enhance employability. Such offerings typically do not count for credit or apply towards graduation. The College is committed to measuring and strengthening student learning from these cross-campus experiences with the same attention, structure, support, and equity-mindedness as course- and program-level assessment. Conversely, extracurricular events and experiences are defined as organized events designed to support student and community learning but that do not have a defined subset of participants; they are promoted and open for participants to attend. While these may be significant learning experiences, because of the undefined nature of participation, these events and experiences do not fall under the purview of cocurricular outcomes assessment via CETAL.”

As with PLOs, CCLOs are governed by individual service areas; as these areas progress through program reviews, faculty and non-faculty employees who oversee cocurricular offerings define and document CCLOs apart from the purpose/mission and goal statements representing these areas. These statements are communicated on elgin.edu.

General Education (GELOs). GELOs at ECC are intended to be “institutional,” in that all students, regardless of program, learn and grow with them as they engage with the College. There are six GELOs at ECC: Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Quantitative Literacy, Scientific Literacy, and Global and Multicultural Literacy. Outcome statements are published in the College Catalog and the CETAL webpage and are maintained by the SLAAC. SLAAC has established by-laws that explain ECC processes for reviewing and updating GELO language. As a guiding principle, the College intends for institutional GELOs to be relatively stable over time and not subject to frequent changes. The last round of substantive changes on GELOs was made between 2014 and 2018. Discussion regarding measurement and improvements with GELOs appears in Core Component 3E.

Alignment Among Levels of Student Learning Outcomes

Various alignment activities ensure the full curriculum offered by ECC meets general education goals. Program reviews are essential to the alignment process, as they provide a means for faculty to document where and how learning outcomes are supported. During reviews, faculty create curricular maps indicating how each course *introduces* a PLO; allows students to *practice* according to that PLO; and finally, how students demonstrate *mastery* of the PLO. Faculty then repeat this exercise with GELOs, using ratings of *high*, *moderate*, *low*, or *none* to document alignment. Ratings then get transferred into CurricUNET and published on master course outlines [e.g., see program maps from Chemistry (CHM), English (ENG), and Culinary Arts (CUL) and general education maps from Communications (CMS)].

As a result of mapping exercises, the College remains assured that its outcomes are well represented through practice. For example, Information Literacy is supported by CLOs in specific courses, such as ENG-101 (English Composition I) or CMS-101 (Fundamentals of Speech), they are reinforced by librarians and resources of the Renner Academic Library.

Similarly, Global and Multicultural Literacy is reflected in sociology coursework, programs in the Health Professions Division, and in cocurricular areas like the Center for Civic Engagement. Alignment principles and techniques are demonstrated by CETAL to aid faculty in aligning their CLOs to class assignments and assessments.

Alignment of Student Learning Outcomes to External Accreditations

Programs with additional standards and/or external credentialing requirements are published in the College Catalog (see Program Accreditation Table), and learning outcomes for these programs appear on program web pages in the College Catalog. Accredited programs go through the same internal development and review processes described above, but with an extra layer of oversight to ensure connections to licensure/certification requirements. Once established, programs make periodic updates to their curriculum and learning outcomes to remain compliant with changing standards. For example, the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Director initiated program-wide changes to course descriptions and learning outcomes to adapt to new standards just published by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

Many courses at ECC give students opportunities to prepare for and obtain external certifications. For example, the Computer Information Science Program prepares students to take CompTIA certification exams. In other areas, the certification becomes part of the final exam, such as various credentials from Microsoft. Other examples from the College Catalog include Accounting (Intuit QuickBooks) and Culinary Arts (ServSafe Manager and ServSafe Alcohol/BASSET Certification). The curriculum of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program is approved for the Gateways to Opportunity Illinois Professional Development System, allowing ECC to offer several credentials: Illinois Director Credential Level 1; Infant/Toddler Credential; ECE Credential Levels 2-4; and the ESL/Bilingual Credential (see Catalog screenshot and the ECE-104 course outline). In another example, ECC's Welding Program faculty maintain certifications from the American Welding Society (AWS), allowing them to test and certify students on behalf of the AWS agency (see program review excerpt). The College is proud to maintain high pass rates for programs with credentialing.

Rigor of Student Learning Outcomes for Dual Credit Students

The College offers several avenues for high school students to earn early college credit, both in high schools and at ECC's campus. ECC's College Transitions and Secondary Partnerships Office maintains oversight and control to ensure college-level rigor for dual credit instruction. Across all modalities, dual credit courses align to the College's curricular requirements, and to further demonstrate our commitment to quality, ECC's Dual Credit Program is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), one of only two such NACEP-accredited programs in Illinois. While the program is governed by the Illinois Dual Credit Quality Act (110 ILCS 27) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with each secondary school district (see District 300 Dual Credit Agreement), the College's standards exceed legislation because of NACEP expectations.

Dual credit high school instructors receive instructor training and are required to complete annual professional development to maintain accreditation with NACEP. Trainings uphold and ensure college-level quality and rigor. To provide further support and ensure consistency across instructors and sections, high school instructors teaching ECC courses are assigned to a faculty liaison. Faculty liaisons conduct classroom observations, provide course training,

review syllabi, review assessments and grading procedures, provide professional development, and are available for questions or clarifications. Training is specifically required for new high school instructors, whereas all other activities are completed every term the course is offered. In fall 2024, the HLC conducted a site visit to Burlington High School, one of our dual credit locations, and ECC joined the HLC Notifications Program to expedite the offering of dual credit courses in high schools throughout our district. Examples of dual credit assessment appear in Core Component 3E.

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3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Argument

Excellence and Intellectual Inquiry

The College has six general education learning outcomes (GELOs): Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Quantitative Literacy, Scientific Literacy and Global and Multi-cultural Literacy. GELO definitions appear in the College Catalog as sub-bullets listing the types of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and perspectives each outcome is designed to impart. In this sense, GELOs support this core component in that they engage students in “collecting, analyzing and communicating information” and promote “intellectual inquiry,” “creative work,” and “adaptable” skills.

During program reviews, ECC faculty rate and score GELOs against course learning outcomes (CLOs) to assess the degree to which courses represent the essential qualities of GELOs. Rating scores are kept in CurricUNET and appear on master course outlines. A 2025 analysis of nearly 900 courses in the database shows the representation and penetration of GELOs across the entire ECC curriculum. Critical Thinking and Communication yield the highest degree of alignment to ECC courses at 57% and 40%, respectively; whereas Quantitative and Scientific Literacy are mapped to fewer courses, at 30% and 25%, respectively. In 2022, the College improved how it collects student achievement data by linking GELOs to artifacts already collected through course assessment. This improvement allows ECC faculty to map not just courses, but artifacts within courses. A Tableau dashboard of student artifacts gathered between 2021 and 2025 reveals that the vast majority meet or exceed the knowledge and skills intended by GELOs.

Instructional Programs. As the above analysis reveals, ECC faculty design their courses and assignments to foster student mastery of GELOs. Descriptions, topics, learning outcomes, and assessment measures found in master course outlines provide additional evidence of this connection:

- In English Composition (ENG-102), students learn how to critically evaluate research, paraphrase findings, and synthesize concepts into a cohesive argument.
- In Statistics (MTH-120), students learn how to make sense of data to test hypotheses.
- In Business Communications (BUS-101), students learn how to write business messages and apply business principles and etiquette to run effective meetings.
- In Hospitality Management (HOS-214), students learn how to design and prepare food, supplies, and services needed for a menu.

- In Psychology (PSY-218), students learn to make sense of emotional and cognitive behaviors throughout the human lifespan.

Additionally, sample course activities and assignments demonstrate how students showcase their learning:

- In the College's Fundamentals of Speech course (CMS-101) students communicate to an audience in an informative presentation.
- In Art History (ART-152) students engage in analysis of creative works.
- In Developmental Psychology (PSY-218), students analyze and impart meaning to human behaviors.
- In the Education Program's Exceptional Individual course (EDN-204), students analyze behaviors at a group or organizational level.
- In Human Services (HUS-205), students demonstrate flexibility, adaptability and change by leading two sharing groups throughout the semester and a workshop at ECC Speaks, the College's storytelling event.

Finally, faculty participate in the College's annual Course Assessment process to document how they gather and assess data on student learning for improvement. These Learning Improvement Reports (LIR) will be introduced and further discussed in Core Component 3E.

In 2019, the ICCB created the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) Credential, providing a clearer mechanism for tracking progress and lending external support of the quality and rigor of ECC's general education program. The College had previously recognized students' fulfillment of general education by awarding an IAI stamp on transcripts, but the GECC credential provides greater transferability, allowing general education to transfer as a package rather than course-by-course. The GECC credential spans all disciplines (communications, fine arts, humanities, human relations, social and behavioral sciences, math, and physical/life sciences) and reflects similar requirements of the first two years of most baccalaureate programs.

Practicing Modes of Intellectual Inquiry or Creative Work

Several ECC programs and courses allow students to develop their creative skills through art or music and to critique other's work:

- In the Digital Illustration (CDN-109) course, students complete vector portraits and advance their understanding of color, aesthetics, and design.
- In Music (MUS-131 and MUS-133), students learn an array of musical genres and participate in performance ensembles.
- In Photography (ART-120), students learn to translate visual images into photographic prints that balance light, form, composition, and space.
- In the Communication Design course (CDN-240), students compile a capstone portfolio for the annual Art and Design Portfolio Exhibition, a judged competition of

student artwork in drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, web design, motion graphics, and moving images.

Industrial arts also provides opportunities for students to be creative. In spring 2025, students in WEL-112 (Applied Welding Theory) collaborated to design and create a meat smoker for Culinary Arts as part of the Manufacturing Employer Symposium and Student Showcase on May 9, 2025. At the event, 200 attendees – including 30+ regional employers (industry leaders and educators) -- focused on career exploration, while Welding students repurposed materials and Culinary Arts students prepared smoked sausages for attendees.

Finally, ECC's three fine art galleries provide spaces for students to showcase their artwork, whether as part of a course or as an extracurricular activity. Gallery admission is free and accessible to the community. Over the years, the College has received many valuable pieces to add to its permanent art collection. Other notable cocurricular and extracurricular centers at ECC include:

- Writers Center, in Building B, provides a space where students' original essays, short stories, graphic novels, screenplays, and poems are featured in various venues: arts and essay contests, a speakers' series, and the student-run Spire Literary Journal.
- Humanities Center, in Building F, provides a space where students, faculty, and community members convene to explore complex life issues and foster understanding. The Center also coordinates and sponsors programming, such as speakers' panels and the College's long-standing Socrates Cafe, a biweekly student circle for philosophical reflection.

Service Learning Activities

Service learning opportunities embedded within the curriculum allow students to develop knowledge and skills to understand and serve local communities:

- ECC's Students Educationally Receiving Volunteer Experience (SERVE) course, GSD-150, is a tuition-free variable-credit course where students volunteer their time at 30+ social service agencies throughout District 509. Activities such as blood drives, visits to nursery schools or senior centers, and Project Backpack occur year-long but culminate in a campus-wide Make-A-Difference Week and Big Event Day of Service.
- In the Community and Civic Engagement course, POS-140 (see p. 9), students explore public service, community leadership, volunteerism, and activism in the non-profit sector. Class activities include service-learning projects and research posters at the Symposium each spring.
- In specialized Communication sections (CMS-101), students infuse service learning and management principles into a common course. In learning how to operate their own consultancy, Spartan Consulting, CMS students have aided operations at the Kane County Teachers Credit Union, which operates a local branch on ECC's campus.
- In ECC's Nutrition for Contemporary Society course (BIO-101), students participate in a "Food Assistance Volunteer Experience" assignment at a local food bank.

Internships, Clinical/Field Experiences, and Competitions

ECC's general education program maps onto the [Illinois Employability Skills Framework](#), and our faculty recognize the importance of general education for local employers. Many ECC programs have course-based [internships, capstones, practicums, and clinical/field experiences](#) embedded into program requirements, allowing students to adapt classroom learning to real-world settings. Additionally, some programs offer an option to take an internship as an elective course. ECC's [Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning](#) (SPEL) Office assists students to find these kinds of experiences.

ECC is a long-standing member of the Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference (affiliated with the National Junior College Athletic Association), which allows ECC students to compete in athletics and other venues, for example, in juried art fairs and science competitions. In spring 2025, ECC hosted the [Skyway STEM Poster Competition](#), which directly address this core components in that it evaluates students' understanding of logical reasoning, field-specific methodologies, hypothesis-testing, research design, and theory. Relatedly, ECC's Math, Science and Engineering Division receives free memberships to the Society of Women Engineers for aspiring female engineering students.

Cocurricular Programs for Honors Symposia

Beyond work-based learning experience, ECC sponsors multiple specialized academic and cocurricular programs that provide unique opportunities for research. Three, in particular, three are woven together to culminate in a [Symposium](#) each spring: the Honors Program; the Center for Undergraduate Research, Innovation, and Creativity (CURIC); and the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE).

Honors Program. The Honors Program works closely with ECC's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter to combine classroom-based learning with cocurricular experiences. Together they oversee a tuition-free Honors in Action (HIA) course, where ECC students work in teams to explore themes, develop a research question, research in-depth, and use findings to develop an action plan that benefits the campus and community. An annual theme drives the selection of a common reading text which is shared across campus and used as much as possible in Honors Program classes. HIA has consistently been awarded a competitive grant from PTK to support this work, and in the 2024-25 academic year, an Honors student and PTK officer was nationally recognized as a Distinguished Officer for her work.

Center for Undergraduate Research, Innovation, and Creativity (CURIC). The CURIC is an outreach program to introduce, expose, and promote undergraduate research and scholarship. CURIC students, called CURIC Fellows, are paired with a faculty mentor to complete a semester-long or year-long research project. Several high-achieving projects have gone on to receive honors, including publications and competitive preparedness for undergraduate transfer. In 2023-24, two dual credit CURIC Fellows presented at the Johns Hopkins Undergraduate Symposium and the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA) Conference; and, in 2024-25, CURIC Fellows co-authored and published a peer-reviewed article in the [Journal Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Education](#), building upon a presentation delivered a year earlier for the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Conference.

Center for Civic Engagement (CCE). The College's CCE fosters the skills and experiences

students need to be thoughtful and engaged civic leaders on campus, in their communities, and in our democracy. The program provides the professional skills students need to propel their careers and advance economic mobility post-completion. While only three years old, the CCE Program has already been featured at HLC and Achieving the Dream conferences and was a Bellwether Award Finalist in 2025. It also received the Elgin Area Image Award in 2025. Because of the CCE, ECC is designated as a Full Participation Institution with the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement (CLDE) Coalition and is the only community college in Illinois to be included.

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- 3B.14 Assignment example from HUS - Copy
- 3B.15 ECC Speaks event - Copy
- 3B.16 Elgin 50901 GECC Submission - Copy
- 3B.17 ENG101.Learning Improvement Report - Copy
- 3B.18 Associate in Arts Degree _ Elgin Community College (ECC) - Copy
- 3B.21 CDN109 assignment & syllabus - Copy
- 3B.22 Course_Outline MUS-131.doc (1) - Copy
- 3B.23 Course_Outline MUS-133 - Copy
- 3B.24 Course Outline ART-120 Darkroom Photography I - Copy
- 3B.25 Course Outline CDN-240 Portfolio Review - Copy
- 3B.26 Awards Procedure.docx (1) - Copy
- 3B.27 Manufacturing Student Showcase 2025 - Copy
- 3B.28 Welding student showcase - Copy
- 3B.29 Writers Center _ Elgin Community College (ECC) - Copy
- 3B.30 Humanities Center _ Elgin Community College (ECC) - Copy
- 3B.31 Humanities Center Speaker Series, 2024_2025 events - Copy
- 3B.32 Socrates Cafe - Copy
- 3B.33 Course_Outline GSD-150 - Copy
- 3B.35 Example posters from POS-140 - Copy
- 3B.36 Spartan Consulting CMS-101 - Copy
- 3B.37 BIO 101 Service Learning - Copy
- 3B.38 Illinois Employability Skills Framework - essential-handout-2 - Copy

- 3B.39 Internship Sites - Copy
- 3B.40 Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning - Copy
- 3B.41 Skyway STEM Poster Competition - Copy
- 3B.42 2025 Symposium Program - Copy
- 3B.43 Unusual Synergy_ Undergraduate Research and Civic Engagement Initiatives at Community Colleges _ Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Educ - Copy
- 3B.44 Full-Participation Institutions — College Civic Learning

3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff

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

Argument

Faculty and Student Support Staff Numbers and Qualifications

ECC maintains sufficient faculty and Student Services and Development staff to support our student population. As of fall 2024, there are 148 full-time faculty and 340 part-time faculty employed (see IPEDS C1 Table below). Based on teaching experience and longevity, full-time faculty are classified as Instructor, Assistant Professor I, Assistant Professor II, Associate Professor I, Associate Professor II, Professor I, and Professor II (see ECCFA/Board Contract, p. 75). Meanwhile, part-time teaching faculty, based on longevity at the College, are classified as either Non-Unit Adjunct Faculty, Adjunct Faculty I, and Adjunct Faculty II. Faculty may either be teaching faculty or library faculty, which are further classified as Technical Services, Public Services, Archives/Interlibrary Loan, and Distance Learning Library Faculty. The Board/ECCFA Contract contains job descriptions for all faculty types which are reviewed and updated as needed during contract negotiations.

Full-Time Faculty Numbers by Classification (Fall 2024)

Classification	Number of Faculty
Instructor	25
Assistant Professor I	11
Assistant Professor II	12
Associate Professor I	13
Associate Professor II	16
Professor I	13
Professor II	51

Other (Non-credit instructor, Skills instructor, HS instructors)	7
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Part-time Faculty Numbers by Classification (Fall 2024)

Classification	Number of Faculty
Adjunct Non-Union	77
Unit Adjunct I	73
Unit Adjunct II	162
Other (Non-credit instructor, Skills instructor, HS instructors)	28

Given these counts, ECC maintains a student-to-faculty class ratio goal of 20:1, with 24% of classes consisting of between two and five students; 34% of classes consisting of between six and ten students, 33% between 11-20 students, and 10% between 21- 35 students (per the [ICCB FY2023 Enrollment Report \(which is based on the IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey\)](#)). The College's internal target for the percentage of credit hours taught by full-time faculty is 60%, and this goal is regularly reviewed and adjusted based on budget and enrollment.

The Student Services and Development (SSD) Division within the TLSD Division is explained in Core Component 3D. Across its departments, SSD employs 75 full-time employees, 25 part-time employees, 17 contingent workers, and 44 student workers. The student-to-SSD ratio (FTE students to FTE employees, calculated as the number of full-time employees + a third of the number of part-time employees) was 69:1 in the 2024-25 academic year.

To ensure personnel are qualified to deliver effective educational experiences, ECC maintains hiring standards for qualified faculty and staff. Standards for full-time and part-time faculty align to the HLC's Faculty Qualifications Guidelines published in March 2016 and updated November 2023 and to the faculty qualifications standards of the [ICCB Systems Rules Manual \(Section 1501.303: Program Requirements/Preparation of Professional Staff\)](#). Meanwhile, ECC's own [AP 5-103 \(Minimum Requirements for Appointment of Faculty\)](#) are applied as well (and this procedure is reviewed and updated per the review cycle explained

in Core Component 2A). Specific hiring standards vary according to discipline which generally include a master's degree and graduate hours for transfer programs and courses and a bachelor's degree and related work experience for career-technical programs and Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education and English as a Second Language courses.

For certain courses and programs, additional qualifications may be preferred or required, based on additional accreditation or industry standards, and are defined by the academic dean in consultation with their faculty instructional coordinator. Course-specific qualifications are listed in the Master Course Outlines in CurricUNET. High school dual credit instructors must meet these same standards. For high school instructors, transcripts are submitted and reviewed by the dean, with questions elevated to the VP of TLSD. Additionally, after being hired, each high school dual credit instructor is assigned a Dual Credit Liaison to provide support and complete site visits. Review of faculty qualifications is conducted by the Associate VP of TLSD, and Human Resources (HR) provides updated faculty credential information.

For areas where licensure is required to remain in compliance, such as in the Health Professions Department, HR issues licensure reports to deans as expiration dates approach. An expiring license then triggers the dean to follow up. Instances of tested experience are documented in the faculty member's personnel record on eTalent (PageUp), the College's HR software platform, and are based on a course's particular learning outcomes. For example, the Dean of Visual and Performing Arts awarded tested experience to a faculty member to teach CDN-230 (Introduction to Videography) once she had ensured his professional experience hours met Illinois State Board of Education's, ECC's, and HLC's provisions. When a portfolio review is included as part of faculty qualifications, the dean collaborates with the instructional coordinator as the subject matter expert. Qualifications for staff in the SSD are set by SSD deans in consultation with HR. To qualify for hire, academic advisors in the Student Success Center must have at least a bachelor's degree, a year of experience advising students, and three years' experience in higher education. Financial aid advisors must have at least a bachelor's degree and two years' experience in a financial setting. Professional tutors must have at least a bachelor's degree.

Hiring and Orientation Processes

Employee Hiring. Hiring processes at ECC ensure that we hire the most qualified candidates and support search committees fully. Full-time faculty members are sought in response to program growth, vacancies due to retirements or resignations, accreditation standards, and to keep the 60%/40% full-time-to-part-time ratio in check. Once Cabinet approval is received, the position is posted online, and a dean leads the faculty search per ECC Search Committee Guidelines (p. 3) stipulating the number of search committee members, interview questions, processes, and timelines. The dean or associate dean usually chairs the committee and prepares the position description. The dean also communicates to the ECCFA the need to recruit faculty to serve on the committee, and the committee determines the number of interview rounds, interview content, and modalities. Full-time faculty searches typically consist of multiple interview rounds and a teaching demonstration. The dean then makes a hiring decision based on feedback from the search committee, the VP of TLSD, and the President. Full-time faculty hires are then approved by the Board of Trustees.

Part-time faculty positions are created based on need from unstaffed sections or anticipated

vacancies. HR posts the position description, and the department's instructional coordinator carries out a desk review of applicants and conducts initial interviews. The instructional coordinator then recommends one or more part-time faculty candidates for the dean to interview and select. Depending on the program and discipline, the part-time faculty interview may include a teaching demonstration and/or a portfolio review, as determined by the instructional coordinator.

Search committees for academic administrators and instructional staff are typically organized and chaired by the position's direct supervisor and follow the search committee guidelines provided by HR. HR provides and encourages the use of a question bank for developing interview questions. The search committee determines the number of interview rounds, modality, and content.

To help hiring committees select qualified candidates and ensure the process is equitable, the College offers professional development. Employees on search committees must first complete a four-hour training course called Seeking Cultural Consciousness and Competency in Hiring, Part 1 that is developed and delivered by an external consultant. The training focuses on mitigating bias in the development of interview questions and selecting applicants who are culturally competent. To chair a search committee, an employee must complete Seeking Cultural Competence in Hiring Part 2, an additional four-hour training focused on recognizing discriminatory behaviors.

Employee Orientation. HR delivers an orientation program for new administrative and staff employees, while CETAL delivers pedagogical training for faculty, including a New Faculty Orientation Program, which consists of:

- An online course, through Brightspace D2L, that educates faculty on ECC's mission and shared values, academic policies, and student and faculty resources. The course also provides practical teaching resources, such as lesson planning templates, and techniques for classroom discussion and assessment. All new faculty are asked to complete the online course prior to the synchronous New Faculty Orientation seminars.
- A half-day synchronous virtual New Faculty Orientation seminar for part-time faculty that introduces new part-time faculty to varied student support offices, provides an overview of our student population (demographics, academic performance, and reported barriers to success), connects new faculty with their deans, and details strategies for the first week of teaching.
- A two-day in-person New Faculty Orientation seminar for full-time faculty introduces new full-time faculty to varied student support offices, connects them with their deans, delves into the tenure and evaluation process, and details strategies for the first week of teaching.
- A two-semester New Faculty Orientation series for full-time faculty is a discussion series among new faculty regarding their teaching and professional experiences. A monthly check-in is followed by a ninety-minute workshop on teaching practices such as: Tenure and Evaluation Processes, Backward Design for Alignment, Creating Transparent Assignments, Exploring Your Course Data, Universal Design for Learning, Student Engagement, and Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Meanwhile, HR provides a one-day New Employee Orientation five times a year that includes information about the ECC Strategic Plan and Annual College Goals; current initiatives in the TLSD and SSD Divisions; Information Technology (IT) services and acceptable usage; employee benefits; up-to-date information about equity, diversity, and inclusion; information about preventing discrimination and harassment; and campus safety.

Capacities of CETAL and HR/Professional and Organizational Development Office

While CETAL and HR support professional development college-wide, their offices, too, maintain sufficient personnel. CETAL includes three full-time administrative personnel (an associate dean, assistant dean, and manager) and an advisory committee comprised of faculty, administration, and staff. The manager role is the Manager of Outcomes Assessment (MOA), discussed in Core Component 3E, who oversees activities related to the assessment of student learning. CETAL's purpose is to:

- Facilitate learning experiences for faculty to engage with innovative, evidence-based teaching practices
- Create opportunities for faculty to engage with one another to share teaching experiences and expertise
- Provide orientation and instructional support for new faculty
- Strengthen connections, as they relate to teaching, between faculty, administrators, and co-curricular offices

CETAL offers regular programs each semester and introduces new workshop series each year centered around its four cornerstones: instructional design, student engagement, career development, and equity, inclusion, diversity. Sample offerings – delivered in-person, online, hybrid, or on-demand – include neurodiversity, faculty-to-faculty paired mentoring, peer observations, trauma-informed teaching, instructional design, various asynchronous online courses offered through the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE), and summer teaching retreats. Additional long-standing CETAL programs include the Faculty Equity Research Community, a community of practice of faculty analyzing student success data and respond with varied strategies; TeachECC, the College's annual multi-session conference for sharing teaching strategies and methods of student support; and Teaching/Learning for Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE) Chats, monthly discussions focused on supporting learning through equity, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, CETAL offers one-on-one assistance directly or through referrals to the Instructional Improvement and Distance Learning Office. During the 2024-25 academic year, 260 individuals (unduplicated) participated in CETAL programs, of which 46% were full-time faculty and 54% were part-time/adjunct faculty.

In HR, the Office of Professional and Organizational Development (POD) coordinates college-wide trainings, including ECC-mandated trainings. The office includes one full-time administrator who manages contractual agreements with multiple training providers. Each semester, the office hosts in-person workshops, such as Difficult Conversations and Mental Health First Aid, and asynchronous online on-demand trainings, such as Stress Management. Two of the highest attended offerings in 2024-25 were Emotional Intelligence and Difficult Conversations. Many required or especially popular sessions are routinely offered, and the office also includes new programs each year. In spring 2023, POD acquired

an institutional license for LinkedIn Learning to provide additional on-demand trainings. Trainings offered through POD are available to all ECC employees free of charge and regardless of employee role.

Trainings regularly offered by POD include:

- Annual Mandatory Trainings
- Communications and Customer Service
- Compliance
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Management and Leadership
- Performance Appraisal Process
- Social & Behavioral
- Technology

Additional professional support and growth opportunities for faculty and staff include frequent opportunities to lead varied committees and to lead segments of college and division-wide meetings. Faculty serve as chairs and co-chairs for standing committees like the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Development Committee, and the SLAAC. Staff and faculty are also able to lead teams under the College's Equity and Student Success Action Council and are frequently invited to coordinate and lead portions of All College Meetings, employee convocations, or the semiannual TLSD Division Meeting.

POD organizes trainings for departments as well. The Student Services and Development (SSD) Division holds once-a-semester divisional meetings of all administrators and staff. For instance, the Fall 2024 SSD Meeting focused on ECC's position as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Prior semesters focused on neurodiversity in learning and the intersectionality of identities connected to students' experiences. SSD maintains an institutional license to NASPA, the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Association, which also provides learning opportunities for student affairs professionals.

Professional Development Funding and Sabbatical Support

Professional Development Funding. ECC supports faculty and SSD staff through funding professional development opportunities. Processes are detailed in the Faculty Development Handbook, which is reviewed and revised by faculty, administrators, and staff following the negotiations of the ECCFA/Board Contract, the most recent being the June 2024 edition. The Faculty Development Committee, which is comprised of faculty and supported by TLSD administration, is charged with reviewing proposals received from full-time and adjunct faculty and granting funds for faculty development activities and reviewing and ranking sabbatical proposals for Board approval.

Requests for funding of professional development activities (e.g., conference attendance, graduate courses, or certification programs) are submitted via an electronic form and are reviewed by the Faculty Development Committee. Grants are distributed on a competitive basis. At the first meeting of the calendar year, funding amounts are set for full-time and adjunct faculty. Once funding for a specific year is exhausted, no further funding is granted. During calendar year 2024, for instance, each full-time faculty member was granted \$3,500 while adjunct faculty were granted \$3,000. Totals expended that year were \$108,698 for full-time and \$36,706 for adjunct faculty.

Additionally, the [SSECCA/Board Contract \(p. 22\)](#) allocates \$100,000 per fiscal year to professional development for support staff, which may be used for purchasing items or participating in learning opportunities, such as a course. Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis at a rate of \$2,400 per year for full-time staff and \$1,250 per year for part-time staff. To apply for pre-approval for reimbursement of funds, staff submit the completed [SSECCA Professional Development Pre-Approval Form](#) to their supervisor.

Sabbaticals. Per the ECCFA/Board Contract, each academic year the Board grants up to four research sabbatical leaves for eligible, full-time, tenured faculty. Two sabbatical leaves are for a period of one academic semester or year, and two for the summer. Additionally, the Board grants up to two sabbatical leaves each calendar year for eligible adjuncts with the title of Unit Adjunct faculty II. Faculty are eligible to seek sabbatical leave after having completed six continuous years of full-time or part-time service.

Sabbatical proposals are reviewed by the Faculty Development Committee based on criteria detailed in the Faculty Development Handbook, with an initial review of a written proposal and a follow-up interview with the committee. The committee sends its recommendations to the VP of TLSD for recommendation to the Board. Since 2021, the Board has approved seven sabbatical requests, six for an academic semester and one for the summer. No applications have been received for a full year sabbatical during this period. Topics of recently awarded sabbaticals have included improving student success in the social sciences; culturally responsive approaches to teaching first-year writing; and long-term career outcomes of healthcare graduates.

Faculty Evaluation Processes

As with faculty development, faculty evaluation processes at ECC also follow a contractually generated handbook, the [Faculty Evaluation Handbook](#). Faculty are evaluated annually via processes overseen by the VP of TLSD and the faculty member's immediate supervising dean. Evaluation components vary based on assigned specialty (such as teaching faculty vs. librarian faculty) and employment status (such as full-time/tenured vs. full-time/non-tenured). ECC's current handbook was last reviewed during the fall 2025 and spring 2025 semesters.

Tenure Process. Part of the Faculty Evaluation Handbook is dedicated to articulating the tenure process for full-time faculty, which takes three years. Tenure committees consist of deans, instructional coordinators, and additional faculty members (one selected by the ECCFA and another by the dean). Faculty members serving on tenure committees must themselves hold tenure. Additional guidelines on eligibility, limits on the number of tenure committees a faculty member may serve on, meeting frequency, and required deadlines are outlined in the handbook. Following review, a summative recommendation is made to the

supervising dean first, then to the VP of TLSD, the President, and finally, to the Board. Approvals result in the granting of tenure; denials result in extension of probationary employment for one year or non-renewal of employment.

Evaluation Components for Full-Time Tenured and Adjunct Faculty. Tenured full-time faculty and unit adjunct are evaluated annually. The process for tenured faculty involves classroom observations (every three years), an Annual Self-Assessment Report, student course evaluations from every class within the 168-day contractual period (not included for library faculty), and one comprehensive in-person evaluation conference every three years.

Adjunct faculty are evaluated similarly but with classroom observations done more frequently (every year for Unit Adjunct I faculty and every two years for Unit Adjunct II faculty). Evaluations of librarian faculty follow the same pattern but with observations of work-related tasks and goals. Finally, Non-Unit Adjunct Faculty, or those who are new to ECC and not yet in the ECCFA unit, are evaluated every semester by deans.

Faculty observations (for in-person, online, and clinical observations for teaching faculty and for library faculty workplace and reference observations) involve a pre-conference between the observer and the observe to discuss goals, areas of interest for the faculty observee, and any questions about the observation form. The observation is then followed by a post-observation conference to discuss strengths and areas for improvement noted on the form.

The Annual Self-Assessment Report asks faculty to describe changes or improvements in their job functions, challenges encountered, participation in departmental/institutional routines, professional development activities, and intended changes. Faculty then receive feedback from their dean.

The College's evaluation processes are intended to support faculty in their growth and ensure that students receive an impactful education. During an evaluation, if faculty are found to need targeted support, the dean may recommend the faculty member collaborate with members of the dean's office on an improvement plan, participate in specific professional development opportunities (such as those offered by CETAL) in a group or one-on-one, recommend resources, assign the faculty member to a faculty mentor, or a combination of these strategies.

In addition to ensuring high educational standards and supporting faculty in professional growth through evaluation, the College also supports those carrying out evaluations to do so in an impactful and supportive way. To support those carrying out observations, CETAL regularly offers a two-week asynchronous course on Faculty Observation and Feedback, with the objectives being to: (1) identify the different stages in the faculty observation process; and (2) demonstrate strategies for completing the form (observers and observees) and provide constructive feedback. The course is designed to support observers in providing constructive feedback and to demystify the observation process. Those who are conducting observations for the first time are encouraged to complete the course prior to carrying out an observation. When most college courses transitioned to remote learning during the pandemic, the observation course was adjusted to provide guidance on carrying out virtual observations.

In spring 2022 and spring 2023, to support members of tenure committees in supporting

faculty in the tenure process, ECC administrators and faculty collaborated with an external consultant to develop and run a workshop series focused on promoting an Equitable Tenure Support series featuring three interrelated workshops:

- Part 1: Practices for Reducing the Influence of Bias on the Tenure Review Process
- Part 2: Guidelines for Shifting from Gatekeeping to Stewardship in the Tenure Process
- Part 3: Skills for Supporting Faculty Through the Tenure Review Process

To institutionalize the series in a more sustained way, future plans include revising the Equitable Tenure Support Series into a regularly offered asynchronous course.

Sources

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- 3C.05 Tested Experience Example, CDN230 (Videography), Elgin Community College, Fall 2021
- 3C.06 ECC Search Committee Guidelines Final 10172023
- 3C.08 Level 2 Hiring Workshop for Search Members and Chairs 4th edition October 2023
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3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

Argument

Commitment to Student Success

ECC demonstrates its commitment to student success by offering myriad student support services in-person, hybrid, and online. The Student Resource Guide and its associated webpage, updated each semester, serve as the primary reference for students to understand all of the academic, personal, and social supports available to them. The Student Services and Development (SSD) Division Annual Report details their usage and growth. In 2024-25, the SSD Division enrolled 17,161 students, conducted 17,780 academic advising sessions, and supported nearly 7,500 visits by students to the Spartan Food Pantry, to name a few. Related departments and offices also provide support services, as explained below.

Academic Advising. Academic and transfer advising are provided through the Student Success Center, a highly visible area near the main entrance, which also includes Career Development Services, Student Success Coaching, Transfer Services, and Wellness Services. In 2024-25, the Student Success Center conducted 17,780 advising sessions, delivered by fourteen academic advisors (11 full-time and 3 part-time) who meet students in-person, via phone, or Zoom at intake (via transcript reviews and placement test interpretations), supporting ongoing course selection, program/degree planning, and transfer guidance. Students are assigned a dedicated advisor who supports them throughout their entire ECC journey, and specialized advisors are designated for key populations, such as athletes, Adult Education/ESL students, dual credit students, and international students.

Guided by data from Ellucian CRM Advise and Self-Service Planning Module, advisors integrate multiple student touchpoints which includes degree planning tools and – in collaboration with deans and faculty – timely information on program requirements and transfer opportunities. In addition to meeting with students by appointment or drop-in, advisors participate in student activities and send monthly newsletters to their advisees.

As we have reported in prior HLC reports, ECC transitioned in 2014 from a faculty-led counseling advising model to a professional case management model, leading to gains in service delivery, shorter wait times, higher persistence and completion rates, and increased satisfaction. A hallmark of this switch was the creation of an advising syllabus that outlines best practices and learning outcomes across cognitive, behavioral, and values-based domains.

Transfer Services. Transfer Services, co-located in the Student Success Center, remains a

crucial support to advisors. Together with advisors, the Director of Transfer provides clear and structured pathways for students to continue their education beyond an associate degree. Reports from Illinois universities demonstrate that ECC transfers outperform transfers from other colleges (and even native students) when it comes to continued enrollment, GPAs, and baccalaureate attainment. In fact, ECC's 6-year baccalaureate attainment rate is a point of pride, and we maintain the highest number of university articulation agreements of all community colleges in the state. Presently, [ECC has 136 transfer agreements](#), including 2+2, 3+1, guaranteed admission to programs, on-campus partnerships, and scholarship agreements. In addition, the state maintains dozens of other agreements through the [Illinois Articulation Council](#). This office also organizes on-campus transfer events like State Universities Transfer Day, Private Colleges and Universities Transfer Fair, and coordinates campus visits in partnership with TRiO and Student Success Coaches.

Admissions and Registration. Admissions and enrollment information is available online and in-person at the Admissions and Registration Office to prospective enrollees and admitted students. This office monitors enrollment funnel metrics, such as inquiry-to-apply and apply-to-enroll conversion rates and persistence rates of the [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#). Bilingual staff assist students as they navigate admissions and enrollment processes, and all materials are available in Spanish, including [Steps to Enroll](#), [High School Visits – Parent Communication](#), and a [High School Visit Follow-Up – Parent Guide](#). Additionally, admissions and program presentations are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) via YouTube and in-person.

Childcare. ECC's [Early Childhood Lab School](#) holds the ExceleRate Illinois Silver Circle of Quality designation, a statewide recognition for excellence in early childhood education. The Lab School offers low cost, financial-aid eligible, full- and part-time early learning and preschool programs for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. It also serves as a clinical training site for students from the Early Childhood Education Program. Post-pandemic, the lab school's enrollment has rebounded to serve 86 clients and provide approximately 32,000 hours of daycare each fiscal year. Led by a director, five full-time lead teachers, one part-time teacher, six assistants, and student workers, the Lab School's curriculum is designed to support the holistic development of each child—nurturing physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth.

Career Development. ECC's Career Development Services offers one-on-one career identification and career search for ECC students and the [GSD-120 \(Exploring Careers and College Majors\)](#) course. This course, grounded in self-concept theory, is offered at no cost through Pathways-to-Careers and Perkins Grants. The office directly supports more than 800 students annually, many through our Career Assessment Package (CAP) resource, which provides in-depth Myers-Briggs (MBTI) and Strong Interest Inventory (SII) assessment and interpretation, to help students make informed decisions about college majors and careers. The office also helps students build resumes, prepare for interviews, and visits ECC classrooms with presentation topics.

Early Alert Program (Spartan Alert). Launched in 2015, Spartan Alert provides a mechanism for faculty to identify students who need additional support and connection to appropriate resources. Referrals are routed to academic advisors and wellness professionals (as appropriate). In 2025, more than 2,000 Spartan Alerts were issued by faculty to request just-in-time, tailored support, ranging from helping students set reminders for assignments

and exams to arranging for transportation through WOIA Grant funds (see Core Component 1A). The program has consistently shown positive impact since its inception, with referred students who follow through on their alerts earning higher GPAs and demonstrating stronger retention than students in similar circumstances who do not follow up. To support student success, and as a direct result of a high number of Spartan Alerts on the topic, ECC developed a self-guided time management resource sit, frequently used by students and staff supporting them (TRiO, Student Success Coaches and Academic Advisors). Additionally, Student Success Coaches have developed a suite of other core-skill resources. Resources for study skills, organization, and note-taking are the most popular among students.

Financial Aid and Literacy. ECC's Financial Aid and Scholarships Office supports students in a nationally recognized program called Financial Smarts. The program features:

- FAFSA workshops (8 per year)
- Financial Literacy 101 (online web course open to the public)
- Community and high school outreach (30+ events per year)

Success of the program is measured in several ways. First, since the 2010 implementation of mandatory individual student loan counseling, the College has decreased the number of ECC students with loans by 84% and its loan default rate from 20+% to just 2.5% today. Additionally, the College has doubled non-loan forms of aid (e.g., grants and scholarships) over this same period – from \$11.9M in 2010 to over \$20M today with an average award size increasing from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per student.

Library Services. Support provided by the Renner Academic Library is explained throughout this Assurance Argument. The library is a major gathering and learning place on campus which offers:

- 150 research databases available to students
- 301 research guides
- 68 public computers and two instructional classrooms
- Chromebooks, laptops, graphing calculators, and medical models for checkout
- Interlibrary loans and group study rooms
- Librarian support for referencing and research in-person, online and via phone

Student Success Coaches. Three full-time Student Success Coaches provide personalized, proactive, and comprehensive academic and social support with a goal of increasing course success and retention. Originally funded through federal coronavirus relief funds to for vulnerable students (i.e., low-income students, students of color, and students in developmental education courses), the coaching program was permanently institutionalized post-pandemic due to its success. In 2024-25, the College conducted 5,028 individual coaching sessions, 40 classroom presentations, and seven college workshops. Two years ago, the SSD Division launched a pilot program to embed Student Success Coaches into key developmental literacy classes (LTC-099), which last year expanded to include

developmental math (MTH-090). While pilot results are not yet definitive, they suggest similarly high rates of course success and retention as noted during the pandemic rollout.

Student Access and Disability Services. This Access and Disability Services Office at ECC coordinates accommodations for students with physical, cognitive, and socioemotional disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the College's [AP 3-501 \(Individuals with Disabilities\)](#). A growing number of ECC students (currently around 700 per year) depend on these services. Led by a director, a coordinator for assistive testing and technology, and two accessibility specialists, the office provides accessible testing, online learning support, and coordination with the Testing Center and faculty. This office also advises the ADAPT Club and participates in [Equity Plan](#) initiatives around neurodiversity, such as Universal Design.

Student Life. The Student Experience and Engagement Center enhances the student experience, one of ECC's Annual College Goals, by providing cocurricular experiences to complement academic learning. Through its Office of Student Life and First Year Programs, the Center hosts hundreds of annual events to foster belonging, leadership development, and community engagement. Most students participate in the Center in some way, and we continue to improve participation tracking with the [ECCExperience mobile app](#). In 2024-25, the Center logged 24,777 individual interactions, and Spartan Leaders – students who assist the Center with programming activities – outperform non-participating classmates in both cumulative GPAs and credit hour completion. The Center regularly uses student feedback to assess and improve its programming through the [Current Student Survey](#), which is explained later in Core Component 3C. Additionally, the Spartan Pantry, which is supported by a partnership with the Northern Illinois Food Bank, continues to meet students' needs for food and personal items, experiencing a 26% increase in visits from 2023-24 to 2024-25, which follows a 24% increase the year prior. Recently, the Center expanded its engagement efforts to include students in our Adult Basic Education Program. As a pre-collegiate program, students in Adult Education tend to congregate by themselves in early evenings, when most of their classes are offered, so networking efforts like the Center's Ice Cream Social and Hot Chocolate Bar are helping to bridge the divide between them and degree-seeking students. On average, these monthly events welcome between 150-280 students per event.

Veterans. ECC supports military-connected students (both veterans and their family members) through a dedicated advisor, a [Veterans Resource Center](#) (opened 2017), boots-to-books transition workshops, the student-veteran club Military Branches United (MBU) and the SALUTE National Honor Society, which inducts new, high-performing students into its ranks each semester. The College continues to be recognized as a Military Friendly School and Spouse Institution by *G.I. Jobs* magazine.

Men of Color. ECC houses a chapter of the Chicago-area [TRIUMPH](#) mentoring program, which aims to improve retention and graduation rates of racially minoritized men through intentional engagement and check-ins. Workshops in the program focus on topics such as time management, professional networking and relationship-building, and community volunteering. The program is supported by a dedicated coordinator who provides individualized support and coaching to the young men, organizes activities, and matches students to mentors from the community. Last year, TRIUMPH students volunteered for the Feed My Starving Children International Program and served as mentors themselves for local elementary school children through the Brothers Rise Up Program.

Athletics. ECC offers five campus sports for men and four for women, including baseball, basketball, tennis, golf, soccer, softball, and volleyball. Student athletes have their own specially trained academic advisor, and as a requirement to play, must participate in the Athletes Committed to Excellence (ACE) Program, which includes mandatory advising and study hours. ECC student athletes do well, on average, academically. In 2024-25, the average GPA among student athletes increased from 2.49 to 2.69, and in the spring 2025 term, the average was 2.89--which is the highest semester average in four years. In fall 2024, 58 student athletes qualified for academic honors (Honors, Dean's, and President's List), and 66 qualified in the spring 2025 term.

Testing. The ECC Testing Center administers over 30,000 tests annually, including placement, CLEP, CASAS testing, course exams (make up exams and accommodated exams for students with disabilities), and certification and proficiency exams. Workshops and prep materials support academic success, and the office uses RegisterBlast to streamline appointments and reminders. The department continues to expand its services to meet the College and community needs. Last year, the Center added Python IT and the Illinois State Fire Marshal Certification Exams to its list of tests, and it also introduced a partnership with ECC's Alliance for College and Career Student Success (ACCSS) to bring high school students to campus for placement testing to accelerate their ECC admissions process.

TRiO. The TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) program supports 362 underrepresented students (e.g., first generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities) in overcoming barriers to success. By providing personalized support, tutoring, career guidance, financial literacy education, and transfer assistance, TRiO empowers students to thrive at ECC and beyond. Targeted services and resources offered by TRiO help students build confidence, achieve goals, and prepare for future success. During the 2024–2025 academic year, TRiO SSS and Transfer Services offered transfer tours that supported students' transitions to four-year institutions.

Tutoring and Learning Support. The Tutoring Center (all disciplines), the Write Place (writing), and the Math Lab (math) hosts 10,500 visits (1,800 unique students) each year through in-person and online support from professional tutors. Tutoring is free and offered six days a week across five physical locations and also live and asynchronously seven days a week. Research shows the benefit tutoring provides. As of July 2025, TRiO students who attend tutoring two or more times over the course of an academic year earn higher GPAs than students who do not attend tutoring (2.97 vs. 2.80 on average). Further, post-usage surveys show that students feel tutoring helps them achieve course learning outcomes (CLOs) at 91% of respondents and gain confidence in their abilities (88% of respondents).

Wellness Services. Founded in 2015, the Wellness Services Office uses a holistic model based on eight wellness dimensions (intellectual, emotional, physical, social, occupational, financial, environmental, and spiritual). The office of four licensed professional counselors provides short-term counseling, at least three support groups per semester, seminars, and referrals to community resources. Wellness partnerships include the UWill direct support and referral hotline for 24-hour support, multiple community partnerships, free online mental health screenings, and *Campus Well*, an online wellness magazine. The office leads ECC's Mental Health First Aid Training Program and is re-engaging a Peer Support Program.

Workforce Development. ECC's Workforce Development Office provides myriad supports for

1,300 students each year – including unemployment and under-employment services, direct funds for emergency needs (e.g., textbooks, transportation, and testing fees), and referrals to external employers and services. Since 2023, every student in the department's multiple grant programs -- WIOA, ICAPS, Apprenticeship, Internship, and Job Shadowing programs -- has been assigned an educational concierge navigator who guides them from career exploration through enrollment, program navigation, and onto completion. The department strategically leverages funding (which we call “braided funding”) to provide targeted assistance for the most in-need students. Most staff in this department are grant-funded. Within the office, the Strategic Partnerships and Experiential Learning Division launched in 2019 to expand work-based learning through US Department of Labor-approved apprenticeships offered in eight fields (CNC machining, HVAC, industrial maintenance technology, accounting, culinary arts, firefighting, paramedic/EMT, and basic nurse assistant). Students receive tuition-free training, full-time employment, and benefits, while employers fund all academic expenses. More recently, we have seen enrollment growth in our “Seven (7) Days to a Career” Pre-Apprenticeships where students obtain their first professional certificates to be hire-ready.

Teaching and Learning for Student Success. The Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, Assessment, & Learning (CETAL) offers workshops, training modules, and one-on-one support focused on evidence-based teaching practices and student engagement strategies. CETAL's resources are closely aligned with institutional goals for equity, inclusion, and student success, ensuring faculty are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of learners. Recent CETAL programs include Supporting Multilingual Students; Artificial Intelligence in Action; and Universal Design with Yuja Panorama, which is co-led by the Access and Disability Services Office. In 2024-25, 259 employees participated in CETAL programming, primarily faculty and instructional staff. Working closely with CETAL, ECC's Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Department and a team of instructional technologists oversees the College's relationship with Brightspace D2L, our learning management system. All ECC courses are required to use D2L in some way to supplement their teaching and assessment practices. At a minimum, faculty include their contact information and syllabus in course shells. Beyond that, CETAL offers a two-part training from Quality Matters on creating and delivering online content.

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3.E. Assessment of Student Learning

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

Argument

In 2021, ECC faculty on the Student Learning Assessment and Advisory Committee (SLAAC) and those working on our *Advancing Equity through the Assessment of Student Learning* Quality Initiative crafted the College's Assessment Philosophy Statement:

“Outcomes assessment at ECC is an ongoing, collective process of examining student learning for the purpose of improving learning for all student groups.

Meaningful and effective outcomes assessment involves understanding the mental models through which we view student learning, nurturing curiosity, collaborating within and across departments to develop methods to measure student progress towards course, program, and general education learning outcomes, and engaging in productive dialogue with each other to identify impactful adjustments to instruction and curriculum.”

This powerful statement guides institutional decision-making and ensures that resources and operations are coordinated collectively to support the improvement of student learning through assessment.

Learning Outcomes Types

As explained in Core Component 3A, the College's outcomes for student learning exist at multiple levels: courses (CLOs), programs (PLOs), general education (GELOs), and co-curricular experiences (CCLOs). Outcomes are defined, maintained, and reviewed by faculty and then discussed, affirmed, revised, and approved through the work of SLAAC, the Curriculum Committee, and during program reviews.

GELOs at ECC are intended to be “institutional,” in that all students, regardless of program, learn and grow with GELOs during their entire time at ECC. GELOs include: Communication, Critical Thinking, Global and Multicultural Literacy, Information Literacy, Quantitative Literacy, and Scientific Literacy. In addition, PLOs at ECC define what students know and can do at the end of a program or a sequence of courses. Finally, CCLOs reflect guiding statements about how experiential learning opportunities inform, align to, and impact both GELOs and PLOs.

Processes for Assessing Student Learning

The College improves educational programs through its assessment practices. Processes are detailed on the Course Assessment Process page of the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, Assessment, and Learning (CETAL) website – including outcomes and their corresponding courses, methods used to collect student artifacts, methods to evaluate student work, analysis and reporting of results, the identification and deployment of changes

made from analysis, and documentation in Learning Improvement Reports (LIRs). As explained in our 2025 Quality Initiative (QI), CETAL and Faculty Assessment Liaisons lend support as their fellow faculty carry out assessment projects, and the Manager of Outcomes Assessment (MOA) assists by organizing data collection and documentation efforts.

Planning and reporting cycles are well established at ECC. Each academic year, ECC programs are asked to conduct at least one course assessment project under the leadership of their faculty instructional coordinators or program directors ([see ECCFA/Board Contract, p. 82 with compensation explained in Appendix B-7](#)). Information is entered into [fillable LIR templates](#) with specific due dates. Section 1 (Plan and Alignment) is due at the end of the semester preceding the assessment project (May 15 for fall projects and December 15 for spring projects); and Sections 2 (Assessment Results) and 3 (Learning Improvement Plan) are submitted after artifacts and assessment results have been gathered, analyzed, and interpreted:

Learning Improvement Reports	Plans Due (Section 1)	Reports Due (Sections 2 & 3)
Reviewing Student Work in Fall	May 15	May 15
Reviewing Student Work in Spring	December 15	October 15

To keep the cycle on track, the MOA sends reminders of upcoming deadlines and recently received reports to deans. As a new process, completed LIRs are reviewed on a regular basis by SLAAC. Feedback [is summarized](#) and sent to the author of the report. Completed LIRs are stored on a common Google Drive and available to all employees. A [CETAL resource page](#) provides more detail and sample LIRs for faculty to reference and model.

LIR Features and Details

During program reviews, faculty create [five-year course assessment schedules](#) to help plan and prepare their assessment projects. Processes for selecting courses and specific CLOs are carried out collaboratively among department faculty. Faculty also jointly determine assessment methods (e.g., exams, projects, etc.); student artifacts that integrate with GELOs; and standards of achievement (i.e., levels of performance to know whether students approach, meet, or exceed expectations) for particular course assignments and activities. For instance, the Nursing faculty note [in their findings](#) that while most students in the Pharmacology course excelled in core concepts and students most struggled in expected, more complicated topics, faculty noted the benefit of additional learning reinforcement on select topics.

LIRs are also vital for understanding GELOs. When faculty complete LIRs, they are asked to denote which GELOs (and sublevels of GELOs) align to the course itself and to measurement tools used for evaluation. For instance, a 2024 [LIR in SPN-201](#) (Intermediate Spanish) noted alignment between a class assignment and individual components of the Communication, Critical Thinking, and Global and Multicultural Literacy outcomes. Each

year, SLAAC selects two GELOs to study in detail and create a data brief. GELOs chosen in the 2023-24 academic year included Critical Thinking and Information Literacy, two areas where the College receives large numbers of artifacts and, thus, strong evidence of student learning. In fact, that year, faculty found that 54% of student artifacts exceeded expectations. The process of reviewing GELOs through their alignment to CLOs has led to a significant increase in the volume of data SLAAC reviews – moving from hundreds to thousands – as shown in this table. By a large majority, the Communication outcome is supported the most (over 19,000 elements assessed), followed by Critical Thinking. Scientific Literacy has the lowest volume of assessments and SLAAC is discussing how to encourage more. These tabulated figures were also reported in the 2025 QI Report (p. 4) and will be monitored moving forward.

Quality Initiative

To increase faculty involvement, streamline processes and reduce logistical barriers, increase the number of artifacts assessed, and mediate equity gaps in learning, the College proposed its Quality Initiative (QI) in spring 2021. Upon approval by HLC, work began in fall 2021 and continues to date; in June 2025, we finalized our report, showing how the initiative allowed us to:

- infuse strategy into the assessment of course outcomes processes
- ensure consistent planning and accountability
- expand and promote professional development
- enhance assessment and data collection tools

To accomplish these goals, the College created interdisciplinary cohorts of faculty. Continuing to date, these cohorts meet four consecutive semesters to compile and discuss learning outcomes, collaboratively interpret success data, engage in faculty development around equity, and build strategies to reduce equity gaps. Up to five ECC courses are included in each cohort with goals to:

- choose an outcome or outcomes to assess
- determine the best method for assessing the outcome(s)
- carry out the assessment
- interpret aggregate and disaggregated results
- identify interventions needed to close equity gaps or other needs
- implement the intervention

Accomplishments of the QI

As we state in our 2025 report, the QI positively reinvigorated campus-wide support around assessment and helped us accomplish four initiative goals:

1. Broaden faculty participation in assessment

2. Increase responsibility for SLAAC
3. Renew the focus on data
4. Renew focus on teaching and curricular changes

First, the QI led to increased faculty participation. Three (3) faculty leadership roles created through the QI include: Faculty Cohort Leads, Faculty Course Leads, and Faculty Assessment Liaisons.

- Cohort Leads are faculty who support interdisciplinary cohorts through the four-semester duration.
- Course Leads coordinate analysis and discussion of CLOs among faculty teaching the same course.
- Assessment Liaisons are members of SLAAC who previously served as Cohort Leads and assist current Cohort and Course Leads in their work with departments. They help identify CLOs for in-depth focus, plan assessment activities, interpret results from Tableau dashboards, help faculty complete their LIRs, and help identify change interventions

From fall 2021 through spring 2025, eight faculty served as Cohort Leads and 31 as Course Leads. Together they represent 27 academic departments. Meanwhile, 133 faculty members have participated in specific course assessment projects.

Secondly, the QI reenergized SLAAC as a support and leadership body for faculty. While SLAAC has existed for many years at ECC, the committee's roles and responsibilities were refreshed and reaffirmed following our 2019 Assurance Filing. In 2020, faculty on SLAAC, the MOA, and the Associate VP of TLSD formed an ad-hoc Assessment Strategy Team (AST) to plan and prepare the work needed for the QI and Monitoring Report. Comprised of faculty and administrators, AST supported the College in reinvigorating wider faculty involvement in assessment; established a vital link between assessment and equity mindedness; increased the volume of student artifacts; and advanced systems for tracking and reporting GELO and CLO data. It carried out each of these tasks between 2021 and 2024, and dissolved in Fall 2024, and transitioned its responsibilities to the longstanding SLAAC group.

Both the QI and the Monitoring Report coincided with our launch of the ECC Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2027 and became the primary means by which we operationalized our then-new Key Imperative on Teaching and Learning Excellence and Annual College Goal on Mastery of Learning Outcomes. Compensation for Cohort Leads, Course Leads, and Faculty Assessment Liaisons were negotiated that same year and set into the ECCFA/Board contract. Cohort Leads and Liaisons receive the voluntary overload rate of 3 contract hours per semester (\$3,000). Faculty Course Leads are paid up to 18 hours per semester at the hourly rate negotiated in Lane 2-Step 2 of the salary schedule (\$56.89 for fiscal year 2025, see ECCFA/Board contract). This compensation is managed within the CETAL budget, and allocated dollars have exceeded \$200,000 from fiscal year 2022 to date.

The College also made important structural reorganizations. The MOA, who had previously reported to the Associate VP of TLSD, was moved to the CETAL (which had previously been

called CETL) to forge a link between assessment and faculty development. Additionally, stronger partnerships with the IR and Distance Learning Offices were established to familiarize faculty with data and assessment tools within Tableau and Brightspace D2L. Lastly, the new role of Faculty Assessment Liaison was created from a suggestion by Cohort Leads early on to provide added support to departments who were not currently involved in an assessment cohort but who may still benefit from outside faculty expertise in outcomes assessment.

A third goal accomplished by the QI is renewing faculty use of data and an expanded focus on data literacy in general. In turn, the IR Office has made assessment dashboards accessible to all with ECC login credentials. When assessment data is fed into Tableau, it creates important conditions for data literacy to flourish. First, it populates both CLOs and GELOs at the same time, and based on this, faculty can “play with” these visualizations to ask (and answer) important questions. Secondly, Tableau ensures data remain filterable and not masked/skewed by population (e.g., student age, race/ethnicity, gender, etc.). This is important for overall validity, integrity, and buy-in. Third, having data in Tableau ensures that standard definitions of metrics are known, such that when faculty decide a student approaches, meets, or exceeds expectations, they agree upon those levels mean. Finally, having faculty examine assessment data through a lens of equity naturally invites curiosity about disaggregated data. In fact, to date, faculty have focused attention on courses with the highest equity gaps and lowest overall success. Twelve (12) of the College’s twenty highest-enrolled courses are included in the QI, reflecting 40% of all enrollments at ECC. Further, of the top 20 highest-enrolled courses, 73% considered especially challenging (with success rates below 76%) have been examined and discussed in faculty cohorts so far.

One example of faculty making use of disaggregated data to inform curricular changes comes from the Economics Program ([ECON 201 Learning Improvement Report](#)), where faculty note that students who are English Language Learners are, at times, less successful in course activities involving CLOs than native English speakers. In response, faculty create vocabulary sheets to define key terms that may be confused or misinterpreted. To further support faculty in analyzing disaggregated outcomes, SLAAC plans to update the LIR form to provide examples of how disaggregated results can be used for learning improvements. Another challenge is streamlining how data gets into Tableau in the first place. One technique we are currently troubleshooting is a grading tool within Brightspace D2L that exports export data from departments into Tableau according to consistent timelines.

Finally, the fourth goal of the QI was to make the entire assessment process more impactful for teaching and learning. Dashboards, LIRs, and cohort activities prompt faculty to reflect deeply and meaningfully on their course design choices, and they have piloted new curricular practices in big and small ways. Several curricular changes, either recommended or implemented by the QI, include:

- Creating a matrix to map program and course outcomes with lesson modules, book chapters, and assignments ([ACC 100 Program Alignment](#))
- Recommending MLA citations be more actively integrated into online English courses (refer to [LIR for English Composition](#))
- Creating/solidifying an English Program Assessment Committee (EPAC)

- Rewriting of course learning outcomes and revising exams and quizzes to align to new outcomes
- Scaffolding assignments into multiple parts
- Revising grading schemes
- Revising common department assignments to include more depth and better alignment to CLOs and their complexity
- Inspiring discussions about which students use the Math Lab and ways to further promote the Math Lab to match individual student's learning needs
- Leading individual faculty to create and use a rubric and grading criteria for the first time
- Creating glossaries of key terms to share with students prior to beginning each course unit
- Revising quizzes for digital accessibility
- Revising summative assignments to allow students to choose how they would like to demonstrate their learning (e.g., presentations, essays, etc.)
- Revising course assignments using a Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) approach to clarify the purpose, steps, and criteria

Cocurricular Learning Outcomes (CCLOs)

As stated in Core Component 3A, the College has experienced renewed interest in cocurricular experiences as means to enhance student learning. A definition of cocurriculars vs. extra-curriculars appears on the CETAL website. Criteria for being a cocurricular program at ECC are that the program:

- Is a structured learning opportunity beyond the classroom
- Includes a defined subsets of students (students register for the program rather than a general attendee event)
- Develops students' skills across GELOs and enhances employability
- Does not count for college credit or apply towards graduation
- Provides opportunities to measure student learning

As with PLOs, CCLOs are overseen by particular service areas. As these areas undergo program review, they define and document their student learning outcomes for various student activities and distinguish them from purpose/mission and goals statements. Student learning outcomes in cocurricular areas are communicated within department reports, websites, brochures, and in LIRs. In 2023, for example, the Honors Committee, in reflecting upon student artifacts, noted in its Honors Committee LIR (p.2, Section 2D, Analysis), that one of its student learning outcomes (the outcome pertaining to researching, analyzing,

synthesizing, and sharing findings from a range of materials) elicited high ratings from faculty on students' ability to analyze research from gathered sources but low ratings on students' ability to find credible sources to begin with. The committee concludes it needs to strengthen students' skills at discerning sources.

Areas of Focus for Continued Impact in Outcomes Assessment

As the QI continues to unfold on campus and as TLSD, CETAL, and SLAAC look back on the QI's successes, we recognize important next steps to be addressed. First, we intend to strengthen internal communications around assessment itself – reiterating and demystifying the process; providing concrete examples where available; and celebrating work already done. Second, we intend to build flexibility in our planning/reporting cycles for departments to study long-term student growth and the impact of curricular changes made. Third, we plan to continue to invest in faculty development and leadership around course assessment and the communication of course assessment results found in LIRs. In sum, we envision the following as next steps in 2026:

- Strengthen the assessment culture around CLOs through centralized communication to participants at multiple points, like what we have done with faculty cohorts under the QI
- Provide examples to faculty of what success looks like at all levels of the assessment cycle – CLOs, GELOs, PLOs, and CCLOs
- Create and maintain a common site for due dates and reminders with help from academic deans' offices
- Facilitate interdisciplinary conversations about student learning
- Further clarify SLAAC's role in reviewing LIRs and noting themes across outcomes assessment activities
- Improve the LIR form itself (reverting to Word/GoogleDoc format instead of Sheets)

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3.F. Program Review

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

Argument

Program Review

ECC uses a rolling five-year cycle to review instructional programs and student service areas. As outlined by the ICCB, the primary goals of the program review process are to:

- support strategic campus-level planning and decision-making related to instructional programming and academic support services, including but not limited to program revisions, program closures, and revisions to services;
- address inequities to support program improvement;
- support the delivery of locally responsive, cost-effective, high-quality programs and services across Illinois' community college system.

The ICCB process is overseen by faculty instructional coordinators in academic programs and directors in the SSD Division. ECC's Manager of Outcomes Assessment (MOA) organizes, guides and supports their work. During an academic year when reviews are compiled, programs participate in various preparatory exercises to engage in self-study. Topics include an examination of progress towards prior goals; understanding changes made to the curriculum, student learning outcomes, and assessment methods; a thorough analysis of program enrollment, labor market trends, and cost/efficiency/affordability returns; and finally, reflection on program quality, equity, and upcoming goals. Resources and the five-year schedule are available on the CETAL website.

To start this process, instructional coordinators, program directors, deans and associate deans attend a workshop to discuss activities, resources, and timelines. Instructional coordinators receive a stipend for facilitating this work, and all faculty are expected to participate. The Institutional Research Office aids in accessing and analyzing data needed to complete sections of the report related to enrollment and success. Upon completion by instructional coordinators, worksheets are reviewed by the dean or associate dean. The MOA and the Curriculum Specialist then use these responses to build the report in the ICCB report template. Language is edited and condensed for clarity, succinctness, tone/voice, and style. Once finalized, the department's report is again shared with the instructional coordinator and dean for final approval.

Final reports are sent to the ICCB each year by the September 1 deadline. Each year's report and materials are archived in a Google drive, and a summary of needs and opportunities is prepared for the Board of Trustees and the President's Cabinet. After the September Board meeting, the report is posted to the College's external website although we are currently challenged with the rigid format of the ICCB mandated template to meet ECC's ADA standards for document accessibility. Recent communications with ICCB about

this issue give us hope that next year's manual will offer solutions.

ECC embraces a continuous improvement mindset; to this end, program reviews offer a holistic overview of needed changes for improvement. Examples of changes identified through reviews include the withdrawal of old courses, updating of prerequisites for existing courses, changing proficiency codes, edits to course descriptions and learning outcomes, or new avenues for research or inquiry. At the request of ECC programs participating in the 2025 cohort, a feedback survey was created by CETAL to collect perspectives about what worked well, what needs improvement, and ideas to strengthen the process. Additionally, the MOA and the Dean of Sustainability, Business and Career Technologies are members of statewide panels to reshape processes for the 2026 cycle.

Curriculum Committee and Cross-Functional Review Team

The College's curriculum is overseen by two distinct and complementary bodies:

- The Curriculum Committee is a faculty-led governance committee responsible for formal review of all curricular changes to programs and courses, including those which are new, modified, or deleted.
- The Cross-Functional Review Team (CFRT) is an operational team that conducts a comprehensive pre-review of all curricular proposals before they advance to the Curriculum Committee.

The Curriculum Committee, guided by formal by-laws, ensures that all curricular actions at ECC align to ICCB standards, transfer requirements, and graduation criteria. In addition, the committee relies on orientation/onboarding materials. Curriculum development and revision begin at the program level and follow six structured and collaborative phases of work:

1. Program/Department Discussion and Consensus. Faculty or program teams identify a needed curricular change (stemming from prior review findings, assessment results, student feedback, advisory committee input, or industry trends). The proposed change is discussed within the program.
2. Proposal Initiation in CurricUNET. Once departmental consensus is reached, the faculty initiator consults with the Curriculum Office (in the TLSD Division) for procedural guidance and then enters the proposal into CurricUNET, ECC's electronic curriculum management platform.
3. Department Approval. The proposal is first reviewed and approved by the instructional coordinator and then by the dean of the department.
4. Cross-Functional Review Team (CFRT) Review. Before being placed on the Curriculum Committee agenda, proposals undergo review by the CFRT, which includes representatives from Academic Advising, Enrollment Services/Registrar, Assessment, and the Curriculum Office. This team examines each proposal for operational feasibility, assessment alignment, and implications for student services. The CFRT helps the initiator with this impact analysis and gathering feedback from potentially affected programs prior to advancing the proposal. The CFRT also helps the initiator prepare for a presentation at a Curriculum Committee meeting.

5. Curriculum Committee Review. The Curriculum Committee conducts its reviews in two phases. First, the initiator (or a well-informed designee) presents the proposal at the Curriculum Committee meeting. Committee members provide feedback, ask questions, and may request additional evidence or clarification. No vote is taken at this stage. Second, after responding to feedback and making any necessary revisions, the initiator presents the updated proposal for formal action. At this stage, the Curriculum Committee votes to approve or return the proposal for further work.
6. Final Institutional Approval. Once approved by the Curriculum Committee, proposals are forwarded to the Vice President of Teaching, Learning, and Student Development (VP of TLSD) for final institutional approval and submission to the ICCB and/or the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and HLC, as required.

Review Content: What's Considered?

Faculty-led program reviews serve as a mechanism to drive continuous improvement and are based on close examination of enrollment trends, student learning outcomes, completion rates, transfer data, and labor market needs. Several sources of information are considered, as detailed below.

Advisory Committees and External Stakeholder Input. In alignment with ICCB requirements, all career and technical education (CTE) programs maintain active advisory committees to ensure that the College's curriculum remains responsive to current workforce needs. Advisory committees consist of local industry professionals, employers, and business leaders whose organizations hire ECC graduates. Committee members provide input on curricular changes, emerging industry trends, potential skill gaps, and graduate competencies. The formation, membership, meeting frequency, and agendas for each committee are managed at the departmental level by the instructional coordinator. To ensure institutional accountability and compliance with ICCB guidelines, documentation of advisory committee meetings – including agendas, minutes, and attendance rosters – is required. All committee materials are stored in a central location in the TLSD Division, and a detailed discussion of ECC's use of advisory committees appears later in Core Component 3F.

Credit for Prior Learning and Third-Party Validation. The College maintains a formal, faculty-led process for awarding credit for prior learning, ensuring that credit granted outside of traditional instruction aligns with ECC's academic standards and curriculum integrity. [AP 1-101 \(Credit for Learning Experiences Other than Formal Instruction\)](#) explains the evaluation and use of third parties for credit, including Advanced Placement (AP) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) assessments.

Faculty play a central role in determining whether and how credit is awarded. When awarding credit industry-recognized certifications, ECC defers to external accrediting and regulatory bodies. For non-accredited programs, faculty assess equivalency by matching third-party course outcomes to ECC's outcomes and departmental expertise. Credits awarded for AP and CLEP exams, including minimum score requirements and aligned ECC course equivalents, are published on the [Testing Office webpage](#). When new or revised AP exams are introduced, the Curriculum Office works with instructional coordinators and subject-matter faculty to review content changes and determine appropriate course alignments. This process reflects ECC's ongoing responsiveness to national assessment reforms and reinforces the College's commitment to maintaining integrity of its credit

evaluation practices.

In addition to supporting outbound transfer, the College maintains continually evolving transfer processes for students bringing credits to ECC from other institutions. These processes ensure transparency, consistency, and alignment with institutional and discipline-specific standards. [ECC's transfer credit policies](#) are publicly available on elgin.edu so that transferring students can anticipate how their prior coursework will be reviewed, applied toward an ECC program, and how the Student Success Center can offer support.

Additionally, ECC recently launched a [Transferology landing page](#) in partnership with Illinois MyCreditsTransfer. ECC is the first Illinois community college to implement this functionality, which allows prospective and current students to assess in real time how credits from other institutions apply to ECC programs. All transcripts are reviewed using established criteria that include accreditation status of the sending institution, course content and level, and grade earned.

Transfer Services. As explained in Core Component 3D, the Transfer Services Office maintains up-to-date course equivalency information with ECC's top transfer partners through institutional guides and shared statewide tools. The College encourages students to use Transferology.com also, and, in fact, several university partners, including the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), require Transferology as part of their Transfer Admissions Guarantee (TAG) programs. Northern Illinois University (NIU), ECC's most frequent transfer destination, also maintains equivalency and major guides for ECC students. Similarly, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) provides an interactive transfer guide to support ECC student transfer planning.

For Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) courses and other ECC transfer course articulations, formal review processes are followed. IAI courses are submitted by the designated institutional liaison to the respective IAI panel and ECC transfer courses are evaluated via [Form 13 submissions](#) sent to Illinois public and selected private institutions for equivalency determination. Responses are recorded and maintained in CurricUNET. At least three responses/signatures from Illinois public institutions are required for each course articulation. Additionally, signatures are rearticulated every five years within the ICCB program review process to ensure they remain current.

ECC maintains [articulation agreements](#) with multiple institutions to create seamless transfer pathways for associate in arts, associate of science, and career-technical education (CTE) degree holders. Recent examples include: (1) University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC), which allows ECC students to transfer up to 70 credits toward UMGC bachelor's programs, with guaranteed admission and a 25% tuition discount; and (2) NIU and Western Illinois University (WIU), which allows ECC students in the Criminal Justice AAS program to complete a transfer pathway. A full list of active CTE-related partnerships is listed online on the [Career and Technical Degree Partnerships page](#).

ECC follows a structured process for establishing articulation agreements. In most cases, baccalaureate institutions initiate partnership proposals which are reviewed by ECC faculty and academic leadership. The general process includes: (1) Initial partnership inquiry and review of existing agreements; (2) Meetings with university representatives to assess alignment; (3) Legal review by the General Counsel; (4) Finalization of agreement language and leadership signatures; and (5) Communication and dissemination of the new partnership. Agreements are reviewed either on a scheduled basis, especially for

on-campus partnerships, or in response to curriculum changes, particularly in CTE pathways.

Finally, ECC integrates transfer into academic advising and communications with students. Advisors are trained to use equivalency tools such as Transferology and internal transfer resource guides. Guides are regularly updated for the College's top transfer institutions: NIU, UIC, UIUC, and Illinois State University (ISU). During advising appointments, students are introduced to these resources to inform transfer planning.

Development of New Programs

ECC ensures new programs are academically rigorous and aligned with the institutional mission, student needs, and industry trends. All new programs follow a three-phase model, detailed in the [Program Development Guidelines](#) and [Program Development Plan Template](#).

Program Development Planning. Program development begins with a feasibility study, which includes analysis of labor market data, consultation with external stakeholders, and alignment with ECC's strategic priorities. A program design and financial impact analysis is also conducted with feedback from the Budget Council and Cabinet before advancing. Once the program concept is approved, the proposed curriculum undergoes the internal approval process outlined earlier in Core Component 3F. Finally, following approvals, the program enters the implementation phase, which includes course setup, degree audit configuration, internal communications to stakeholders, and targeted program promotion to students and community partners.

Three recent examples illustrate ECC's commitment to responsive and evidence-based program development:

- [Cybersecurity Certificate Program](#). In response to shifting industry expectations, ECC identified a regional workforce gap for IT security roles that required less than a bachelor's degree. In collaboration with the Computer Information Sciences (CIS) Advisory Committee and multiple industry experts, ECC designed a stackable Cybersecurity Vocational Certificate that articulates directly into the existing CIS degree program. Since its launch, the curriculum has undergone several updates, incorporating emerging content areas like cloud computing and AI applications, based on ongoing advisory committee input. Since 2022, seven students have successfully completed this program.
- [Supply Chain Management \(SCM\) Program](#). To address regional employer needs in logistics, warehousing, and supply chain operations, ECC developed the SCM degree within the Business Program. Input was gathered from logistics companies, warehouse employers, and four-year university partners to design a program that supports both incumbent workers and students wishing to transfer for baccalaureate study. The SCM Advisory Committee continues to inform program improvements based on technological advancements, automation trends, and post-pandemic shifts in the supply chain industry. Since 2022, 13 students have successfully completed this program – three earning an AAS in Supply Chain Management and ten earning the Basic Vocational Certificate in Supply Chain and Logistics Specialist.
- [Recovery Support Specialist Program \(RSS\)](#). In response to a growing regional and

statewide demand for peer support professionals in mental health and substance use recovery fields, ECC developed the Recovery Support Specialist (RSS) Basic Vocational Certificate Program in 2022. Guided by input from the Human Services Advisory Committee and funded through an Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) grant, ECC became one of the first community colleges in Illinois to offer this program. The RSS curriculum was designed to equip students with the competencies needed to support individuals in recovery from mental health and substance use disorders, including those with dual diagnoses. Drawing on feedback from community partners and state workforce agencies, this program emphasizes theoretical knowledge and practical skills, preparing graduates for certification and immediate entry into the workforce. Since 2022, 69 students have completed this program.

Consistency of Course Quality Across Modalities

Another way the College ensures compliance with Core Component 3F lies in how it ensures academic rigor across modalities, locations, and other differentiating factors. All ECC courses are aligned to established student learning outcomes and master course outlines, and all adhere to clearly defined instructional standards and contractually negotiated expectations. Expectations related to course development, instructional quality, and delivery modalities (e.g., face-to-face, asynchronous online, synchronous online, and hybrid courses) are codified in the Faculty/Board Contract and the [Faculty Evaluation Handbook](#), which is also a product of negotiations. [Course Success Dashboards](#) reveal that asynchronous sections generally have slightly lower overall success but not uniformly.

With regard to high schools as institutional locations, ECC maintains formal [Memoranda of Understanding \(MOUs\)](#) with partner districts to ensure alignment with our institutional standards. Course success data consistently demonstrates strong outcomes for dual credit students, and the table below provides a snapshot of an internal dashboard comparing success rates for dual credit courses taught on campus and in high schools against non-dual credit offerings. For additional information on quality control mechanisms specific to dual credit instruction, please refer to Core Component 3A.

Communications and Behavioral Sciences Division Courses from FY2020 to FY2025:

	Success Rate (Course Grades of A, B, or C)	
	2022-23	2023-24
All Students	74%	74%
Dual Credit on Campus	94%	92%

Dual Credit in High Schools	96%	93%
Non-Dual Credit Students	71%	72%

Faculty Qualifications and Training for Online Instruction

To ensure instructional quality, faculty assigned to teach online for the first time must meet minimum professional development requirements. They include successful completion of ECC-provided workshops – such as *Techniques for Managing the Enhanced Classroom* and *Online Instruction and Assessment Practices* – or recognized external certification programs (e.g., Quality Matters, Illinois Online Network). Alternatively, faculty may demonstrate equivalent experience with approval from their dean. When necessary, faculty may teach while completing training, as approved by academic leadership.

These required workshops include content about regular and substantive interaction (RSI), a critical component of high-quality online instruction and federal compliance. Specifically, RSI is addressed in Module 2 of the *Online Instruction and Assessment Practices* workshop which outlines examples of RSI and offers links for further guidance and practical homework activities. Additionally, the course introduces faculty to Quality Matters Standards 5 and 6, which also address aspects of faculty-student interaction and learner support.

Structured Course Development and Quality Assurance. Faculty developing new or revised asynchronous, synchronous, or hybrid courses follow a pre-approval and submission process coordinated through ECC's Distance Learning Office and their dean. Courses must be submitted at least three months prior to implementation and are built within Brightspace D2L. Design expectations include:

- A fully developed syllabus
- Clearly structured modules aligned with the master course outline
- Defined learning objectives and aligned instructional content
- Embedded instructor contact information and office hours
- Integrated discussion boards and assessment samples
- Publisher materials properly linked within the LMS
- Adherence to ECC's adopted quality rubric for online learning

All course developments are reviewed and approved in writing by the dean or designee. Compensation for development or redevelopment is determined by course modality and contractual provisions. Reduced rates apply to adaptations of archived courses or courses that primarily utilize publisher content.

Ongoing Instructional Support and Quality Monitoring. Faculty teaching a course in a new modality for the first time (e.g., asynchronous or synchronous) receive additional institutional support and a stipend. Class sizes may be limited at the dean's discretion to promote quality during initial delivery. Instructional quality across all modalities is also supported through the faculty evaluation process (p.5), detailed in Core Component 3C, which includes classroom observations, self-assessments, and peer and administrative reviews. Practices apply equitably to traditional, online, and hybrid formats.

Finally, as cited earlier in Core Component 3F, the ICCB program review process pays specific attention to key differentiating factors for enrollment and success – in particular, to instructional modality, location, and dual credit. For example, in its 2022 report, the English Program analyzed modality data and equity outcomes for ENG-101 (Composition I) and ENG-102 (Composition II). Additional dashboard tools are continually being developed by Institutional Research to highlight dual credit success. Based on faculty requests, for instance, a new filter was added in spring 2025 to allow ECC faculty to drill down not only by dual credit status but by dual credit location as well.

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3.G. Student Success Outcomes

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Argument

ECC demonstrates its commitment to student success by setting achievable learning, retention, and completion goals. These are monitored through the systematic use of data and benchmarked against peer institutions.

Data Warehousing and Visualizations

To advance ECC's commitment to student success, the College creates opportunities to leverage data for decision-making. ECC has built, and continues to expand, a robust institutional data warehouse to inform planning, resource allocation, and the assessment of student success initiatives. The warehouse consolidates data from state, federal, and national sources along with internal sources from the Colleague Student Information System (SIS), Brightspace D2L, financial aid and student CRM data, and co-curricular engagement into a unified environment for longitudinal and subgroup analyses. The warehouse makes it possible to easily analyze course success, retention, and completion, along with other metrics across student subpopulations, such as first-generation students, students of color, adult learners, and students placing into developmental education. In addition, we regularly disaggregate data by enrollment status, race/ethnicity, age, dual credit status, developmental placement, Pell status, gender, veteran status, and disability status. Most importantly, the warehouse addresses a historical challenge for ECC and many institutions: the fragmentation of data across disparate systems. While still a work in progress, our warehouse has helped decision-makers access a "single source of truth" when examining student performance.

To ensure information remains accessible, ECC has relied on data visualization software (Tableau) since 2018. Tableau dashboards are accessible through my.Elgin Quicklinks for all employees; and in fall 2025, ECC's Institutional Research (IR) Office is developing a digital data library to house all 158 institutional dashboards created since 2018.

External Benchmarking

ECC's commitment to student success is informed by external data sources. At the state level, all Illinois community colleges submit numerous annual datasets to the ICCB, which fulfill compliance requirements and contribute to comparative reports. In 2022, ICCB created Illinois Postsecondary Profiles to share this information publicly through dashboards. National datasets further enrich ECC's student success work. The College regularly examines Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and National Community College Benchmarking Project reports (NCCBP) to establish realistic, data-informed Annual College Goals. IPEDS has historically shown ECC's graduation and retention metrics are higher than peer groups, a finding that has held true for more than a

decade.

In addition to IPEDS, since 2022, ECC has participated in the National Student Clearinghouse's (NSC's) Post-Secondary Data Partnership (PDP), and our Senior Director of Data Quality is a national trainer for this tool. Over 500 PDP-participating institutions supply student-level data each semester to the NSC, which then appends additional enrollment and completion information from its national database to yield data dashboards on student momentum, transfer, and completion comparatively. ECC uses PDP results to inform its progress on Annual College Goals. One example is our monitoring of first-year credit completion milestones as part of the Student Success Coaching program, explained in Core Component 3D. PDP shows that the percentage of ECC's new, degree-seeking students who earn 24 credits (full-time) or 12 credits (part-time) during the first year is higher than Illinois peers (45% versus 40%, respectively, for fall 2018 cohort). Following a brief post-pandemic decline, the College reignited its "Stop Before You Drop" initiative to reduce aggregate course withdrawals and its "Just One More" campaign to encourage students to accrue additional credits. As a result, we have begun to see credit milestones rebound for first-time students from 32% for the fall 2022 cohort to 38% for the fall 2023 cohort.

Student Voice

ECC's commitment to student success is also informed by student voices. While quantitative data is central to how the College evaluates student success, we recognize that students' perceptions and attitudes provide an indispensable context for shaping interventions. To this end, ECC administers an array of student surveys. Each fall since fall 2011, the College conducts an in-house pulse survey to gather immediate insights into students' needs or concerns which are not always present in institutional datasets, particularly their views on support service offerings, barriers to persistence, and satisfaction with learning environments.

ECC also conducts surveys of CTE and transfer alumni a year following graduation to gain insights into their experiences, including insights about employment, transfer, and satisfaction. Data are fed into program reviews, giving academic programs concrete evidence of how effectively they prepare students for post-graduation success. In the 2025 Career-Technical Survey, 96% of former students "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "*If I had to do it all over again, I would still enroll at ECC.*" Furthermore, 94% rated themselves as "very successful" or "somewhat successful" in achieving their objectives at ECC.

In addition to local surveys, ECC administers nationally normed instruments, including the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), on a rotating three-year basis. These surveys provide longitudinal data and national benchmarks that allow ECC to assess whether students' levels of engagement and satisfaction align with or diverge from peer institutions. Results are reviewed at multiple levels, from faculty committees to senior leadership, and play a direct role in shaping ECC policy and practice. Historically, surveys have consistently shown that ECC students are more satisfied with their experiences than national or statewide comparison groups (74% versus 68%, respectively, for the 2023 SSI). Moreover, they are more likely to enroll again at ECC than similar students responding about re-enrollment at their colleges (83% versus 77%, respectively).

Finally, from time to time, the College conducts focus groups of students to validate findings from quantitative research. In 2024-25, the Latinx Identity Team, which we describe later in this section, conducted a series of focus groups with students and community members that led to the creation of our newly adopted HSI Servingness Plan in summer 2025. One of the observations noted by focus group participants was confusion surrounding ECC's use of the term Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), which the new plan helps to clarify.

External Frameworks for Student Success

ECC relies on external frameworks to inform its decision-making around student success. Work carried out by ECC's Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs Office has prompted us to supplement student success data with demographic and labor market data obtained from the US Census Bureau. Geographic information system (GIS) datasets and ArcGIS software allow us to produce maps and community reports for legislative officials and community advocates who ensure our success strategies remain connected to regional needs. Additionally, since 2024, ECC has begun utilizing the Bureau's Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes Explorer (PSEO) to understand longer-term economic benefits of our programs. Notably, ECC used the PSEO to set Goal 7 (Community Experience) of our FY2026 Annual College Goals.

At the program level, ECC leverages federal Perkins Grant data through an ICCB dashboard to monitor CTE student outcomes, including credential attainment, job placement, and nontraditional student participation rates. These data are incorporated into program reviews and CTE advisory committees to provide insights into graduate readiness. At the district level, ECC's Alliance for College and Career Student Success is a 17-year formal partnership with four high school districts (11 high schools in total) that comprise District 509. Data gathered by Alliance partners includes course grades, attendance records, placement test scores, cocurricular involvement, and teacher and guidance counselor feedback. ECC's College Transitions and Secondary Partnerships Office uses this information to design bridge programs, curricular alignment activities, parental awareness-building, and transitional courses that articulate into ECC's gateway English and math.

At a broader level, ECC participates in the statewide Partnership for College Completion and national Achieving the Dream (ATD) networks. In 2020, ECC published its first five-year Equity Plan for the Partnership's Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) initiative, which was updated to the ICCB/IBHE Equity Plan in 2024. In 2023, ECC joined the ATD Community of Vibrancy Framework in recognition of the increasing importance of linking traditional student success metrics with post-completion metrics, such as economic mobility and community connectedness. Finally, in addition to the NCCBP noted earlier, ECC is a member of Excelencia in Education, whose work informs our HSI Servingness Plan and other strategies aimed at improving success for Latinx students (currently 52% of ECC's student body).

ECC's involvement with its equity partners, PCC and ATD, informs the way we organize ourselves for success. Since 2009, the College has maintained a standing cross-functional committee focused on closing equity gaps in access, retention, advancement, and completion and developing initiatives to address them. Guided by the Equity Plan, the latest iteration of this team is called the Equity and Student Success Action Council (ESSAC), which is led by the Chief Institutional Success and Engagement Officer (CISEO) with assistance from TLSD, CETAL, SSD, and IR. Various ESSAC teams are tasked with leading interventions and policy initiatives. As of 2025, these teams include:

- Black Students Success Team
- Latinx Success/HSI Servingness Team
- Gateway Course Success Team
- Undocumented Students Success Team
- Neurodiversity Strategy Team
- Justice-Impacted Students Team
- Strategic Enrollment Management Team

Team implementation updates will be officially reported to ICCB/IBHE in spring 2026 to determine whether and how teams are closing gaps by race/ethnicity, gender, age, and Pell status. Internally, the CISEO monitors ongoing progress twice annually – at the end of the fall semester and the end of the spring semester -- using a standard Progress Report on Outcomes Form (PROOF). Data gathered so far confirms long-standing strengths and opportunities. One strength is retention for full-time students, which has consistently been around 77% from fall to fall (vs. 68% for other Illinois colleges). Similarly, the three-year graduation rate for full-time students hovers around 40% (vs. 37% for Illinois). Meanwhile, the overall “advancement” rate, which ICCB and ECC define as completion among students who transfer, are still enrolled, and/or progressing toward a certificate/degree after three years is another strength, hovering around 75% for recent cohorts (vs. 68% for Illinois).

However, other metrics reveal opportunities for improvement. One example is gateway math completion, which, according to the Aspen Institute, reveals a significant gap among ECC's degree-seeking students (22% completion of gateway math during the first year vs. 44% among other Aspen Top 150 Colleges). To address this deficiency, ESSAC's Gateway Course Success Team is collaborating with teachers from local high schools to offer transitional math courses for high school seniors who would otherwise not take math. In addition to the reforms in testing and placement explained in our 2019 Assurance Filing, the launch of transitional math allows seniors to matriculate directly into ECC's gateway courses upon admission, reducing excess credits and hastening time to completion. Math faculty also eliminated a developmental math course in 2022 and launched multiple preliminary pathways to accelerate gateway success. These examples also meet Illinois's legislative mandate to maximize the number of students who complete college-level coursework their first year.

English faculty, too, participate on the Gateway Course Success Team, although gateway completion has been easier to achieve in English than math. Policy changes implemented by English faculty have institutionalized corequisite developmental and gateway English (ENG-101, Composition I) into a combined course (Accelerated Learning Program) for over a decade; additionally, English has eliminated placement testing for those with earned GPAs of 3.0 or higher, and, like math, provides transitional courses for high school seniors. Students who still place into developmental levels upon admission enroll in either a five-credit integrated literacy course, LTC-099 (College Literacy) or the corequisite developmental/gateway option.

The results of gateway reforms are promising. The proportion of new degree-seeking

students completing gateway math has improved from 11% in fall 2019 to 26% for the fall 2023 cohort (most recent available data). Increases in gateway English completion are also positive, rising from 46% in fall 2018 to 51% in fall 2023. While encouraging, the College recognizes the impact of low gateway math/English completion rates on overall success and continues to work on identifying opportunities for improvement through ESSAC.

Fostering a Data-Literate Campus

While we consider the *amount* of data utilized by the institution to be comprehensive, ECC recognizes that the power of that data is fully realized only when the college community has the capacity and confidence to use it effectively. To that end, the College has recently begun working toward intentional capacity-building around data literacy. In 2023-24, ECC developed a data literacy training video as a mandatory annual professional development task for all employees. Since then, IR holds weekly drop-in IR Office Hours each semester to answer data/research questions and to help colleagues interpret dashboards. Goals 6 and 10 of the FY2026 Annual College Goals focus on data literacy, with a goal of attaining a baseline measurement of ECC employees' collective "data persona" using a common data literacy assessment tool, from the book, *You Are A Data Person: Strategies for Using Analytics on Campus*, by Amelia Parnell. The College is launching a data library portal in fall 2025 to provide employees a single point of access to dashboards, reports, and definitions. These resources allow us to democratize data, reduce dependence on IR staff, and foster shared accountability for student outcomes.

In addition, several lines of work enable the College to evaluate outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and implement strategies for success. First, as mentioned earlier in this section, ECC has invested substantial resources in its data infrastructure through warehousing and dashboard visualizations. This investment is most evident in program reviews, explained in Core Component 3F. During this process, IR liaisons help ECC faculty make sense of their program data, develop familiarity with dashboards, and conduct an array of analytical projects stemming from reviews.

In addition to ICCB's five-year cycle, ECC has adopted its own internal Program Health Review (PHR) to provide more frequent snapshots of academic programs. Introduced by the TLSD Division in 2018-19, the PHR utilizes a data scorecard of key metrics determined by deans to be vital to a program's overall "health": enrollment change, average course success rate, average course withdrawal rates, credentials per 100 FTE, course fill rates, percent of sections cancelled and percent profit or loss. Each program metric is assigned a value of +2 to -2 based on the quartile each metric falls into among all programs, the sum of which yields an annual "program viability" score. The viability score helps to prompt discussions among faculty to identify programs that need additional support to better serve students.

A good example of the success of the PHR process is the cessation of the AAS-Paralegal degree in 2019. During that year, deans identified the Paralegal Program as having a low viability score, prompting an in-depth review. As a result, TLSD realized that the Basic Vocational Skills (BVS) Certificate and AAS degree offered by the program were valuable credentials for intermediate or advanced positions in the field. Thus, the program eliminated its stand-alone certificate and degree in favor of a stackable BVS + Associate of Arts (AA) program that allows students to either earn a certificate for immediate, entry-level paralegal employment or a degree for longer-term transfer. Following this change, the Paralegal

Program has seen enrollments increase significantly from 242 total enrollments in 2021-22 to 390 (+61%) last year.

Finally, ECC recognizes that none of these successes would be fruitful without addressing the financial challenges our students face. Indeed, financial empowerment is an area where ECC shines. Our Financial Smarts Literacy Program, begun in 2011, features a strong community outreach component and has allowed hundreds of District 509 families to pursue higher learning. In 2023, we created the [Center for Financial Empowerment and Wellness \(p.3\)](#) to forge a vital link between academic and financial success. A local credit union, Kane County Teachers (KCT) Credit Union, partners with us to offer this program, which also features FAFSA completion workshops and individual financial counseling. In 2023, KCT opened a branch in ECC's Renner Academic Library next to financial aid and other student service offices.

Results of the program are truly impressive: since 2010, we have decreased the number of students borrowing loans by 85% (1,890 to 286) and loan dollars by 80% (\$6.5M to \$1.3M) while simultaneously increasing non-loan aid by 69% (\$11.9M to \$20.1M) and on-time completion from 17% to 41%.

Financial literacy also includes unique student aid programs, such as emergency funds from the ECC Foundation and the Complete to Compete Scholarship that aids students with 45+ credits ("near-completers") to finish their associates degree within one year. IR uses predictive modeling to identify the unique impact of this program, now in its fifth year. We are pleased to know that the average completion for near-completers is significantly higher with the scholarship than without it (79% vs. 31%), even after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that traditionally impact completion. Additionally, predictive modeling of the entire Financial Smarts program shows that students who take loans earn fewer credits and are less likely to graduate within three years than students who receive non-loan aid (e.g., scholarships, grants, etc.), even when controlling for group differences by demographic, academic, or socioeconomic characteristics. Knowing this, the ECC Foundation has purposefully grown its net assets since our 2019 Assurance Filing (from \$8.9M in 2019 to \$14.6M in 2024).

As each of these examples highlight, ECC's approach to evaluating student success involves a dynamic and ongoing process of continuous improvement. By strategically utilizing external data sources, engaging in national and statewide student success initiatives, incorporating student feedback, disaggregating data to uncover equity gaps, and investing in data literacy across the institution, ECC has developed a comprehensive framework for evidence-based decision-making. This framework not only ensures accountability to our mission but positions ECC to respond effectively to the evolving needs of its diverse student populations.

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- 3G.16 Credit Accumulation Rate
- 3G.17 Current Student Survey Executive Summary FA 2024 PDF
- 3G.18 Career Tech Exec Summary 2025
- 3G.19 UT Executive Summary
- 3G.20 Community College Survey of Student Engagement Illinois Benchmark Comparisons - 2021
- 3G.21 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey Executive Summary SP 2023
- 3G.22 2018 LatinX Focus Group Executive Summary
- 3G.24 Most Recent Outlook Newsletter
- 3G.25 Screenshot of PSEO
- 3G.26 PODS 2.0 Screenshot
- 3G.27 ILEA Equity Plan
- 3G.28 ESSAC Report for AtD Coaches
- 3G.29 ICCB Equity Plan Guidance
- 3G.30B Elgin CC data sheet_AspenAwardInterview_2024
- 3G.31 PPT of Data Literacy Video (Final Video - Update)2
- 3G.32 Data Identity Self-Assessment Excerpt from Book
- 3G.33 Screenshot of Program Review Project Folder in Tableau
- 3G.34 ICCB_Program_Review_Manual_FY2022-2026
- 3G.35 FY2024 Program Health Scorecard
- 3G.36 PROGRAM HEALTH RUBRIC
- 3G.37 Paralegal Program Health Summary
- 3G.23 Legislator District Map (1)
- 3G.27B FY2024 Equity Plan
- 3G.30 PROOF Form - EDI-PD 7-1-25 End of Year(1)

Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

Argument

In 2021, ECC's Student Learning Assessment Advisory Committee (SLAAC) formalized our Assessment Philosophy, emphasizing collaborative, equity-focused practices to measure student learning. Learning outcomes themselves are defined at the course (CLO), program (PLO), cocurricular (CCLO), and general education (GELO) levels. They are monitored internally by academic and student service departments during five-year and annual (program health) reviews and externally by the Illinois Articulation Initiative and program accrediting bodies. CLOs are standardized across sections, modalities, and instructors and are updated regularly to reflect industry trends and transferability. PLOs build upon course outcomes and reflect scaffolded learning across an entire discipline, while CCLOs address students competencies beyond the classroom, such as civic engagement, leadership, and collaboration. Finally, GELOs encompass six core competencies (communications, critical thinking, global and multicultural literacy, information literacy, quantitative literacy, and scientific literacy) which are integrated across all programs and measured through curricular maps and Learning Improvement Reports detailing assessment methods, results, and planned instructional changes as a result of review. LIRs also ensure alignment with GELOs. Finally, ECC ensures rigor of dual credit courses, with oversight provided by high school faculty liaisons using National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) standards. Together, these structures and systems demonstrate ECC's commitment to maintaining quality, relevance, and college-level rigor for student learning.

Program reviews complement assessment practices by offering cyclical analyses of program curriculum, enrollment, student learning and other success outcomes, equity, transfer, job attainment, costs, and labor market needs. Oversight is provided by deans, directors, and faculty instructional coordinators, with final reports submitted internally to ECC trustees and externally to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Reviews often lead to updates in course outcomes, prerequisites, and program practices and routines. The Curriculum Committee and Cross-Functional Review Team further ensure that curricular changes made in academic areas align to institutional practices. Additionally, new programs added to the College's overall curriculum follow development guidelines containing these same elements, and recent examples include Cybersecurity, Supply Chain Management, Respiratory Care, and Recovery Support Specialist.

ECC maintains rigorous hiring, evaluation, and professional development processes for faculty and instructional staff. As of fall 2024, the College employs 148 full-time and 340 part-time faculty. Hiring practices ensure that the recruiting and onboarding of new hires exemplify cultural competence, and faculty development programs led by the Center for the

Enhancement of Teaching, Assessment, and Learning (CETAL) the value of teaching for equity and inclusion. Faculty sabbaticals and competitive faculty development funding further enhance instructional quality. The Student Services and Development (SSD) Division, with 75 full-time staff and additional contingent and student workers, provides advising, wellness, tutoring, disability support services, career development services, and specialized programs such as TRiO, veterans services, and initiatives for men of color.

Finally, the College's data infrastructure and systems deliver steady streams of information to faculty and other stakeholders regarding metrics for learning, enrollment, retention, credit momentum, completion, student and employee engagement, community vibrancy, financial health, and operational efficiency -- all of which are benchmarked against peer institutions via the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP), the National Student Clearinghouse Post-Secondary Data Partnership, and IPEDS. ECC's memberships in Achieving the Dream, the Aspen Institute, Illinois Equity in Attainment, and other voluntary partnerships also inform student outcomes, goals, and metrics. Qualitative mechanisms for understanding student learning include online surveys, alumni feedback, and focus groups -- all of which further inform institutional practices and policy development. An institution-wide data warehouse consolidates academic, demographic, and engagement data, enabling systematic disaggregation by population, program types, and other characteristics of interest. Meanwhile, Tableau data visualizations and a centralized data library allow consistent access to data needed to guide evidence-based decision-making.

Equity is central to ECC's continuous improvement framework. The College's Equity and Student Success Action Council (ESSAC) oversees targeted strategies for underserved populations and includes initiatives focused on Hispanic servingness, gateway course reforms, and strategic enrollment management. Financial literacy programming and completion scholarships also directly supplement ECC's understanding of student persistence and completion. The College's *Equity Through the Assessment of Student Learning Quality Initiative* (QI), launched in 2021, further promotes equity-mindedness when assessing student learning. Our 2025 QI report demonstrates increased faculty participation and leadership around assessment, increased use of learning outcomes data over time, and changes to pedagogical practices through close examination of practice.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

4.A Effective Administrative Structures

The institution's administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate.

Argument

Administrative Structures

The College is organized to facilitate intentional collaboration among constituencies. We explain in Criterion 2 how open meetings like the COTW and the use of administrative procedures encourage broad participation. The ECC Board operates under the principles of Policy Governance (Carver, 2009) . As such, it sets all policies, executive parameters, and limitations; while 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 further details how the President enables the Board to meet its financial, academic, legal, and fiduciary responsibilities:

President's Cabinet . The President maintains an executive Cabinet consisting of the following senior leaders and the Senior Executive Assistant to the President:

- Vice President of Teaching, Learning and Student Development/Chief Academic Officer (VP of TLSD/CAO)
- Vice President for Business and Finance/Chief Financial Officer (VP of BF/CFO)
- Vice President of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Technology (VP of PIE/IT)
- Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)
- Chief Marketing and Communications Officer (CMCO)
- Chief Institutional Success and Engagement Officer (CISEO)
- Chief Community and Government Relations Officer (CCGRO)

- Chief of Police
- Executive Director of the Institutional Advancement and the ECC Foundation
- 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, workforce development, and the Student Services and Development (SSD) Division. She also supervises the Assistant Vice President, who, in turn, oversees curriculum compliance, academic resources and instructional technology, and the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, Assessment, and Learning (CETAL). The Deans Council provides leadership for academic and student support units by executing administrative procedures; supervising faculty; overseeing academic committees and other initiatives; developing academic and student service goals and curricula; and monitoring assessment practices. Deans Council consists of these academic units:

- Adult Education & English as a Second Language
- College Transitions & Secondary Partnerships
- Communications & Behavioral Sciences
- Health Professions
- Math, Science & Engineering
- Academic Resources & Instructional Technology
- Liberal, Visual & Performing Arts
- Student Services & Development
- Sustainability, Business & Career Technologies
- Workforce Development & Continuing Education

Faculty. 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. Every tenure-track full-time faculty member and librarian are represented by ECCFA, as are part-time faculty members after fulfilling a minimum number of service hours. Elected ECCFA representatives participate on all college committees, and their interests are represented on the Cabinet by the VP 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 supplemental assignments and compensation (e.g., stipends or release) not otherwise contained in the contract are separately negotiated through memoranda of understanding by ECCFA leadership, the VP 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 Deputy CHRO.

Building Engineers. The International Union of Operating Engineers of Chicago (Local Union 399) is the governing body for a team of 13 building engineers (including two lead engineers) that maintains a formal contract with the Board.

Police. The Board also recognizes the Metropolitan Alliance of Police Chapter 735 as the sole collective bargaining representative for 13 full-time college-employed 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/).

Our labor agreements and job descriptions are detailed and followed meticulously by union and non-union personnel. We allow staff to participate in contract negotiations and handle contractual matters during their regularly paid time. Finally, we provide checks and balances through formal procedures on employee grievances, student complaints and appeals, ethics and whistleblower advisors, and FOIA requests.

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 with the 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 of the Student Discipline Committee, a team that advocates for students during disciplinary hearings (see Core Component 2E).

A student member of the Board of Trustees (Student Trustee) is elected by peers in April to serve on the Board and as ECC's student voice 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.

Many faculty and administrators lead teams that are directly associated with their jobs – e.g., the President oversees Cabinet by default. In addition to job roles, policy governance ensures the establishment of cross-functional committees, with clearly stated purpose statements and leadership roles. Meanwhile, several project-based taskforces and workgroups meet to respond to specific needs. These are also led (or co-led) by administrators.

A final feature of policy governance is monitoring accountability. The Board's Annual Planning Calendar provides designated times for constituencies to prepare written reports on a monthly, quarterly, or an annual basis. The Board provides feedback at the COTW

meetings. Key reports on the calendar include:

- Performance Reports
- Academic Program Review Reports
- Auxiliary Business Plans and Reports
- Budgeting and Grant Monitoring Reports
- Student Activities Reports
- Community Reports
- Personnel Report
- Community Engagement and Legislative Activities Reports
- ECC Foundation/Institutional Advancement Reports

As with committees themselves, committee reports are also prepared in a cross-functional way. While they are generally prepared by a key administrator or faculty member, information comes from experts throughout the institution.

Sources

- 4A.27 Foundation Board Report 9-25
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- 4A.03 ECC Org Chart
- 4A.04 ECCFA2023_2025Contract
- 4A.05 Revised-Supplemental-Chart-12.11.24-with-CY25-L2S2-Hourly-Schedule
- 4A.06 SSECCA-contract-english 2023-2026
- 4A.07 Illinois Education Association
- 4A.08 Your Rights & Workplace _ NEA
- 4A.09 5-401---Dispute-Resolution-for-Eligible-Administrative-Employees-
- 4A.10 Complaint Procedure 4-401 and Appeals 4-408
- 4A.11 3-804-whistleblower-protection
- 4A.12 FOIA Request - Name of all graduates from school for completed school year
- 4A.13 studentgovernment-constitution
- 4A.14 Student Advisory Committee ICCB
- 4A.15 Standing Cross-Functional Committees
- 4A.16 ECC Task-Oriented Teams
- 4A.17 Annual Planning Calendar 2025 Sept_FINAL (1)
- 4A.18 board-book-090925
- 4A.19 FY24 Performance Report Final
- 4A.20 District 509 ICCB Program Review FY2025
- 4A.21 FY25-Auxillary Business Plans
- 4A.22 Bugeting and Grant Monitoring Report
- 4A.23 2025-August 12th Board Report - Student Trustee (1)
- 4A.24 2024-community-report

- 4A.25 Personnel Report-081225 15_Redacted
- 4A.26 2025 CELA-Leg Affairs Monthly Report 2025.06-07

4.B Resource Base and Sustainability

The institution's financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution's financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability.

Argument

ECC operates in accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805). As such, the College adheres to rules set by the Illinois General Assembly's Illinois Administrative Code Section 1501, which define operating standards for students, programs, administration, and fiscal and human resources.

Fiscal Resources

In its policies (see Criterion 2) and in accordance with the ICCB Fiscal Management Manual, the ECC Board has adopted long-term financial planning principles related to budgeting, financial condition, and asset protection. Financial health has been one of the Annual College Goals for several years and is overseen by ECC's Business and Finance Office.

ECC has proudly operated with a balanced budget since its founding in 1949, and major credit agencies give the College their highest ratings – e.g., an 'Aaa' rating from Moody's and a 'AA+' from Standard and Poor's. The College has always received unmodified independent audit opinions and even received Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 22 consecutive years from the Government Finance Officers Association.

The College relies on three main revenue sources: property taxes, student tuition and fees, and state apportionment. When the Illinois Community College System was founded in 1965, the state's intent was for these sources to be allocated evenly at roughly a third each (33.3%). However, this has not been the case. In FY2025, for example, local taxpayers supported 60% of operations through property taxes, while students supported 24% through tuition and fees, and the state supported 7% through credit hour apportionment. The remaining 9% came from investment income, grants, and miscellaneous revenues.

Fortunately, the District 509 tax base is strong, and the College maintains outstanding relationships with corporate, commercial, educational, and community partners. Together they encompass ECC's most reliable source of income. Tuition and fees, the College's next highest source, can at times fluctuate as enrollment ebbs and flows; nonetheless, the impact on the College's budget remains modest due to revenues from other sources. More recently, the College has experienced stable – and, at times, growing – state support equal to 95% to 105% of the prior year.

Expenditures for the College are classified in two ways: by function and by object, as defined in the ICCB Fiscal Management Manual. Functional categories include instruction, student services, and instructional support; object categories include salaries, benefits, materials and supplies, and contractual services. In FY2024, 74% of the operating

expenditures were for salaries and benefits; 14% for materials, supplies, and contractual services; and the remaining for other operating costs. Expenditures are projected from the ECC Strategic Plan – specifically, by tallying the sum total of all items coming through department and employee goal plans that align to the College Annual Goals (which, in turn, align 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. More details on how budgets are planned can be found in Core Component 4C.

Evidence the College maintains sufficient financial resources is found in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and end-of-year independent audits. The percentage of our operating budgets allocated to instruction, academic support, and student services (57% in FY2024 vs. 58% in fiscal year 2019) has remained stable even with the fluctuations in enrollment. In FY2024, for example, the College operated with \$94M in operating revenues and almost \$73M in unrestricted operating reserves, or about 78% of total operating costs. 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 \$101M, of which \$73M (72%) is unrestricted. [Please note that we are currently preparing our FY2025 ACFR, which is typically finalized in October. For this reason, we report on FY2024 audited financials here but can provide FY2025 audited financials during the visit.]

The Board requires an operating reserves policy to maintain working capital equal to six months of operating expenses in operating funds (operating funds are defined as the Education Fund and the Operations and Maintenance Fund). During years of uncertain state funding, ECC realizes the importance of long-range planning. By requiring six months of operating capital, the College ensures that it has the reserves necessary to complete a semester of operations.

Other examples that ensure primacy of our core mission include safeguards built into the ICCB Fiscal Management Manual. These include independent audits, rules on levying taxes, using restricted and unrestricted funds, and fund balances. Transfers between funds are allowable only with Board approval. Budget transfers between expense categories are allowed without Board approval but must be approved by both the budget officer and the Business and Finance Office. Budget transfers in excess of 10% of the total fund availability would require a budget amendment approved by the Board. 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 ACFR.

Physical Facilities ECC's 217-acre Spartan (main) campus lies two miles southwest of downtown Elgin at the geographic center of District 509. The campus lies within 15 miles of 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 labs in computer science, computer-aided design, health and sciences, welding, auto mechanics, advanced manufacturing, photography finishing, and art production. The campus also contains multiple 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 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 Building C (Renner Academic Library), Building A (Health and Life Sciences), Building K (Workforce Development, TRiO, and Adult Basic Education), and the Center for Emergency Services in Burlington. ECC also rents space in Hanover Park and Streamwood for Adult Basic Education, ESL courses, and an Illinois WorkNet employment center.

Capital Planning. ECC prepares campus master plans every ten years with updates every five years. These plans, created with expertise from outside architects, allow us to align space needs to strategic goals by outlining all major projects – new buildings and renovations to existing facilities – along with deferred maintenance for improving building substructures, equipment, and grounds. Once plans are set, implementation is led by the Operations and Maintenance Office, which maintains an accounting of capital assets by type, model, size, location, components, value and depreciation per Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) System Administrative Rules. Additionally, this office submits capital project requests to Illinois's Resource Allocation and Management Program (RAMP). While funding varies from year to year and college to college, ECC routinely budgets the state-required 25% local match each year. ECC's most recent RAMP request, if funded, will help renovate Building I (Culinary Arts Building) pending completion of other projects, as explained in the next paragraph.

Since 2009, the Board annually transfers operating fund balances to support capital improvements. Over time, capital funds have increased from \$1.9 M in 2009 to \$35M in 2024, which ECC has used to renovate and expand Building H (Visual and Performing Arts) and Building A (Health and Life Sciences) within the past two years. The largest project defined in the 2020 and 2025 master plans is the Manufacturing and Technology Center (MTC), currently set to open in fall 2026. Funding for construction and interiors came from three sources -- \$27M in raised capital funds and transfers; \$28.7M from state legislators; and \$55M from alternate revenue bonds. When completed, this building will house programs in industrial manufacturing maintenance, welding, HVAC, and energy management along with a Workforce Development and Business and Industry Incubator. In turn, we plan to relocate and renovate existing locations for the automotive technology and culinary arts programs.

Human Resources. The Cabinet monitors the personnel needs of the College by reviewing justifications for all new and reallocated positions and unit reorganizations. Replacement of positions depends upon resignations and retirements is not automatic. New position requests are collected in the fall prior to the next budget year. The Cabinet reviews and ranks the requests with a rubric, and final approval is based on priority and funding levels allowed within the budget.

Generally, the distribution of employees by class has remained stable; however, there was a decline in faculty and classified staff in FY2021 during the pandemic. Reductions were due to attrition and non-replacement, and pandemic relief funds ensured the College did not furlough any employees. Faculty declines that year were due to fewer sections and less demand for part-time faculty. In FY2025, the number of overall employees has returned to pre-pandemic levels, albeit with fewer faculty and more professional-technical staff.

Fall Semester Employee Counts by Type: Fiscal Years 2019 to 2025

ICCB Employment Class	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
Teaching Faculty	524	539	474	478	477	488	488
Administrative	48	54	57	56	60	62	58
Non-Teaching Professional Technical Staff	255	264	268	270	265	295	298
Classified Staff	223	228	213	191	174	202	211
TOTAL	1050	1085	1012	995	976	1047	1055

The Human Resources Office strives to recruit diverse candidates for open positions. Each year this office fulfills Illinois legislative reporting requirements under Public Act 85-283 by reporting progress in recruiting, hiring, and promoting African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American employees. Employees are hired on the basis of the College's Search Committee Guidelines (see Core Component 3C).

Technological Resources. The Information Technology (IT) Department's three offices (Academic Computing, Applications Development, and Network Operations) lead multiple concurrent projects. The department is led by a Chief Information Officer and advised by the Academic Technology Committee and Distance Learning Advisory Committee representing faculty and students. It also relies on a team of specialized analysts (Analysts Group), who work within IT but serve as technology liaisons to various college departments. Finally, deans and academic support staff work alongside IT to prioritize budgeting for technology-related instructional equipment.

Partially offset by a \$5 per credit hour student technology fee, the College relies on the Ellucian Colleague Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to support student information systems (including admissions, registration, financial aid, student billing, testing, and advising) and two Customer Relationship Management systems, Salesforce and Ellucian CRM Advise. In addition to transactional processing and reporting, ECC provides Active Directory Single Sign-On for apps and push notifications/alerts for campus news and events. Faculty and students utilize Brightspace D2L as the learning management system, and the Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Office provides a dedicated Helpdesk for faculty, lab coordinators, and students.

Technology planning remains responsive to student, employee, and community needs. In 2024, due to increased demand, the College doubled its bandwidth with two Internet providers: the Illinois Century Network at 800MB/sec and Northern Illinois University at

2GB/sec. Two free, fully redundant, high-speed wireless networks called ‘public’ (for students and community members) and ‘secure’ (for employees) maintain high-speed connections with 447 access points covering the Spartan (Elgin), Burlington, and Hanover Park locations. An IP phone system covers all offices, conference rooms, and classrooms. Faculty, staff, and students are given storage space on the network that is accessible on and off-campus and are provided ECC email accounts associated with Google Apps. In 2026, IT will upgrade the campus from 10GB to 100GB with 1GB connections to desktops and at least 10GB connections to servers, which will be updated from a physical to virtual environment. Equipment has already been purchased, and we are in the process of installation and configuration.

With post-pandemic growth in hybrid learning, IT has upgraded all audio-visual equipment across campus with responsive systems; added 20 permanent remote conference/learning classrooms equipped with cameras, microphones, and document sharing; and updated internal video signage with LED displays. A mobile stock of rolling carts with monitors, cameras, microphones, speakers, and laptops allows for quick shifts to video conferencing as needed.

Other noteworthy technology accomplishments since our 2019 Assurance Filing include:

- Launching a new ECC Requests Portal (via Atlassian Jira) for monitoring all requests and workflows campus-wide
- Adding new positions in IT project management and A/V systems
- Launching a multi-layered Rave emergency alert system and upgrading 470 security surveillance cameras across our three campuses
- Launching an ECCEperience App (via ExLibris CampusM) to provide students instant access to campus news and announcements, club information, important phone numbers, and to view class schedules
- Launching Salesforce CRM for recruitment and admissions; and in 2026 the College intends to hire a CRM Director
- Incorporating multi-factor authentication for off-campus access, including remote document access, virtual private networks, email, and Brightspace D2L
- Hiring Sophos, Inc. to provide remote endpoint and server cybersecurity monitoring and incident management services and with an independent third party to provide external penetration tests
- Partnering with the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to provide weekly external vulnerability scans and monthly web application scans
- Updating our Cyber Security Response Plan in 2024 as an annex to the Campus Emergency Operations Plan
- Revamping our server and network backup strategy to include offsite cloud-based backups; and in 2025, we included back-ups of the Office 365 environment for all employees

- Implementing a new tracking system, Asset Panda, for managing software licensing and hardware assets
- Installing exterior access points throughout campus grounds

In sum, we demonstrate in Core Component 4B how sound management of our physical, technological, personnel, and operational systems ensure long-term viability of the College and our capacity to deliver our Mission.

Sources

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- 4B.01 comprehensive-financial-report-2024
- 4B.02 Fiscal Management Manual FMM 2025
- 4B.03 September 2025 Transfer to Auxiliary Units
- 4B.03B FY26 New Position Scoring Matrix
- 4B.03C Feb2025 ICCS African American Employment Plan Report
- 4B.03D Feb2025 ICCS Hispanic Employment Plan Report
- 4B.03E Feb2025 ICCS Asian American Employment Plan Report
- 4B.04 Ellucian ERP Board Action
- 4B.05 CRM Software Purchase Board Action
- 4B.06 12-21INSTITUTIONAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) SOFTWARE BA final
- 4B.07 Audio-Video Equipment Update Board Action
- 4B.08 Sophos Board Action
- 4B.09 Cybersecurity Annex 23-Jan-2025

4.C Planning for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment.

Argument

ECC engages in systematic strategic planning to ensure institutional quality and continuous improvement. Our approach is both deliberate and adaptive, positioning the College to respond proactively to changes in student needs, regional demands, and fiscal realities.

Annual Goal Setting

Creating Annual College Goals. As explained Core Component 1A, the [ECC Strategic Plan from 2023 to 2027](#) was designed with four Key Imperatives to last for a five-year period. Key Imperatives are the broadest actionable layer of the plan, providing a foundation for [Annual College Goals](#) to be set each spring. Goals themselves take time to develop, emerging from campus-wide reflections on current goals, feedback from constituencies, and national trends. The process for selecting Annual College Goals kicks off in December at the [Budget Forum](#), an all-college meeting where we recap the current year's goals, introduce emerging ideas, and preview the budgetary responsibilities that will ensue in spring. During this time, and throughout much of the spring, ideas for new goals are raised, discussed, drafted, revised, and, ultimately, decided. They begin as rough ideas that Cabinet records on the [Emerging Issues List](#) which are finalized by mid-spring. Ideas deemed worthy of focus become Annual College Goals, while those needing more vetting remain on the list for future consideration.

During the 2022-to-2027 planning cycle (corresponding to fiscal years FY2023 to FY2028), the Cabinet has averaged ten goals each year. Specifically, there were ten Annual College Goals during fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025; and nine for fiscal year 2026. Each goal aligns to at least one Key Imperative and all are written to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Once finalized, usually in late spring, Annual College Goals are shared with employees on my.Elgin and eTalent (PageUp) and with the public on elgin.edu. Finally, they are shared with the Board so that trustees can prepare their own goals at their June retreat. In April 2025, when we introduced the 2026 Annual College Goals, we also unveiled a new [KPI Data Model](#), a model of hierarchical metrics that feature the Annual College Goals and underlying metrics that feed into them. The model serves as a useful heuristic for illustrating how smaller metrics inform broader metrics just as individual goals inform broader Annual College Goals and Key Imperatives.

Cascading annual goals. The annual goal-setting process provides a framework for departments and employees to align their own activities to the broader ECC Strategic Plan. Once the Annual College Goals are finalized, they cascade to all levels of the organization – from Cabinet to deans or directors, and from deans to managers and staff. Employees enter

their own goals per the Annual Goal Setting Guide, and the entire appraisal process is anchored by three deadlines: (1) goal setting in July; (2) regular check-ins with supervisors during the performance period (July 1 to June 30, the fiscal year); and (3) formal appraisal and sign-off in September of the following year.

Performance is reviewed in two ways through the performance management system, eTalent: first, through employees' self-appraisals; and then, through their supervisor's evaluation. Supervisors also evaluate employees' overall job performance, contributions to departmental priorities, and opportunities for professional development. One example of how cascaded goals have worked at ECC is an ongoing enrollment reminder campaign that initially began during the pandemic. Designed to bolster declining enrollment during COVID lockdowns, the campaign was introduced by the Dean of Enrollment Management that year to motivate current students who had not yet registered to re-enroll and persist. She first aligned her goal to Annual College Goal 3 on increasing enrollment and then cascaded it to members of her team to set their own goals related to it. These employees, in turn, wrote goals about campaign logistics – training volunteers; writing scripts for the phone calls and texts; setting calendars; and tracking and monitoring students' actions. While her goal was certainly not the only goal under Goal 3 that year, it was one of the more successful ones, having a net positive impact on full-time retention (from 73% in fall 2019 to 77% in fall 2024) and part-time retention (from 53% to 57% over the same period). Meanwhile, total enrollment has increased by 33% between fall 2020 and fall 2025.

Reviewing annual goals. Annual goals are reviewed and adapted based on current performance, changing student needs, and emerging opportunities. The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Model, which we introduced in the 2017 to 2022 planning cycle and continue today, describes how we learn from past practices and apply insights to new advances. Major actions always begin with *planning* or outlining the 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 engaging and learning from PDSA, we employ flowcharts, logic models, and status updates, using these tools to engage in alternating phases of *doing* and *studying*, by which we mean piloting through careful deployment and testing/assessing for impact. The last phase of the model is *action*, where we decide to do something with what we have learned, either to scale an activity up or down, continue at current levels, or start anew.

Finally, as noted in Core Component 3G, ECC “closes the loop” with each year’s annual goals through the publication of the summative Performance Report, which is shared with the Board in October and posted to elgin.edu in November. The Performance Report evaluates progress made toward each goal’s target during the prior academic year and highlights initiatives conducted by the College that may have influenced performance. This cycle of setting, measuring, and reporting goals ensures that progress on the strategic plan is transparent and regularly communicated.

Integration of Planning and Budgeting

A cornerstone of ECC’s continuous improvement work is the integration of planning with budgeting, continuing the “purposeful budgeting” philosophy first established in the 2015 Quality Initiative and strengthened over time. The Annual Budget is compiled over a multi-month planning/budgeting period outlined in the Annual Budget Planning

Calendar. The process starts with the Budget Forum in late fall and continues through the end of spring, as ECC departments, offices and committees develop goals and budgets through systematic and integrated activity. Budget officers begin developing their department budgets in late fall and submit their annual requested budgets in early March. In doing so, they are expected to plan in a “zero-based” manner - i.e., from scratch and without assumptions from prior years. Budget officers submit detailed requests using standardized templates in Questica, the College’s budgeting software, aligning each request to Annual College Goals and, ultimately, to the ECC Strategic Plan. Within Questica, a drop-down menu allows each line item to be aligned to a goal.

During this same time, the Budget and Finance Office develops draft budget allocations by establishing anticipated revenues for the upcoming fiscal year. Anticipated revenues are based on evaluations of historical taxation, equalized assessed values of properties, consumer price indices, historical tuition and fees, expected grants, hiring needs, and anticipated reimbursements from the ICCB to forecast revenues, as described in the Annual Budget (see Section 3). Once all departmental budget requests are submitted, they are reviewed by Business and Finance. Budget requests that represent significant increases in cost year-over-year are set aside for review by the Budget Council, which begins meeting in March and continues until May when the ECC Annual Budget is posted publicly (which, by the Board Policies, occurs a month prior to Board approval in June and the start of the fiscal year in July). ECC’s Budget Council includes representatives from TLSD, SSD, Business and Finance, Operations and Maintenance, and other core areas to ensure budget decisions consider a wide range of perspectives and reinforce alignment with both the strategic and operational priorities. The annual audit transmittal letter provides greater detail about each of the specific budgeting processes outlined above.

In addition, large requests or significant new initiatives require approval through the Universal Funding Request Process which is routed to the Cabinet for consideration. This form ensures that all proposed projects are evaluated consistently, based on alignment with strategic goals, fiscal capacity, and potential for measurable impact. If approved, the project is budgeted and monitored by the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office, the ESSAC, the CURIC, the ECC Foundation/Institutional Advancement, or another appropriate body.

Examples of successful initiatives funded through this process illustrate the College’s commitment to innovation and student success. Programs such as those described in Core Component 3D – the Financial Smarts literacy initiative, the Alliance for College and Career Student Success (ACCSS), and the Center for Civic Engagement – started as proposals through the innovation funding process that were proven successful and later institutionalized within department budgets. In this way, ECC’s funding process functions both as an incubator for new ideas and as a mechanism for sustaining high-impact practices.

Data-Informed Forecasting

Annual planning is informed by rigorous analysis of internal and external data. Enrollment forecasting models simulate future headcount and credit hours, integrating factors such as high school graduation trends, unemployment rates, and adult learner demand. The Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Committee, which is overseen by the SSD Division, is a primary user of these forecasts. This committee – which includes

representatives from TLSD, Business and Finance, Institutional Research, and Marketing and Communications – establishes enrollment and retention goals for the upcoming year aligned to Annual College Goals, such as Goal 3 on enrollment and Goal 4 on credit attainment.

SEM incorporates data from the ICCB, National Student Clearinghouse, and internal dashboards to track applications, registrations, persistence, and completion. These insights are paired with external environmental scans—including demographic shifts, high school pipeline data, and regional labor market projections—to anticipate enrollment pressures and opportunities. For example, environmental scans conducted by the Clarus Corporation in 2023 provided valuable information on adult learners' preferences and barriers to enrollment, while the ICCB's 2021 Economic Impact Study offered broad insights into population demographics, employment projections, income trends, and industry shifts across Illinois. These insights are infused into strategic and academic planning to ensure alignment with workforce needs.

Beyond SEM, the College is beginning to use forecasts, paired with long-range financial models, to account for tuition revenue, state appropriations, property tax projections, and labor market conditions. For example, multi-year projections support planning for faculty hiring, capital projects, and technology investments, ensuring that commitments are sustainable over time. Finally, the College uses key reports and plans to further inform strategic planning and budgeting at all levels. The Auxiliary Business Plan and internal audit reports help inform our annual budgeting cycle. The Annual Program Review Report and Program Health Dashboard (each described in Criterion 3) and the Student Services and Development (SSD) Annual Reports and Course Scheduling Guidelines help to inform planning and budgeting processes around student matriculation. Together, these integrated reports and planning tools ensure that strategic priorities are consistently aligned with resource allocation and institutional decision-making, thereby reinforcing a culture of data-informed continuous improvement.

Sources

- 4C.28 FY2025 Class Scheduling Guidelines
- 4C.01 strategic-plan-book-version-accessible
- 4C.02 FY2023-2025 Goal Statements
- 4C.03 2024 Budget Open Forum Slides
- 4C.04 Cabinet - Emerging Ideas as of 031925
- 4C.05 ECC KPI Data Model
- 4C.06 annual-goal-setting-guide
- 4C.07 eTalent Performance Review Set Goal Step
- 4C.08 Fall Enrollment History
- 4C.09 PDSA Model
- 4C.10 Data-Based Decision Making Process
- 4C.11 Logic Model
- 4C.12 PROOF - Progress Report on Outcomes Form
- 4C.13 2024 Performance Report
- 4C.14 2015 QIP
- 4C.15 ECC FY 2025 Annual Budget
- 4C.16 Budget Planning Timeline

- 4C.18 Universal Funding Request Process
- 4C.19 Enrollment Forecast Simulator
- 4C.20 FY25-27 draft SEM Plan
- 4C.21 Clarus Executive Summary
- 4C.22 FY2021 ICCB EIS Executive Summary
- 4C.23 fy25-auxillary-business-plans
- 4C.24 FY2024 Annual Audit Report
- 4C.25 FY 2023 Annual Program Review Report
- 4C.26 FY 2024 Program Health Dashbord
- 4C.27 FY 2025 SSD Annual Report
- 4C.17 FY 2024 Transmittal Letter (1)

Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Argument

ECC demonstrates effective administrative structures, strong resource management, and strategic planning to ensure institutional quality and sustainability. Governance follows the Policy Governance Model, where the Board of Trustees sets policy, and the President, as the Board's sole employee, oversees implementation. Administrative structures are designed for collaboration and accountability. The President's Cabinet consists of senior leaders across academics, finance, human resources, technology and research, marketing and communications, institutional advancement and fundraising, community relations, and legal counsel. Academic operations are led through the Deans Council, which manages curricula, faculty oversight, student services, and assessment practices. Faculty interests are represented by the ECC Faculty Association (ECCFA), while staff, building engineers, and police are represented by respective unions. Students contribute through the Student Government Association and a Student Trustee on the Board. Cross-functional committees, taskforces, and formal reporting procedures further support transparency and shared governance.

ECC's financial and operational sustainability rests on careful long-range planning and prudent fiscal management. Since 1949, the College has maintained a balanced budget and holds the highest credit ratings. Primary revenue sources include property taxes (60%), tuition and fees (24%), and state apportionment (7%), supplemented by investments and grants. ECC maintains significant reserves—\$73M in unrestricted operating funds, equal to 78% of annual costs—and follows strict state fiscal rules. Expenditures prioritize instruction, academic support, and student services. Independent audits, reserve requirements, and policies on fund transfers safeguard accountability.

The College's Spartan campus includes specialized labs, theaters, clinics, athletic facilities, and academic centers. Capital plans, updated every five years, align facilities with strategic goals. Since 2009, ECC has modernized its campus through local referenda, state funds, and bonds. Current projects include the Manufacturing and Technology Center, scheduled to open in fall 2026. Human resource planning emphasizes data-driven position approvals, diversity in hiring, and compliance. Staffing levels, impacted by the pandemic, have since returned to pre-pandemic totals, though with shifts between faculty and professional staff.

ECC also prioritizes technology as an enabler of student success. The IT Department oversees infrastructure, classroom learning tools, and cybersecurity and is supported by faculty-student advisory committees. Investments since the 2019 Assurance Filing include an expansion of internet capacity, hybrid learning classrooms, mobile conferencing, cybersecurity, and audio-visual upgrades.

Finally, ECC's strategic planning process integrates data-driven goal setting, budgeting, and performance assessment. Guided by the ECC Strategic Plan from 2023 to 2027, the College sets Annual College Goals that cascade to departments. A Plan-Do-Study-Act Model ensures continuous improvement, with results reported publicly in annual Performance Reports. Budgeting is tightly aligned to goals through zero-based planning, universal funding requests, and oversight by the cross-representative Budget Council. Data from enrollment forecasts and labor market studies further inform priorities. ECC demonstrates a culture of collaboration, fiscal responsibility, and evidence-based decision-making to sustain its mission and advance student success.

Sources

There are no sources.