

Assurance Argument

Elgin Community College - IL

9/25/2015



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1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

The mission of Elgin Community College (ECC) is to *improve people's lives through learning*. Elegant in simplicity, the mission is *the* core driver behind every goal and objective in Elgin Community College's five-year [Strategic Plan for FY2013 to FY2017](#). Our promise to the residents of [Illinois Community College District 509](#) is to create and provide high-quality learning environments that meet their needs while enriching their lives and communities. Our mission was crafted along with our vision, wherein we challenge ourselves to achieve excellence in how we improve lives. Specifically, we strive to make *ECC one of the best centers of learning in the United States* and benchmark our performance against peer institutions nationally. Taken together, the mission and vision guide everything we do. Our mission calls us to improve the lives of others, and our vision promises excellence in how we do this.

1.A.1. The ECC Strategic Plan consists of several components:

- Mission, a statement of why the college exists
- Vision, a statement about our future and where we are headed
- Shared Values, core principles and beliefs that guide our work
- Goals, broad intentions we expect to accomplish during the life of the plan
- Objectives, reportable actions we expect to accomplish for each goal

The ECC Board of Trustees approved the current plan on August 14, 2012, and it will stay in effect until the end of FY2017 (June 2017). The next planning cycle is scheduled for July 2017 (FY2018) until the end of June 2022 (FY2022). The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), a cross-functional team representing faculty, administrators, support staff, students, and community members – is slated to reconvene in fall 2016 to begin work on the next plan.

Strategic planning is overseen by the college's Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) Office, an office which works collaboratively with the division of Teaching, Learning, and Student Development (TLSD) and all service and auxiliary areas to keep strategic planning tied to the needs of the District residents and businesses. The Executive Director of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness reports to the College President, and the institutional research staff reports to the Executive Director (see [ECC Organizational Chart](#)). The Executive Director is involved actively in all institution-wide strategy teams, i.e., the Student Success Infrastructure (SSI), the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), and the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council (SPBC). These committees are referenced throughout this Assurance Argument.

Throughout our history, oversight for planning has been housed in various campus offices, but launching of the PIE Office in 2007 resulted in formalization and centralization of these efforts (see 2009 HLC Focused Visit Report). Since then, we have significantly improved data reporting capabilities – as evidenced by improvements in outcomes assessment, program review, budget review, and student success review – and have linked them to goal setting. Further, since launching the [Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative](#) in 2013, we are improving our practices in linking planning to resource allocation.

1.A.2. Actionable and reportable components of the plan include six college-wide goals and 23 college-wide objectives within them. Together these components reflect the ECC's overall direction in terms of academic programs, student support services, and enrollment. Aligned to these components, annual operating goals are set by departments each spring, followed by annual accomplishments each fall. These are recorded in the Annual Goals Database and used to inform the [ECC Annual Budget](#) (see 5A3).

College-wide goals and objectives, as well as department-level operating goals, are consistent with the college's mission *to improve lives* and vision *to achieve excellence*. For example, with regard to Goal 1 (foster a learning-centered environment) and Goal 2 (promote student goal completion), ECC heeds the call to prepare more students for college by developing high-quality college readiness programs. Current accomplishments within these goals include launching a successful Accelerated Learning Program and piloting multiple methods for course placement (see 3D2). Through Goal 3 (promote a climate of collaboration, equity, and inclusion), ECC recognizes the importance of building an equitable culture by designing programs responsive to diverse learning needs. In addition to hosting professional development in [cultural competency for hiring](#), ECC has created programs like the [Transition Academy](#), which offers college preparation and mentorship to area high school students. Goal 5 (strengthen partnerships) is another distinctive feature of the plan, which we exemplify through successful programs like [Accelerating Opportunities](#) for Adult Basic Education students and free job fairs. Finally, through Goal 4 (promote transparency) and Goal 6 (enhance ECC as an employer of choice), we commit to improving our own operations. Accomplishments in these areas include refinements in tracking institutional data and increased participation in professional development by employees.

1.A.3. Processes by which ECC prioritizes budgeting needs are described more fully in 5C1. Evidence that these support the mission surfaces in many ways. First, [2015 Employee Survey](#) results show that 83% of employees strongly agree or agree that the institution is successful in

meeting its mission and goals – a figure which has risen since 2006, a year before strategic planning became centralized (see [2009 HLC Focused Visit Report](#)). Secondly, our [Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative](#) with the HLC, which is detailed in Criterion 5C1, ensures that the annual budgeting process aligns to department plans, and in turn, to strategic goals and objectives. Finally, the [Student Success Infrastructure \(SSI\)](#), the organizational umbrella which unites all student success strategies on campus, is guided by the work of several teams focused on one or more strategic goals.

Sources

- 2015 EEC Emp Survey Results - Exec Sum
- Accel Opportunity Info
- Cris Clifford Cullinan_March 6
- ECC District Map (Oct. 2014)
- ECC Org Chart - Sep 2015
- ECC Strategic Plan Booklet - 20121024 C
- Final Budget FY16 Report 6-10-15
- HLC Focused-Visit-Report 2009
- QI Report Elgin Community College IL
- SSI Chart and Roles-Respon
- SSI Materials
- Transition Acad Flyer

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

1.B.1. The Strategic Plan is available on the college website, in paper copy, and on many signs throughout campus. The mission and vision are displayed at the top of the [President's Report](#), which is mailed to District residents and employees three times a year, and [Para Ti](#), the college's Spanish-language newsletter. The mission, vision and shared values are posted and recited by members of the college's Board of Trustees at monthly Board meetings, and the shared values appear on ECC employee business cards. Each college commencement program includes the mission, vision, and shared values, as does the [Student Handbook and Planner](#), which is produced annually. The annual [College Catalog](#) (online or paper copy) includes the mission, vision, shared values, and strategic goals. Finally, in additional employees, students and community members participate in strategic planning.

Progress in meeting ECC Strategic Plan goals is articulated in the form of internal reports like [Student Success Infrastructure \(SSI\) Project Updates](#) and [Annual Goals Database reports](#). Many of these sources are formative in nature and used by senior leaders. Public reports containing top-level summative include the [Community Report](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#), and the [Performance Report](#), in which the President and Board annually reflect on progress in meeting 34 key indicators of institutional performance. These reports are available on the ECC website. In our communications with the public and in the [2015 ECC Employee Survey](#), we recognize a need to improve dialog about ECC Strategic Plan goals and to provide greater clarity in how we meet goals and objectives (e.g., while 83% agree *that* the college meets its goals, only 56% agree to understanding *how* goals guide decisions). In the meantime, we promote communications informally through social media (e.g., Twitter and Facebook) to current and future students and alumni and via weekly news updates ([The Wrap-Up](#)) and biweekly newsletters ([Spartan Review](#)) for employees. Videos containing updates and announcements are displayed via ECCTV screens found inside common areas and outside near campus entrances. Finally, the ECC Foundation has begun an alumni relations program through surveys, a newsletter, and improved database management.

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

1. student learning
2. student goal completion
3. diversity, equity, and inclusion
4. transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in processes and systems
5. educational and workforce partnerships
6. employee well-being

Goals encompass the constituents we serve which include: students, employers, taxpayers, college employees, and partner educational institutions. Mission-derived documents explain the college's emphasis on instruction, scholarship, research, creative works, and public and economic service and provides additional details on the public reports described in 1B1. Examples include self-study reports; program review reports; webpages; department marketing materials; course schedules; professional development workshops and events; and budget documents. The scope and purpose of various each are described in the college's [Planning and Budgeting Guide](#), which is used by ECC deans, directors, and budget officers to guide operational planning annually. The [Annual Planning Calendar](#) within this guide delineates the schedule of these reports chronologically throughout the year. Faculty instructional coordinators, who lead curriculum development and assessment in their disciplines, and academic support staff, who support deans and coordinators, play important roles in supplying information needed in these essential documents.

1.B.3. Residents and businesses of District 509 have diverse learning needs; thus, goals of the ECC Strategic Plan reflect a wide scope of offerings and services. As shown in the FastFacts profile, students reflect a range of backgrounds, ages, and aspirations. In academic year 2014-15, ECC enrolled 16,598 students in credit programs, including six university-transfer degrees (Associate in Arts; Associate in Science; Associate in Fine Arts – Musical Performance; Associate in Fine Arts – Visual Art; Associate in Engineering Science; and Associate in Liberal Studies) across 33 disciplines; 137 career-technical degree and certificate programs; Adult Basic Education (ABE); General Education Development (GED) high school equivalency; and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. ECC also enrolled 3,900 students in [non-credit/continuing education classes](#) during fiscal year 2015. ECC's academic programs are described on the college's website, the College Catalog, [view books](#), and [student career planning guides](#).

Support services at ECC are detailed in 3D1 and include the Renner Academic Library, financial aid and scholarships, career development and job placement, services for veterans, services for residents over 50, federal [TRiO](#) upward bound program for students at-risk for not completing high school, work study programs, internships, on-campus early childhood lab school, workforce transitions and unemployment services, distance learning, international studies/study abroad, tutoring and supplemental instruction, writing and math labs, placement testing, academic advising, academic advising and wellness, and co-curricular and service learning opportunities. Our services are quite comprehensive, reflect the diversity of our community, and confirm our commitment to equity in serving the learning needs of all residents.

Sources

- 2015 EEC Emp Survey Results - Exec Sum
- 2015 Spring Presidents Report LR-20150309
- Annual Planning Calendar 2015-07-01 Final
- College Career Ready Guide 4-23-12
- Continuing Education Fall 2015 - 1859
- ECC Para Ti Summer 2015 final
- ECC Report to the Community 2014
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog
- Final 14 CAFR - ECC
- Op Plan Guide Final - 2013-02-15 v3
- Performance-Report-FY14
- Spartan Review - Example
- SSI Project Updates
- Strategic Planning Presentation Oct 2014 FINAL
- Student Planner 2015-16
- The Wrap Up Example
- TRiO Fact Sheet-20150609
- Viewbook

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1. ECC's mission – *to improve people's lives through learning* – is an open invitation to all residents of District 509. During the 2014-15 academic year, ECC had a total unduplicated headcount of 16,598 students. Of these, 5% were African-American, 7% Asian, 39% Hispanic, <1% Native-American, and 45% White. The percentage contribution of minority students at ECC is higher than their relative representation in the District as a whole, where 4% of residents are African-American, 8% Asian, 25% Hispanic, <1% Native-American, and 62% White, according to the American Community Survey (US Census) 2009 to 2013 five-year average estimates. Over the past several years, ECC's student profile has become increasingly diverse in term of race/ethnicity. A US Department of Education-designated [Hispanic Serving Institution](#), ECC was recognized in 2014 with the Diversity and Equity Award by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) and a Central Regional Equity Award nominee from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) for programs designed to raise cultural competence among students and employees. Female students represent 55% of all enrollments, a figure which has not changed substantially over the past several years. In terms of age, <1% students are under 17; 51% are 17 to 22; 21% are 23 to 29; 14% are 30 to 39; and 6% are 40 and older. The average age of students is 27, a figure which has declined slightly over the past several years.

ECC actively recruits international students and has recently allocated new initiatives funds to increase the total number of international students on campus. In 2012, the college added a part-time homestay coordinator to find residential housing for international students, and the position was upgraded to full-time in 2015. The college has also increased funding for software to track student documents and facilitate communication between students and the college. ECC is also recognized for providing exceptional outreach to veterans and students with disabilities. ECC has been a recognized Military Friendly School (G.I. Jobs Magazine) since 2012 and employs a full-time veterans' affairs specialist and a full-time ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) services coordinator who works closely with the college's Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) officer.

Annually the college compiles membership lists of [student clubs and organizations](#), and some of our largest student organizations focus on special populations. According the 2015 Performance Report, these include the Black Student Association (BSA), the Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS), and Advocacy for Disabled and Able People Together (ADAPT). Finally, the

recently-created Wellness Service Office focuses on holistic workshops and support groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (LGBTQ) students and their supporters.

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

A focus on human diversity is integrated throughout the ECC Strategic Plan, and *respect for diversity* is one of the college's shared values, which reads as follows:

All constituencies are important to achieving our vision. Therefore, we must respect the unique and diverse perspectives each person offers and embrace those difference as the means for developing the strongest learning community possible. We promote individual growth and a positive sense of self-worth for all members of the college community.

We champion diversity throughout the plan. Under Goal 2 (promote student goal completion), for example, we have proposed and achieved the following objectives:

Objective 2.3. Improve success milestones among students with the greatest achievement gaps

Achievements:

- Piloted specialized sections of [College 101 \(COL-101\)](#), our introductory course for first-time students, to 21 African-American and Hispanic students based on the Academy of College Excellence (ACE) culture-based curriculum (<https://www.cabrillo.edu/academics/ace>)
- Enrolled 104 and graduated 87 students to date in [Accelerating Opportunity \(AO\)](#) career-academic preparation programs
- Enrolled 611 students in academic year 2015-16 and 413 student in fall 2015 at the [Education and Work Center](#), who together represent 19 world nations. Total walk-in traffic at the Center has reached 4,816 visitors to date, not including enrolled students.

Objective 2.4. Improve placement processes to assist and support various student populations

Achievements:

- Transitioned the college's summer bridge program to a new 4th year high school math course (see 4C1), which nearly 2,000 high schools students have enrolled in since first being offered in the 2013-14 school year.
- Enhanced language development support through co-enrollment in college-level courses
- Revised placement testing in math and English to allow multiple measures including high school grade point averages (GPAs)

A commitment to diversity also appears in Goal 3 (to promote a climate of collaboration, equity, and inclusion), and the objectives and activities contained within it articulate strategies to serve diverse stakeholders:

Objective 3.1. Expand cultural competency awareness and skills across campus

Achievements:

- Offered cultural competency skills training and hiring for cultural competency skills workshops to ECC employees
- Awarded 42 internal grants for faculty to infuse multicultural content into ECC courses
- Sponsored several book readings and expert speakers on topics of diversity through the [Multicultural and Global Initiatives Committee \(MAGIC\)](#)

Objective 3.2. Implement diverse cross-functional teams to broadly promote equity and enhance decision-making

Achievements:

- Implemented four Student Success Infrastructure (SSI) teams which are diverse by employee role (faculty and staff)
- Restructured the Administrative Team and Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council to promote decision-making across a broader set of campus leaders

Objective 3.3. Increase partnerships and programs that encourage interactions with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures

Achievements:

- Hosted welcoming receptions for 51 students (69% of whom are African-American) in fall 2015 with other receptions planned for spring 2016
- Funded, created, and communicated programs that support people of color, global awareness, international student affairs and culture, women, veterans, and adults who are 50+
- Increased the percentage agreement from 73% to 85% in regard to creating an environment that respects diversity and inclusion ([2015 Employee Survey](#))

Finally, Goal 6 (enhance ECC as an employer of choice) promotes and achieves diversity in the following ways:

Objective 6.1. Proactively recruit diverse individuals to work at ECC

Achievements:

- Increased the number of Hispanic employees by 20% and African-American by 40% since 2006
- Through the Student Success Infrastructure (SSI), fund, create, and communicate diversity in hiring workshops to ECC employees

Sources

- 2015 EEC Emp Survey Results - Exec Sum
- Accel Opportunity Info
- COL-101 Master Syllabus
- Hispanic Serving Institution - Map
- HP Ext Site - Intergov Agreement Board Actions
- MAGIC_Newsletter
- Performance-Report-FY14
- Performance-Report-FY14 (page number 33)

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

1.D.1. As our mission states, ECC exists to improve the lives of the District 509 residents, educate communities, and foster ongoing cooperation and partnership. From advisory committees in career programs to workforce development and internships, all college activities are undertaken within a spirit of public stewardship. For example, Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs, a Cabinet-level office, provides outreach for local chambers of commerce, service organizations, and elected representatives. Another example is the [Alliance for College Readiness](#) (see 3D2), a partnership between ECC and public school districts to facilitate dialog, share data, align curricula, and improve college-level placement. The Alliance has been recognized regionally and nationally as a model program in Illinois and a 2013 Bellwether Award recipient (Community College Futures Assembly). The college's involvement in the recently-formed [Alignment Collaborative for Education](#) and [Northern Illinois P-20 Network](#) also illustrate our commitment to coordinate efforts among school districts and state agencies. A final example is ECC's [Financial Literacy Program](#), referenced in 3D1, which has been recognized as a model program by the Community College Futures Assembly and the National Association of College and University Business Officers. It was recently featured in reports from President Obama's Advisory Council on the Financial Capability of Young Americans, which were released in June 2015 by the [White House](#) (p. 65) and the [US Department of Treasury](#) (p. 25).

Finally, two recent centers illustrate the college's ongoing commitment to serving the community: the [Education and Work Center](#) in Hanover Park and [Public Safety Training Center](#) in Burlington. The Education and Work Center, opened in September 2014, is the first of its kind to be jointly managed by two community colleges, Harper College and ECC, which offers free courses for Adult Education students and provides job training through the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. Harper College and ECC each contribute \$750,000 to operate the center for three years as a pilot program. The Public Safety Training Center was chosen by voters to meet the public safety needs of area police and fire departments through a successful referendum in April 2009. Once completed in 2016, it will house the college's certificate and degree programs in criminal justice and fire science, while area police and fire personnel will use the facility for ongoing training rather than travelling several hours to Urbana-Champaign.

It is difficult to quantify the magnitude of the college commitment to the public good. In fall 2014, the Illinois Community College Board conducted an [economic impact study](#) which estimated the total impact of ECC on the regional economy at just over \$93 million. The report went on to state that students who complete an ECC education can expect total lifetime earnings to be 42% higher than the earnings of those not completing at ECC and an expected annual rate of return of 14% on an initial investment in tuition at ECC. When measured in term of student success, ECC has increased completion by 43% between 2000 and 2012 according to this report.

1.D.2. We take seriously our responsibility to meet the learning goals of students even when financial times make it challenging to do so. Examples of the many incentives offer students include:

- Free tuition for eligible students. The ECC Foundation gives away hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in donor scholarships. In addition, the ECC Board of Trustees awards special scholarships for high school students in particular field, who are athletes, and whose cumulative GPAs place them in the top 10% and 20% of their graduating classes. Among the scholarships ECC awards are several focused on Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language students, including students in the college's Accelerating Opportunities vocational certificate programs.
- Financial education, counseling and related services. Through the college's Financial Literacy Program, ECC began in spring 2011 to offer mandatory one-on-one loan advising for all students wishing to borrow money to finance their educations. Relatedly, program sponsors 100 events annually, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion workshops, College Night, College Smart Fair, College Goal Sunday, Adult Education financial education programs, and Money Smart Week campus events.
- [Unemployment services](#) and [career services](#). In response to the economic downturn in 2008, the Board approved a permanent part-time coordinator to serve unemployed residents. The unemployment services coordinator serves 100+ unemployed individuals each month, 60% of whom are over 50. She also provides assistance in applying for public aid and referrals for emergency public housing, which is currently a two-year wait in Elgin. ECC hired a full-time career services internship coordinator in 2014 who works with area industries to match graduating students with non-paid and paid internships.
- [Services for older adults](#). (1) District residents 60 or older receive free tuition. While Illinois statutes (110 ILCS 990/0.01) provide education waivers for residents 65 years of age or older, ECC lowers this threshold to 60. (2) American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Plus 50 and AARP Foundation Grants. The AACC Plus 50 Encore Completion Program and ECC funds are used to provide free weekly computer workshops and math tutoring to students over 50. The AARP Foundation Grant, received in 2014, covers tuition so that students between 50 and 60, specifically women, can re-enter the workforce.

1.D.3. ECC fulfills community expectations by requiring service learning projects from students. Highlights include:

- Speech students from Professor John Karnatz's class participate in their own Spartan Consulting company and provide free business consulting services to local non-profit organizations.
- Students in health professions and human services undertake field experiences for course credit at clinical settings.
- Students in General Student Development courses can elect to participate in alternative spring break as volunteers for Habitat for Humanity.
- Political science students in Professor Antonio Ramirez's class participate in the Model Illinois Government mock legislative sessions at the Illinois state capitol.
- Graphic design students provide creative services for in-house ECC advertising projects.
- Student writing and art is featured in ECC's *Spire* journal of student-created original work.
- Art student participate in the Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference Art Competition.
- Students in various career technical programs participate in Skills USA competitions at regional or national levels.

Other student-sponsored programs help raise money or donate goods to community organizations, many of which have been featured in Spartan Review and the President's Report:

- Relay for Life, which has been a mainstay at ECC for 13 years, raises funds for cancer research
- Project Backpack, now in its fifth year, has collected over 10,000 backpacks and school supplies for needy students
- The Spartan Food Pantry, which opened in February 2015, provides free groceries for needy students and their families. The service was created and is operated by students the Phi Theta Kappa honor society.
- PB Jam, in which 1,200 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are made by students and delivered to social service agencies in the district
- Big Event Day, also launched in 2015, invites students to volunteer for various charitable organizations, such as United Way and the Elgin Park District. Faculty design assignments around this event or allow students to participate as part of their classes.

ECC provides support for primary and secondary schools in our community through several programs including:

- Alliance for College Readiness
- Alignment Collaborative for Education
- Upward Bound college preparatory program for first-generation college students
- Transition Academy

Numerous programs provide support for professional growth and development of community members including:

- Participating in federally-funded TRIO programs for academic personal support and mentoring

- Sponsoring the Youth Leadership Academy, an Elgin-area program to support low-income middle and high school students
- Hosting an annual job and internship fair which is open and free to the public
- Hosting an annual College Night whereby over 100 baccalaureate-granting colleges and universities meet with area residents

Finally, the college supports cultural organizations in our community. ECC provides rehearsal and performance space to six in-residence ensembles, including the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra, Elgin Children's Chorus, Elgin Master Chorale, Children's Theatre of Elgin, Fox Valley Youth Theatre Company, Ballet Folklórico Huehucoyotl, and an arts organization, Hamilton Wings.

Sources

- AACC Plus50 Student Brochure-20131003
- Align Collab for Ed - Press Rel
- Alliance Exec Summary and DH article
- COTW Internship Pres 09-09-2015
- ECC Econ Impact Report
- Financial Literacy Program
- HP Ext Site - Intergov Agreement Board Actions
- Opportunities to Improve the Financial Capability and Financial Well-being of Postsecondary Students
- Opportunities to Improve the Financial Capability and Financial Well-being of Postsecondary Students (page number 25)
- P20 Council Annual Report (Spring 2014)
- PACFCYA Final Report June 2015
- PACFCYA Final Report June 2015 (page number 65)
- PSTC - Approval Docs
- Services - Resources for Unemployed Booklet
- Transition Acad Flyer

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC fulfills Criterion 1 through our mission to *improve people's lives through learning* and our vision *to make ECC one of the best centers of learning in the United States*. ECC's Strategic Plan for FY2013 to FY2017 is the physical manifestation of our mission and vision and helps to guide and prioritize the college's operations. It includes six college-wide goals and 23 college-wide objectives within them. Aligned to these components, annual operating goals are set by departments each spring, followed by annual accomplishments each fall. These are recorded in the Annual Goals Database and used to inform the ECC Annual Budget.

As our mission states, ECC exists to improve the lives of the District 509 residents, educate communities, and foster ongoing cooperation and partnership. From advisory committees in career programs to workforce development and internships, all college activities are undertaken within a spirit of public stewardship. We take seriously our responsibility to meet the learning goals of students even when financial times make it challenging to do so and have many incentives to offer students. We also provide support for professional growth and development of employees and community members.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Argument

The ECC Board of Trustees maintains a [Board Policies Handbook](#) containing policies for: governance, the Board/President relationship, executive parameters, and annual goals. Governance policies include Board duties and roles, planning cycles and calendars, and codes of conduct. The Board/President relationship includes policies related to the delegation of duties, evaluation of the President, and executive succession. Executive parameters include policies related to budgeting, compensation and benefits, etc. Finally, annual goals and metrics are set each spring to align to ECC Strategic Plan goals.

In addition to the above components, the handbook also contains copies of the Board's self-evaluation tool, [Affirmation of Service](#), [Board Ethics Resolution](#) and [State Officials and Employees Ethics Act](#) (5 ILCS 430/1-1), [Open Meetings Act](#) (5 ILCS 430/1), [legal duties](#) per the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805), [Board professional growth and development](#), and current and historical information about the District. These written policies and statutes ensure fair and ethical practice in leadership.

Through the [Cabinet](#), the President oversees compliance with the Board's policies by setting [administrative procedures](#), or standard operating practices, aligned to the policies. At present, 132 administrative procedures specify how the college operates, which together reflect every major institutional function at ECC: academic affairs, student affairs, human resources, finance, etc. Administrative procedures are vital to engaging constituencies in governance. The development, revision, and approval of procedures often takes months to execute, and during this process, discussions occur cross-functionally. Each procedure is revised according to schedules contained within the procedures themselves, and within the Teaching, Learning, and Student Development (TLSD) division, a standing Academic Procedures Review Team oversees procedures related to faculty, curricula, and students. Once approved by the Cabinet, administrative procedures are communicated internally to employees via the portal and externally to students via [www.elgin.edu](#) and the [Student Handbook and Planner](#).

Financial Functions. The PIE Office maintains an [Annual Planning Calendar](#) which outlines major events impacting annual cycles at ECC. [Annual budgets are prepared](#) by each department in the spring term, forwarded to the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council (SPBC) for

vetting, and advanced to the President and the Board for approval. Once approved, revenues and expenses are monitored by budget officers and the Business and Finance Office. These are subject to an annual [external audit](#) and an annual [A-133 audit](#) for federal grant-funded programs. Audit reports are presented to the Finance Committee of the Board at its October meeting. Finally, an onsite auditor in the Business and Finance Office also helps ECC assess administrative procedures. Working within the Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics of the Institute of Internal Auditors, Inc., the ECC auditor creates unbiased assessments of effectiveness in areas like course registration, testing, and advising – which are then used to refine processes, create new goals, or inform new administrative procedures. Several procedures which directly impact TLSO academic units, deans and directors (e.g., section scheduling, etc.) are delineated in more detail in [Processes for Effective Teaching and Learning \(PETAL\) documents](#) on the employee portal.

Academic Functions. ECC's academic programs are covered in more detail under Criteria 3 and 4. Programs are developed and courses are reviewed by the [Curriculum Committee](#), a faculty-led cross-disciplinary body which meets twice a month throughout the academic year. Programs are launched after a thorough review of market needs, resource availability, and feedback from students and advisory committees; and courses are assessed in terms of disciplinary content and mastery of student learning outcomes. Once developed, programs are reviewed internally by the [ECC Review Team](#) – a peer review committee consisting of faculty, administrators and support staff – and externally by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Criteria for review include alignment of curricula to stated goals, student success, cost, and planned improvements. In addition, ECC maintains a separate innovation fund outside of department operating budgets. Funds for new initiatives are dispersed competitively by the [Equity Coordinating Council](#) of the Student Success Infrastructure (SSI). Many initiatives, after a period of testing and measurement, become sources for new programs, positions, partnerships, or administrative procedures.

Personnel Functions. Goal 6 of the ECC Strategic Plan prompts us to enhance ECC as an employer of choice and includes objectives related to employee recruiting, hiring, and professional development. All new and reclassified positions are approved first by the Cabinet and then the Board of Trustees. ECC uses an online [applicant tracking system](#) to gather resumes and expedite the search review process. Faculty job descriptions are outlined in a three-year negotiated contract between the ECC Faculty Association (ECCFA) and the Board of Trustees ([Board/ECCFA contract](#)). For administrative and support staff positions, employees and supervisors create [position description questionnaires](#) (PDQs), which are evaluated by the [Hay Methodology Team](#), a standing cross-functional committee tasked with classifying jobs based on the [HayGroup Profile Method](#) of job evaluation. Jobs are reassessed whenever reorganizations or vacancies arise. Once hired and following mandatory probation, administrative personnel sign annual contracts, while staff have a three-year negotiated contract between the Support Staff of Elgin Community College Association (SSECCA) and the Board ([Board/SSECCA contract](#)).

Fairness and integrity extend to employee professional development. New hires attend an [orientation to the college](#), which highlights administrative procedures, the ECC Strategic Plan, operational processes, [campus safety and emergency procedures](#), and [employee assistance programs](#). Binders of materials are provided to all new employees. The [Professional and](#)

[Organizational Development Office](#) supports training for all ECC employees, and within this office, the Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning provides professional development to faculty. Finally, all employees and community members have access to training courses and resources online via www.ed2go.com, a division of Cengage Learning.

Auxiliary Functions. The college maintain nine auxiliary service areas: athletics, bookstore, non-credit continuing education, Early Childhood Lab School (childcare center), facilities rental, food services, production services (printing), student life, and the Visual and Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Each prepares an [annual business plan](#) and budget according to [auxiliary operating parameters](#) approved by the Board's Finance Committee. With the exception of the bookstore, which returns a modest sales profit to subsidize other auxiliary areas, all auxiliaries are slated to break even each year. In reality, economic conditions sometimes necessitate periodic transfers from the education to supplement auxiliary operations. Because student success is the primary driver of all college activities, revenues do not necessarily equal expenses in these areas. For example, the Early Childhood Lab School and VPAC serve dual roles as both auxiliary units and learning labs for students. As such, learning goals supersede financial returns. Another area where this often occurs is athletics. ECC belongs to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference in Region IV of the NJCAA. The NJCAA has student eligibility requirements which focus on academic performance and college completion, and the NJCAA compliance exam is required for all head coaches. In addition, ECC complies with the US Department of Education's annual Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act Survey to ensure the college's commitment to equitable opportunities for men and women.

The college's continuing education is a self-sustaining auxiliary office which provides open enrollment training, lifelong learning, workforce development, and contract training to district residents and businesses. As with all auxiliary units, this area reinforces learning goals in credit areas. Generally shorter in duration with flexible start dates, noncredit classes often serve as stepping stones to credit-bearing certificate and degree programs. For instance, massage therapy became a credit program in 2009, and the firefighter program exists in both credit and noncredit versions. Finally, with support from the US Small Business Administration and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the continuing education office hosts an [Illinois Small Business Development Center](#).

Sources

- 2015 Fall POD_CETL_EM Brochure
- A133 Single Audit FY2014
- A133 Single Audit FY2014 (page number 5)
- Admin Contract Template1
- Admin Procedure List_HLC - 081215
- Affirmation of Service September 2015
- Annual Planning Calendar 2015-07-01 Final
- Board Ethics - Legal Duties 10-16pp
- Board Ethics - Open Meetings Act 16-32pp

- Board Ethics - Resolution 1-9pp
- Budget Planning Calendar FY16
- Business Plan - Bookstore FY16
- CEOP 2011
- Curriculum Comm Policies 4-3-15
- District 509 Board of Trustees Policies
- Draft - BoT Prof Dev
- ECC Employee Assistance Program
- ECC Hay Methodology
- ECC Org Chart - Sep 2015
- ECC Review Team - Sentinel - April 2013
- ECCFAContract2013_2016
- ed2go Online Courses
- Established Dates for Review of PDQ
- External Audit FY2014
- Guide to Writing at ECC
- Hiring Process
- Hispanic Serving Institution - Map
- IRRB FAQ
- June 15 Operating Parameters for Aux Enterprises
- New Employee Orientation 2015 08 11 MASTER
- P0 400 - Course Scheduling Guidelines
- Policy_BPR_BOT
- Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ)
- Renner Acad Library Brochure 21845jc10-13
- SBDC-Workshops
- SSECCA Contract 2014-2017
- SSI Chart 2_0
- State Officials and Employees Ethics Act
- Student Planner 2015-16
- The Write Place Brochure 362SM20131031

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

The www.elgin.edu website provides students and the public with detailed information about the college. The About ECC page contains facts about ECC programs, requirements, costs, information on ECC's accreditation with a link to the HLC statement of affiliated status, and information on the Board of Trustees. The [Fast Facts](#) brochure includes specific information about student enrollment and is updated annually. The [College Catalog](#) includes information on programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control by the Board, and accreditation. It is available both online and in paper copy upon request. In addition, many degree programs maintain student handbooks which explain requirements and accreditation to enrolled students (e.g., [Physical Therapist Assistant Program Handbook](#)), and individual program brochures are created annually in paper form for prospective and enrolled students. These are available at campus entrances. The Student Handbook and Planner is updated annually and contains the academic calendar; mission, vision and values, and the campus location and phone number for each campus service; and short sections on academic and student life offerings, student services, enrollment and finances, college procedures, and student success strategies.

Summary reports available to the public on www.elgin.edu are updated annually and include: Student Right to Know (Public Law 101-542) statistics and the academic success of athletes; the [Community Report](#); [Performance Report](#); accreditation reports; budgets and financial reports; and the [Career Technologies Student Survey Executive Summary](#) with job placement rates and employment of recent graduates. The athletic program at ECC maintains a student athletic code of conduct and convenes fall meetings with each team to review policies and procedures. The [Athletes Commit to Education](#) program was adopted in fall 2010 and includes a contract signed by student athletes.

Sources

- 2015 to 2016 PTA Handbook F
- Athletes Commit to Education Program
- Career Tech Survey Exec Sum
- ECC Report to the Community 2014
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog
- Fast Facts 2015-2016
- Performance-Report-FY14
- Student Planner 2015-16

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

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

Board responsibilities include: determining the policies, resolutions and motions to govern the college; monitoring the college's fiscal affairs; and appointing and overseeing administration of the President. The Board governs the college by majority rule in accordance with Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS) and the US Constitution. The Board meets in open meetings 11 times per year, once per month, except during February. All Board meeting agendas and minutes are posted publicly on the college's website.

Trustees participate in two Board committees: the Committee of the Whole and the Finance Committee. The Committee of the Whole consists of the entire Board and meets just prior to each monthly open meeting to discuss agenda items and hear presentations by college and external presenters. The Finance Committee meets quarterly to review, discuss, and approve financial items, such as budgets, audits, tax levies, tuition, and auxiliary operating parameters. The committee consists of three trustees, although more typically attend. In addition, trustees serve as representatives/liaisons to various college and external organizations. The Board chair appoints Board representatives to the Illinois Community College Trustees Association and liaisons to the ECC Foundation and legislators. One trustee serves as a representative to ACCT and is elected by the Midwest Region Chapter. Board members also participate in college convocations, partnership meetings, and meet-and-greet sessions with local elected officials.

An example of how Board deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the college is the former graduation fee. For many years, the college's graduation fee was cited by students as a reason for not attending graduation. In 2014, the Vice President of TLSO and the Vice President of Business and Finance led efforts to come up with an alternative, and consequently the [Board approved a \\$1 increase](#) in the registration fee and eliminated the graduation fee. This change has allowed the college to encourage student participation in graduation while maintaining revenues needed to support operations.

2.C.2. The necessity of the Board to consider interests of internal and external constituencies is exemplified in its purpose statement:

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

It is further reflected in the [Affirmation of Service](#), which is pledged by trustees during seating of new members in the spring. Through the affirmation statement, trustees promise to support the community and acknowledge that their authority derives from community common interests. Members further agree to foster cooperation and mutual support, encourage community interactions to inform future planning, and participate in college committees, such as cultural competency workshops. Finally, at each open meeting, the Board chair provides an opportunity for public participation. Any member of the public who wishes to address the Board may do so during a designated portion of the agenda.

An example of how the Board considered the interests of internal and external constituencies concerned a proposal to outsource custodial services in spring 2014. Board meeting minutes attest to the college's intention to explore outsourcing as part of its review of college operations, but that idea registered concerns on the part of ECC employees, students, and District residents (see [The Observer](#) from April 2014). As a result, the President proposed hiring a consulting services firm to provide recommendations on how to optimize custodial services. A special, additional board meeting was held in June 2014 to discuss a new [request for proposals \(RFP\)](#), resulting in a custodial services consulting contractor being hired in October 2014. A report and recommendation are being prepared now.

2.C.3. Illinois has statutes that the Board is required to follow in conducting its meetings. The [Open Meetings Act](#) (5 ILCS 120/1) establishes legal criteria to ensure a quorum is present and that meetings focus on matters of public concern. The Board only convenes in closed session to discuss confidential legal or personnel matters and only after a vote is taken in open meetings to move to a closed format. The Board Policies Handbook contains guidelines to ensure that meetings are productive and not rushed, avoid disruptive behavior, and follow parliamentary procedures. The handbook also states that developing a collective concurrence outside of a public meeting is prohibited.

In addition to the Open Meetings Act, the Illinois statutes detail due processes with regard to meeting attendance, finance, contracts, and the recording of minutes – and the Board is further bound by an [Ethics Resolution](#) which stipulates guidance with respect to political activities, acceptance of gifts, and appointment of an [ethics advisor](#) and/or ethics commission. To avoid conflicts of interest and promote public confidence in leadership, each trustee and all ECC employees at the level of director and higher are required to file [statements of economic interests](#), income, investments, or real estate holdings annually with the Kane County Clerk. Further, despite vote results, each trustees agrees to support the policies decided by the majority. Finally, through the Affirmation of Service, trustees promise to exemplify ethical behavior and vote according to conscience rather than special interests.

The Board maintains a [rigorous program of professional development](#), which includes an orientation for new members and ongoing training in governance matters. Trustees attend the annual ACCT and ICCTA conferences and prepare written and oral reports at open meetings. They participate in two days of retreat each summer to prepare annual goals. In all professional activities, the Board adheres to the college's administrative procedure related to travel and business expenses. Finally, to foster awareness and personal connection between employees and Board, each Board meeting contains a President's Spotlight, when the President highlights the important contributions of particular employees and students (e.g., academic leaders, athletes, etc.).

The [Education and Work Center](#) (see 1D1) is an example of how the Board collaborates with partners while preserving its independence and serving the best interests of ECC. The college, the village of Hanover Park, Harper College, and the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership jointly collaborate to operate this center. Harper College and ECC assumed responsibility for launching it, thereby providing much-needed educational accessibility for residents of Hanover Park, a suburb which lies partially within the district boundaries of both colleges.

2.C.4. As described in 2A1, the Board has adopted a governance system focused on creating policies (see also 5B2), from which day-to-day management of the college is delegated to the President. The President further delegates responsibility to the Cabinet, who prepares consent agendas for Board meetings. The faculty oversee academic matters through the [Curriculum Committee](#) which oversees approval and review of programs, certificates, and courses.

An example of an issue overseen by the faculty and approved by the Board are lab and course fees. The [instructional fee recommendations](#) for fiscal year 2016 were approved by the Board at its October 2014 meeting after review and discussion from the Vice President of TLSD upon the counsel of faculty.

Sources

- Affirmation of Service September 2015
- Board Ethics - Legal Duties 10-16pp
- Board Ethics - Open Meetings Act 16-32pp
- Board Ethics - Resolution 1-9pp

- Curriculum Comm Policies 4-3-15
- Draft - BoT Prof Dev
- ECCBOTAction - RegFee_Oct2014
- ECCBOTAction179A14_CustodialServices
- ECCBOTAction-Ethics Advisor-May 2014 171A14
- HP Ext Site and Intergov Agreement Board Actions
- Instructional Fee Recommend FY16 - Oct 2014 BOT
- Observer Apr 2014_CustodialOutsourcing
- Statement of Economic Interest

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

The college strives to live our seven shared values, which are recited aloud by trustees before each meeting. One of these values is freedom of inquiry, which reads:

We believe a learning community is most engaging and viable when a spirit of free inquiry exists, allowing everyone the freedom to explore new and diverse ideas and to express their interests and attitudes.

College policy on [academic freedom](#) is discussed in the Board/ECCFA contract (p. 9) which articulates expectations that faculty will present information fully and without bias and are entitled to research and speak freely about academic matters.

An example of putting freedom of inquiry into practice was the September 2013 ECC Humanities Center Speakers Series invited talk by William Ayers entitled *Democracy and Education: Teaching for Liberation*. Sponsored by the student-led Peace and Justice Club and the faculty-led Humanities Center, the talk caused a number of District residents to express concerns to the Board and was followed closely in both the [The Observer](#) and local newspapers. A counterargument defending the center's choice of speakers was made by the President and Vice President of TLSD, who rallied behind freedom of expression, and the talk was eventually held amid great publicity.

Sources

- ECCFAContract2013_2016
- ECCFAContract2013_2016 (page number 9)
- Observer Oct 2013_BillAyers

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

2.E.1. [Administrative Procedure 3-103](#) (Data Collection Involving People at ECC) describes the college's procedures for conducting research involving students, employees, or affiliates of the college. The procedure specifies that anyone collecting original data (either in numerical or qualitative form) via surveys, interviews, focus groups, or performance measures/experiments must submit requests in writing using a [research project intake form](#). The form ensures that data are collected ethically and contains a sample form for research participants to offer informed consent. Administrative oversight is maintained by the PIE Office and overseen an Institutional Review Board (IRB) consisting of appointed administrative and elected faculty members. Typically, research requests come from ECC faculty, or faculty or graduate students at other universities. Research projects from students as part of class assignments are monitored by ECC faculty who follow best practices of the IRB and their own professional organizations.

Anyone can requests commonly available summative data from the PIE Office (e.g., enrollment data, completion rates, etc.), and many of these are summarized in public reports. Requests for individual record data containing identifying information about students or employees are routed through the PIE Office as well as other appropriate offices (e.g., human resources or EEO/AA office). Requests must be submitted on a [non-disclosure/data sharing agreement](#) which ensures that data are used ethically and only for legitimate research purposes. Data sharing agreements are signed by the requesting party and either the President or the Executive Director of PIE. Guidance on these process is provided in an IRB frequently asked questions [\(FAQ\) document](#).

2.E.2. [Administrative Procedure 4-407](#) (Academic Integrity) details the college's position on academic integrity and expressly forbids any form of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, complicity, multiple submissions, or misconduct in research. Violations of the policy may results in verbal warning, mandatory enrollment in the college's Writing with Integrity non-credit course offered through The Write Place (writing center), rewrite/revision of an assignment, or grade reduction/failure of a course. Should a violation warrant oversight by the Dean of Student Services and Development or the Vice President of TLSD, repercussions may include disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. [Administrative Procedures 4-401](#) (Complaint Procedure), [4-403](#) (Appeal of Final Grade), [4-404](#) (Placement Test Appeals), and [4-408](#) (General Appeals) offer detailed processes whereby students can complain about and, if needed, appeal

various college decisions (e.g., grades, judicial decisions, etc.) through fair hearings and without fear of retribution.

ECC's federal compliance filing outlines the distribution of student complaints by type for the most recently completed academic year (2014-15) and the prior year (2013-14). These include 17 of 52 complaints related to administrative procedures and eight related to grade appeals, among others. Only one complaint in the past two years concerned plagiarism or the misuse of information resources. All complaints have been resolved successfully.

Assistance with using information resources ethically is available from the [Renner Academic Library and Learning Resources Center](#) and [The Write Place](#), ECC's writing lab for students. [A Guide to Writing at ECC](#) is a manual written by ECC faculty that includes information about writing research papers, plagiarism, editing strategies, and resources for writing assistance. It is provided as a link through Desire2Learn (D2L), the college's learning management system, for students in online classes as well as from the Renner Academic Library website, and in print version in the ECC bookstore. In addition, [Research Guides](#) on the library site provide links to articles, online videos, and websites for researching and writing in various disciplines. Finally, help is available on a walk-in basis, by appointment, or through the free Writing with Integrity class mentioned above. Librarians teach classes in the use and evaluation of all types of information and provide students help with research projects for ECC classes and assignments

2.E.3. A number of administrative procedures address the discovery and application of knowledge by faculty and staff:

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

A number address integrity and honesty for students:

- Administrative Procedure 4-401: Complaint Procedure
- Administrative Procedure 4-402: Student Code of Conduct
- Administrative Procedure 4-403: Appeal of Final Grade
- Administrative Procedure 4-404: Placement Test Appeals
- Administrative Procedure 4-407: Academic Integrity
- Administrative Procedure 4-408: Appeals

Each procedure outlines the college's definitions, general guidelines, and provisions for compliance, as well as repercussions should procedures be violated. For many procedures, the college follows state or national laws. For example, [Administrative Procedure 3-301](#) (Copyright) follows copyright laws of the United States. Others are articulated through negotiated contracts. For example, intellectual property rights are detailed in the [Board/ECCFA Contract \(p. 47\)](#).

For students, procedures are introduced during new student orientations, required [COL-101 \(College 101\)](#) course sections for first-time students, and in the Student Handbook and Planner. A [Violation of Academic Integrity](#) form is used to document acts of dishonesty for students. For employees, procedures are articulated during employee orientations, and documentation follows the employee discipline and grievance/appeals process, which is found in contracts for union employees and [Administrative Procedure 5-401](#) for non-union administrators (Employee Grievance for Eligible Administrative Employees).

Sources

- Academic Integrity Violation Form
- Admin Proc 3-103 Data Collection Involving People at ECC
- Admin Proc 3-301 Copyright
- Admin Proc 4-401 Complaint Procedure
- Admin Proc 4-403 Appeal of Final Grade
- Admin Proc 4-404 Placement Test Appeal
- Admin Proc 4-407 Academic Integrity
- Admin Proc 4-408 Appeal for Complaint Procedure
- Admin Proc 5-401 Employee Grievance
- COL-101 Master Syllabus
- ECCFAContract2013_2016
- ECCFAContract2013_2016 (page number 28)
- Guide to Writing at ECC
- Home - LibGuides at Elgin Community College
- IRB Intake Form - Final
- IRRB FAQ
- Renner Acad Library Brochure 21845jc10-13
- The Write Place Brochure 362SM20131031
- Two Way Non-Disclosure Agreement Form - rev20141222

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC exhibits the highest degree of integrity, ethics, and responsibility in serving students and conducting operations. Through strategic goals and achievements, the institution exemplifies its shared values of:

- excellence
- freedom of inquiry
- equity
- ethical practices
- accountability
- respect for diversity
- community engagement.

Examples of exemplary practice within Criterion 2 include written policies (from the Board) and administrative procedures (from the Cabinet) regarding institutional governance, conduct, ethics, accountability, financial stewardship, and freedom of inquiry and expression. Equity is a particularly essential value to the college's overall success, as it requires a thorough understanding the needs of constituencies. Launching the Education and Work Center in 2014 is one way the college has delivered on this value. Diversity is another essential value which is reflected in recent recognitions by the Association of Community College Trustees and the Illinois Community College Trustees Association for best practices in cultural competence professional development.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A.1. ECC's vision ends with *"we will strive to create high-quality learning opportunities that respond to the needs of the residents of our district."* To ensure our courses and programs meet this aim, ECC uses feedback from course and program reviews, employers, external advisory committees, and professional accreditation organizations. The Curriculum and Assessment Office has developed a [10-step program development process](#) based on information provided in the ICCB Program Approval Manual and Administrative Rules Section 1501.302. This process encompasses an assessment of feasibility/needs and approvals from the ECC Board, the HLC, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Once green-lighted, new programs carry out assurances which include budgets, hiring of faculty, and marketing – as well as set-up in the college's enterprise resource planning (ERP) data system. Each step follows college policies and procedures.

Program review reports are used to document goals, needs, curricular improvements, student success measures, and costs. Programs are reviewed on five-year cycles specified in the [ICCB Program Review Manual](#). ECC prepares an [annual state report](#) each year from which ICCB issues an annual statewide summary, containing data from ECC and all 47 Illinois community colleges. In addition to reviews every five years, ECC programs receive annual data updates from the PIE Office containing program-specific comparative data on student enrollments, retention, and completion.

At the course level, [master course outlines](#) document course outcomes, prerequisites, [credit hours](#), [Illinois Articulation Initiative \(IAI\) codes](#), books, supplies/materials, and teaching qualifications. Master course outlines are publicly available in the [CurricUNET curriculum management](#) system at <http://www.curricUNET.com/elgin>. In addition, the Curriculum and Assessment Office has provided a [guide to creating a new course](#) and [faculty training](#) to inform course development and sound assessment practices.

All courses and programs are reviewed and approved by the [Curriculum Committee](#), which is faculty-led and includes representatives from all ECC divisions. In addition, ex-officio committee members participate from Academic and Transfer Advising Services, Records and Registration, and Curriculum and Assessment. The committee meets bimonthly in the fall and spring semesters to review all proposed new programs, certificates, and courses – taking into account the educational needs and goals of particular disciplines, student needs, community needs, graduation requirements, course transferability, and state guidelines and requirements. The committee recommends approval or denial to the Vice President of TLSD. Meeting minutes are available to all ECC employees via the employee portal, and the committee produces summary reports twice annually. During the past five years, the committee has reviewed over 750 proposed changes, which include new programs and courses, prerequisite changes, and course withdrawals (see table).

Summary of Reviews Conducted by the ECC Curriculum Committee Over Five Years

Year	New Programs	New Courses	Course Revisions	Withdrawn Courses
2010-11	4	29	120	11
2011-12	5	19	62	57
2012-13	2	32	87	17
2013-14	3	40	94	15
2014-12	0	12	100	44

ECC's career-focused programs work in close partnership with area employers and maintain external advisory committees. An example is the truck driving program. In this program, students receive 320 hours of training compared to the state requirement of 160 hours, and program completers have been 100% successful in passing the state's Commercial Driver's License Exam. Because of high demand in this area and nationwide, employers who in the past only hired candidates with one to two years of experience now come to ECC to recruit graduates. By increasing the number of required hours, truck driving students are eligible for federal financial aid under the US Department of Education's Title IV program. An added benefit is that credits earned count toward an owner/operator certificate or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Another example comes from ECC's radiography program. In fall 2014, the program introduced three advanced vocational certificates for licensed, practicing radiographers (computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, and mammography). These programs increase job opportunities and earnings potential. With regard to the magnetic resonance certificate, there are currently only ten such programs in the US which are accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT), and ECC is one of only two such programs in a community college. Other accredited career programs appear in the [College Catalog \(pp. 19-23\)](#). Throughout all 14 health professions at ECC, 96% of graduates passed licensing exams during the 2014-15 academic year.

3.A.2. Every ECC program establishes program outcomes (learning goals) which are recorded in CurricUNET and examined and/or revised as part of 5-year program reviews. Program outcomes are shared with students in various ways. The paralegal and radiography programs, for instance, lists outcomes in the program details section of their webpages. Healthcare programs publish program outcomes in student handbooks distributed during students' first semesters (e.g., see the [Clinical Laboratory Technology Program Handbook](#)).

ECC has two main curricular tracks that, while not mutually exclusive, are focused on different short-term goals. The university transfer (UT) track consists of six associate degree options (see 1B3), while the career-technical education (CTE) track consists of 39 occupational programs leading to certificates and/or an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees. While UT transfer degrees focus on advancing students through general education requirements and preparing them for junior status in baccalaureate institutions, CTE programs focus on preparing students for employment.

Many CTE programs build skills through stackable credentials. Students qualify for entry-level employment by getting a basic vocational skills (BVS) certificate, from which they may proceed (immediately or later) to a vocational specialist certificate and then an associate of applied science (AAS) degree. The AAS requires students to complete at least 15 semester credits of general education courses. ECC has agreements with several universities to allow AAS graduates to enter baccalaureate programs after completing an AAS degree.

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

3.A.3. ECC courses are taught at the Spartan (main) campus, at the Education and Work Center, and soon at the Public Safety Training Center. In addition, Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language courses are taught at various community locations, such as the Streamwood Village Hall. ECC has articulation agreements with area high schools to provide students who

complete designated courses with college credit upon matriculation to ECC. Courses are taught face-to-face, hybrid (partly online), or wholly online. In some programs, the same course is offered in all three modalities (e.g., English 101). Regardless of location or delivery mode, all modalities are included and evaluated during the program review and follow the same master course outlines.

An example of how instructional quality remains consistent across modality involves telecourses, or courses on video. During program review, one of the data elements provided to programs is student success by modality. Based on a review of historic data from 2009 to 2013, ECC determined that course success in telecourses lagged behind face-to-face, hybrid, and online sections. Course grades of A, B, and C were lower in telecourses than other modalities (e.g., in 2014, success in telecourses was 54% v. 70% for face-to-face courses), and grades of D and F were higher. Meanwhile, persistence rates were lower, and withdrawal rates were higher (e.g., in 2014, 25% of students in telecourses withdrew before finishing the course v. 13% in face-to-face courses). Consequently, beginning in fall 2014, telecourses were retired.

Hybrid and Online Courses. The development and assignment of online and hybrid courses is carried out by deans or supervising administrators. The Department of Instructional Technology & Distance Learning assists faculty in converting face-to-face courses into hybrid or fully online formats and provides technical training to faculty. The office is comprised of an associate dean, two full-time and one part-time instructional technology coordinators, and an operations coordinator. It is advised by a Distance Learning Advisory Committee of faculty, staff, and administration. Desire2Learn (D2L) is the college's designated learning management system. The Quality Online Course Initiative (QOCI), a framework developed by the Illinois Online Network, is used to analyze learning needs and provide a systematic approach to developing online courses consistent with the transfer of knowledge and skills ([online course development process](#); [QOCI rubric](#)) and informed a new classroom visitation form. In an effort to further ensure quality, a clause was added to the Board/ECCFA contract whereby online and hybrid sections may be among those selected for review as part of faculty evaluation.

Dual Credit Programs. Dual credit programs are available to qualified high school students in the District. Dual credit courses are offered at ECC and taught by ECC faculty. Students enroll in and are integrated into the courses on our campus and can earn both college and high school credit simultaneously. All are assessed and must meet minimum competencies as defined for all courses. On average, 160 high school students attend ECC annually, earning approximately 1,500 credits each year. Students participate in an orientation, receive training in D2L software, and are provided access to all college resources, including the library, tutoring, and helpdesk. Both CTE and general education courses (i.e., middle college) are offered as dual credit. Middle college students must complete the same competency testing as regular college students, have a 3.0 high school GPA, or be in the top 10% of their high school class. Students who apply for CTE dual credit must meet minimum competency requirements and have at least a 2.0 high school cumulative GPA.

Articulated Credit. Several high schools also offer ECC-articulated courses in a number of career technical fields through the Perkins Grant (US Department of Education). Articulated courses are taught at the high schools by high school instructors and can lead to ECC proficiency

credit upon enrollment at ECC. For example, students in District U-46 who successfully complete an articulated accounting class (with a final grade of B or better) can, upon enrolling at ECC, receive proficiency credit for ACC-100 (Introductory Accounting I) and enroll in any course for which ACC-100 is a prerequisite ([District U-46 Articulated High School and ECC Courses 2014-2016](#)). Credit is automatically transcribed on the tenth day of enrollment and accepted into the next course for a particular degree/certificate sequence. Articulation agreements are reviewed every two years by ECC faculty. High schools must provide course outlines, syllabi, sample tests, texts or other information deemed necessary to document the alignment of the course content and rigor.

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

ECC also has a memorandum of agreement with Montessori Education Centers Associated (MECA) to provide instruction at MECA for the BVS certificate in Montessori infant/toddler and Montessori early childhood education. MECA is accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. Student success and learning outcomes are evaluated with the same rigor as coursework taught on campus, and regular site visits are conducted to ensure quality. The early childhood education program, which encompasses these certificates, is required to conduct a program review self-study per ECC's and the ICCB's frameworks. MECA provides ECC students with field experiences and a workplace setting to promote active learning. This contract is also under review presently at the HLC. The college has no consortial agreements.

Sources

- Clinical Lab Tech Handbook 2012-13
- Consideration When Creating a New Course
- Course Development Guide for Lab Ratios
- Course Evolution
- Credit Hour Contact Hour Determination
- CurricUNET - Elgin
- CurricUNET User Manual
- D300 Articulated courses 2014-2016
- D301 Articulated courses 2014-2016

- D303 Articulated courses 2014-2016
- DU-46 Articulated courses 2014-2016
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog (page number 23)
- Elgin Community College Master Course Outline Example
- Final Bylaws Curriculum Policies 4-3-15
- FY15 Program Review 509 Elgin Community College
- IAI core curriculum GEPanelsDocument_1998-May-01
- IAI Process Documentation
- ICCB Program Review Manual
- Online-hybrid course development
- Program Development Guidelines FY15
- QOCI - ECC Current

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

3.B.1. ECC is committed to offering general education courses and co-curricular experiences that provide students with knowledge and skills common to all professions and that prepare students for local, national, and global citizenship and leadership. ECC's general education program requires students to acquire skills in reading, writing, scientific literacy, quantitative literacy, critical thinking, information and technology literacy, and global awareness. A detailed description of each general education outcome is documented in the [College Catalog \(p. 17\)](#) and posted on our website.

Students fulfill general education requirements in various ways. All associate of arts and associate of applied science degree programs require general education coursework. As described in 3A1, the statewide IAI allows students to transfer general education credits earned elsewhere to ECC (and vice versa) and ensures that courses are of high quality. Finally, all vocational skills certificates, while not intended for transfer, require completion of communications coursework, which aligns with the general education outcomes of reading, writing, critical thinking, and global awareness.

3.B.2. Building upon the American Association of Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes (National Leadership Council, 2007), ECC's general education program encompasses the values and skills deemed necessary for students to achieve higher levels of learning and knowledge as well as strong intellectual and

practical skills to navigate an ever-changing world. ECC's general education philosophy and full definition of outcomes appears in the [College Catalog \(p. 17\)](#):

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Scientific literacy
4. Quantitative literacy
5. Critical thinking
6. Information and technology literacy
7. Global awareness

Student Learning Assessment and Advisory Committee (SLAAC). [SLAAC](#) is a cross-divisional faculty committee charged with developing and assessing ECC's general education outcomes (see full description of committee purpose in [SLAAC bylaws](#)). SLAAC is also charged with developing and implementing strategies to improve student learning, which will be detailed in Criterion 4. Outcomes language is revised as necessary to reflect advances in curriculum and education standards. In 2014, for example, new language was introduced for reading, critical thinking, and scientific literacy.

3.B.3. As stated in 3A2, ECC offers six associate degrees designed for transfer. These include the associate of arts, associate of science, associate of fine arts - music, associate of fine arts - visual art, associate of engineering science, and the associate of liberal studies. Each requires students to complete general education coursework in communications (6-9 semester hours); mathematics (3-9 semester hours); physical and life sciences (7-10 semester hours); humanities and fine arts (3-9 semester hours); and social and behavioral sciences (3-9 semester hours). A non-transfer associate of applied science degree is also offered, which requires coursework in communications, social or behavioral science, mathematics or science, and liberal education. During five-year reviews, programs are asked to review curricula and align courses to both their program and general education outcomes. A mapping exercise ensures that each degree program allows students adequate opportunities to learn, practice, and master communication as well as research and critical thinking skills across the curriculum. Advisory committees and accrediting agencies also reinforce the need for students to acquire such skills.

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

3.B.4. As described in 1C2, diversity is one of ECC's shared values which is reflected in ECC Strategic Plan Goal 3 (promote a climate of collaboration, equity, and inclusion). There are

myriad different ways our curricula exemplify this goal and contribute to the general education outcome of global awareness and diversity. ECC offers coursework in world languages, humanities, history, political science, and international studies; an annual International Week, featuring dance, food, and conversations about current topics related to global cultures; and grants for faculty to infuse global perspectives into their courses.

The College's Global/International Studies Taskforce (GIST) formed in fall 2007 to advance globalization efforts. The GIST Steering Committee and five (5) subcommittees (curriculum; study abroad and faculty exchange; international student services and enrollment; funding, assessment and research; and extra and co-curricular events) of faculty and administrators provide leadership to infuse curriculum, encourage and foster global exchanges, and explore strategies to expand global opportunities for students, work exchanges for faculty and administrators, and increase international student enrollment.

ECC maintains a strong partnership with Chongqing Technology and Business University (CTBU) in China to create semester and summer study abroad programs. With Chinese educators, ECC hosts the biannual International Forum on Globalizing Career Technology Education for faculty, staff, and administrators. In partnership with the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP), the college offers two-week professional exchanges for faculty and administrators to China, as well as the Netherlands, and Finland; semester programs in Spain, England, Austria, and Ireland; and summer opportunities in India, France, and Costa Rica. ECC culinary students are able to participate in short-term programs in Semmering, Austria and Angoulême, France, and a summer study abroad program to Brazil will be piloted in summer 2016. Exploratory visits to set up new partnerships have been conducted at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana and Yamaguchi University in Japan.

While GIST focuses primarily on globalization abroad, the Multicultural and Global Infusion Committee (MAGIC) supports multicultural learning experiences for students and staff, hosts diversity-related community events, and assists search processes for new hires. Finally, ECC's Student Success Infrastructure (SSI) includes an Embracing Cultures on Campus Team, which coordinates cultural competency professional development for employees and recruitment and retention of diverse employees.

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

Through the SSI, a Faculty Research Community (FRC) was established in 2015. Each participant submits a research proposal and works collaboratively with other FRC members to design, carry out, measure progress, summarize, and share results with ECC and external audiences. Long-term goals of the FRC are to increase faculty interest in scholarship; investigate ways that research can enhance teaching and learning; increase the prestige of excellent teaching; broaden the evaluation of teaching and assessment of learning; increase faculty collaboration across disciplines; and support teaching and learning financially. In a similar way, the Honors

Program challenges highly motivated students to lead research investigations with faculty and analyze, synthesize, and share findings.

As described in 2E1, ECC maintains an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the purpose of ensuring that data derived from, or to be derived from, human participants affiliated with ECC (i.e. current, potential, or former students; employees or affiliates of ECC) is collected and used in a manner that complies with standards of acceptable practice and federal mandates.

Sources

- ECC-2015-16_Catalog
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog (page number 21)
- Home - Lib Guides at Elgin Community College
- SLAAC Bylaws
- SLAAC Orientation Fall2015

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1. At our last IPEDS reporting date, ECC employed 601 (133 full-time and 468 part-time) faculty members who provide oversight for the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of student learning. One hundred thirteen (113) full-time faculty are tenured, and 20 are pre-tenured on a tenure track. The average length of employment for full-time faculty is 14.2 years; and 8.8 years for part-time faculty. Full-time teaching faculty teach a minimum of 30 credit or contact hours annually, and per the contract, all faculty are expected to utilize learning outcomes assessment and measures to improve learning/instruction.

The Cabinet strives to maintain a student-faculty ratio of 20:1 while allowing for faculty office and service hours as required by contract. Additionally, the Cabinet strives to have 60% of all credit hours in any given year taught by full-time faculty, but results from the 2014 National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) indicate that ECC is only in the 24th percentile among comparable community colleges, with large variances by program. In academic years 2015-16 and 2016-17, ECC plans to hire six new full-time faculty in the English Department and Math Department to balance ratios and will increase the number of faculty as needed in the coming years.

3.C.2. [Administrative Procedure 5-103](#) (Minimum Requirements for Appointment to Faculty) defines credential requirements for faculty. The faculty contract contains job descriptions for each faculty type, which are reviewed during contract negotiations. Faculty teaching most university transfer (UT) courses must have at least a master's degree in the discipline in which

they teach or in a related discipline of at least fifteen (15) graduate hours. Faculty teaching career-technical education (CTE) courses must have at least a bachelor's degree and 4,000 hours of work experience; or a master's degree in the discipline or in a related discipline of at least fifteen (15) graduate hours and 4,000 hours of work experience; or journeyman status sanctioned by the Department of Labor; or recognized license or certification and 4,000 hours of work experience.

Because dual credit students are integrated into ECC courses, all dual credit is taught by appropriately credentialed ECC faculty.

Faculty teaching Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, or English as a Second Language must have a bachelor's degree in the discipline or in a related discipline and one year of teaching experience in the discipline or a related discipline. Faculty teaching pre-college courses must have a bachelor's degree in the discipline or a related discipline. Faculty teaching general student development courses must have a master's degree in counseling, clinical psychology, or a related field with professional counseling certification or doctorate in psychology. Additional requirements may apply to individual courses to meet applicable laws.

3.C.3. Expectations for faculty evaluations are described in the [ECCFA/Board contract](#). The forms, procedures, and schedules are detailed in the [Faculty Evaluation Handbook](#). Generally, non-tenured faculty are evaluated on an annual basis by a dean during their first three years of employment. The probationary period may be extended for an additional year and notification of non-renewal is given at least sixty days prior to the end of a semester. Tenured faculty are formally evaluated every three years. Unit adjunct II faculty who have taught six semesters or more are evaluated every two years. Unit adjunct I faculty who have taught two to five semesters are evaluated annually. As part of these evaluations, each faculty member submits a self-evaluation, including a professional growth plan, to his or her dean. Student evaluations of instruction are also compiled for each course in the fall and spring semesters. Response data are provided to faculty and deans by the PIE Office and used for instructional improvement.

3.C.4. As stipulated by contract, faculty are expected to participate in professional growth activities aligned to ECC Strategic Plan goals, participate in professional organizations, and stay current on research and technologies in their fields. ECC's [Faculty Development Committee](#) supports formal study, including degrees or certifications, as well as sabbatical leave and financial support for other forms of professional growth such as travel, publications, and professional works. The college budgets separately for professional development and professional expenses for both full-time and adjunct faculty. Professional expenses include books, dues, hardware, or software necessary to carry out faculty duties.

The Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) is committed to empower ECC faculty and staff to support student success with current research in pedagogy, andragogy, and instructional technology (see 5A4.). The [2015 Employee Survey](#) indicates professional development as an area of satisfaction among faculty in particular. In academic year 2014-15, a variety of classes and workshops were offered to 273 faculty registrants, which included topics on lesson planning, outcomes assessment, faculty evaluation, D2L technology training, and college readiness.

CETL also invites expert guests to speak on relevant topics. In 2014-15, Dr. Michele DiPietro, author of *How Learning Works* conducted faculty workshops on millennial students, generational theory, and metacognition and intellectual development. Dr. Peggy Mitchell Clarke spoke on classroom management, student mental health issues, and identifying pre-incident indicators to violence. Dr. Ronni Sanlo, Director Emeritus of the UCLA Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Center and author of *Letter to Anita* conducted workshops on LGBTQ allies, which has been further organized into a student support group by ECC's new Student Wellness Office.

3.C.5. Engaging students is one of the hallmarks of a culture focused on student success, and [2012](#) and [2014 results](#) from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) indicate ECC students score faculty availability and helpfulness higher than national benchmarks for like-sized colleges. Faculty are issued college email and phone numbers, which are communicated to students on syllabi. Faculty hold office hours in their offices or laboratories, and office hour schedules are submitted in writing to deans and posted on divisional bulletin boards. Full-time faculty are available for at least 60 minutes each day they teach and for at least ten hours and four days per week. Adjunct faculty hold office hours for at least 25 minutes per week for every credit or contact hour of teaching.

3.C.6. Wrap-around support services are critical to helping students achieve their goals. Staff in academic advising, financial aid, tutoring, and co-curricular student life have appropriate credentials to provide high quality support. Academic advisors in the new Student Success Center have at least a bachelor's degree, a year of experience advising students, and three years' experience in higher education. Financial Aid Office advisors have at least a bachelor's degree and two years' work experience in a financial setting. Professional tutors have at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent.

ECC recognizes its role in providing professional development and maintaining the capabilities and competencies of employees. ECC students rate the helpfulness of support services higher than comparison colleges on the 2009, 2012, and 2014 CCSSE. However, results from ECC's 2015 Employee Survey indicate satisfaction with professional development is markedly lower for support staff than other ECC employees; thus, moving forward, we intend to address this gap. Nonetheless, ECC budgets for professional development for staff as it does for other employees, and funds are awarded per contracts. In addition, individual departments provide training for staff members and encourage attendance at professional conferences.

Sources

- 2015 EEC Emp Survey Results - Exec Sum
- Admin Proc 5-103 Min Reqments for Appt to Faculty
- CCSSE2012 KeyFindingsRpt
- CCSSE2014_KeyFindingsRpt
- ECCFAContract2013_2016
- Faculty Evaluation Handbook Final
- Final Faculty Development Handbook 081214
- IAI core curriculum GEPanelsDocument_1998-May-01

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

3.D.1. Many of ECC's student support services are provided before students even apply for admission. One of the 2014 CCSSE items ranked as statistically higher than comparable colleges is how well ECC provides support (3.23 vs. 3.01 on a 4.0 scale). The Embracing Student Support/Resources Team of the SSI is where ECC support services are strategically planned, vetted, and measured. All student support services, descriptions and contact information are updated annually in ECC's [Student Resource Guide](#), which is prepared by the Student Life Office and emailed to all students. This information is also available in print form, in the College Catalog, and electronically on the college's website and within D2L.

Admissions and Registration. Admission and enrollment information is available to potential and current students 24 hours a day via the college's website or email. In person, the Admissions Office is open Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Fridays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bilingual staff assist Spanish- and Polish-speaking students. Over the past five years, the office has developed presentations for Hispanic students and families. Additionally, an Adult Education coordinator holds adult information sessions three times a year which focus on prior learning, transcript evaluations, and other needs of returning adults. All registration information is available in English, Spanish, and Polish in print and online.

Academic Advising and Transfer Services. Academic and transfer advising services are offered through the Student Success Center. A detailed description of these services is provided in section 3D3. ECC employs two full-time wellness professionals who are clinically licensed counselors or social workers and a Behavioral Intervention Team consisting of the Dean of Student Services and Development, the Chief of Police, the ADA Coordinator, and the Associate Dean of Student Success. Together these professionals help students stay on track while ensuring

the safety and well-being of all students. A student assistance hotline is available to students 24 hours a day/7 days a week for crisis intervention and handling personal challenges.

Disability Services. The Disability Services Office serves any students with disabilities, assisting approximately 450 to 550 students each semester. ECC faculty receive disability accommodation procedures about disability services, contact information, accommodation letters from students, and disability services statements for course syllabi. The office collaborates with the Tutoring Center and the Testing Center to provide test accommodations and the Department of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning for students with difficulty navigating technology. They work with Student Accounts and Financial Aid to interpret information for students with understanding debt obligations and refer students and provide documentation to the TRiO Program office as needed. The office also works closely with high schools to conduct presentations and individualized educational plan meetings at the high schools to assist in the transition from high school to college.

Testing and Tutoring. The Testing Center proctors over 30,000 tests annually for prospective students, current students, and community members, who use the center for workplace certification tests. The center runs six placement review workshops for COMPASS and PSB-HOA (Psychological Services Bureau Exam for Health Occupations Aptitude) exams and works collaboratively with the Tutoring Center to provide computer basic skills workshops. The Tutoring Center operates in two locations – Building C (Renner Academic Library) and Building K (Multipurpose Classroom Facility) – and across multiple formats – private, drop-in, online, and in-class. Most services are free except for private tutoring, which costs \$15 an hour, and two-hour basic skills workshops, which cost \$5 each. Basic skills workshops include computer basics, biology study skills, fractions, positive/negative numbers, sentence structure, comma use, test-taking, test anxiety, note-taking techniques, and time management. Online tutoring is available to all students and distance learning students in particular, and Accelerating Opportunity program students benefit from having in-class tutors. The TRiO Program supports tutoring if students qualify, and fees are waived in hardship cases.

Supplemental Instruction Labs. Two supplemental instruction labs provide free assistance in writing and math. The Write Place provides free one-to-one assistance in all types of writing – reports, essays, grammar, punctuation, formatting papers, speech outlines, vocabulary, etc. A free Writing with Integrity class is also offered. The center is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. and on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Faculty across the college heavily promote The Write Place in their teaching, and during the 2014-15 academic year, 2,560 students visited the center. In a similar way, the [Math Lab](#) is available on a drop-in basis Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Math Lab is staffed by a professional math facilitator and provides a relaxing space for students to form study groups and seek assistance with math problems. In 2014-15, an average of 212 students visited the Math Lab each week during the fall and spring semesters; with an average of 93 students per week taking advantage of this service during the summer term in 2015.

Library. The Renner Academic Library and Learning Resources Center was built with funds from the April 2009 referendum. The library serves students, faculty, staff, and community members. The library's homepage serves as both a communication tool and an instructional

tool. [Research guides](#), created by ECC librarians, house information on locating references for various topics and are used in classes, during reference desk interactions, and embedded instant messaging chats. The library provides interlibrary loan services for physical resources located at other institutions and dedicated study spaces for group and individual study. According to student survey results, [UT and CTE students are universally supportive](#) of the library (92% and 93%, respectively), and 84% of UT students and 66% of CTE students use library services regularly. Student use of the research guides grew 117% between 2012 and 2013.

Underrepresented At-risk Students. ECC supports three federally funded TRIO programs (Student Support Services, TRIO Student Support Services/English as a Second Language, and Upward Bound) and one self-funded homegrown program, the Transition Academy – which assist at-risk students with support services necessary for college success. Student Support Services work with college students, while Upward Bound and the Transition Academy prepare high school students for college success. Services include:

- Academic planning
- Tutoring support
- Information concerning financial aid and scholarships
- Assistance with college applications and transfer
- Visitation to four-year institutions
- Workshops addressing various aspects of college life
- Leadership development
- Cultural and social activities
- Referral to college and community support services
- Mentoring

Internships and Career Exploration. Assisting students in choosing majors and careers is a service offered through the Career Development Services Office. In addition to individual appointments with students, the office offers coursework designed to connect college to careers: Two courses, GSD-120 (Exploring Careers and College Majors) and GSD-160 (Job Search Strategies) are offered every term, while GSD-140 (Guided Career/Life Transitions) is offered occasionally. GSD120 is the department's highest enrolled course, and an online version was developed in 2012. Resume assistance and mock interviews are also offered.

Since November 2013, the internship coordinator in ECC's Career Development Services Office has developed a centralized program connecting students to real-world job experiences. This role was created through analysis of career preparation data gathered by the SSI's Career Coalition Taskforce. The coordinator has created an employer handbook and training for 45 area employers. Thirty-four new internship opportunities have been created and three district employers began paying interns. Two new employers joined ECC's Illinois Cooperative Work Study Program (Illinois Board of Higher Education) which funds internships. ECC's Paralegal and Criminal Justice programs require internships for program completion.

Financial Literacy. A 2014 Bellwether nominee and 2013 Innovation Winner from the National Association of College and University Business Officers, ECC's Financial Literacy Program and the Financial Aid Office provide workshops on how to apply for financial assistance and

scholarships, and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In June 2015, ECC launched a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on how to pay for college, financial aid basics, and scholarships in a free and accessible format. As mentioned in 1D1, ECC's Financial Literacy Program was spotlighted in June 2014 reports from President Obama's Advisory Council on the Financial Capability of Young Americans.

Programs for Special Populations. ECC is committed to providing services to special populations. The college employs a full-time veteran services coordinator who publishes a newsletter for veterans and organizes resource fairs and special events, such as an Honor Guard on holidays. One academic advisor is assigned to all veteran students. ECC's student athletes are required to participate in the Athletes Commit to Excellence (ACE) program (see 2B1) which includes mandatory meetings with advisors and required logins of study hours for continued play eligibility. During the 2013-14 academic year, 23 first-year student athletes qualified for Academic All-Conference recognition (with GPAs above 3.0) for studying 24 hours or more, and 15 second-year athletes logged 48 hours or more. Finally, services are available to assist unemployed or underemployed students through ECC's Workforce Transitions Department. Services include assistance for tuition, testing fees and books; referrals for childcare and transportation, resume development and interview skill training; job search and referral assistance; support groups and one-on-one advising; computer skills training; and employer tours.

3.D.2. ECC is an open-admission institution. All first-time and returning students are required to attend a new student orientation on campus during which time they learn about support services and meet with an academic advisor to understand placement tests and select courses. Beginning spring 2016, students transferring to ECC will also be required to attend new student orientation.

Placement into many courses is based on demonstration of minimum competencies in reading, English, and math prior to enrolling. Competency is determined from ACT subscores, Compass test scores, and/or an English writing essay. An earned high school GPA of 3.5 or higher was introduced as another acceptable placement indicator for college-level math and a similar policy has been adopted by the English department with a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher.

In fall 2011, the Math Department introduced a developmental course (MTH-099) which blends two levels of developmental math (MTH-096 and MTH-098) into one combined course. Students placing on the higher end of the Compass test but below the college-level cutoff score are eligible to take MTH-099 and thus save time and tuition. Results show that students are as likely to be successful in the combined course as a stand-alone courses (66% receive C or higher v. 65% in MTH-096). Math faculty continue to test innovative approaches to encourage matriculation and have proposed a practical math course (MTH-095) to be offered starting in fall 2016.

Since fall 2013 ECC has offered an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) enabling students who place into developmental English the opportunity to enroll in developmental and college-level English concurrently; thus, allowing students to complete both courses in one semester. The

ALP program has proven quite successful, as results from fall 2013 and spring 2014 show that students earn grades of C or higher in ALP developmental courses more often than regular developmental courses (83% v. 65%) and just as often in ALP college-level courses as regular college-level courses (69% v. 70%).

As described in 1D1, the Alliance for College Readiness is a collaborative partnership between ECC and public school districts which formed in 2006 with the goals of improving student success and ensuring all high school graduates are college-ready regardless of where they continue their postsecondary education. The Alliance is comprised of voluntary middle school, high school, and ECC faculty and staff focused on curriculum and instructional alignment and student transitions to college and careers. From 2008 to 2014, the Alliance offered a summer bridge program which served 219 students and resulted in improved ECC placement test scores in writing or in math among 72% of its participants. The program's success resulted in the development of a fourth year high school math course, jointly created by high school, ECC and Northern Illinois University math faculty. Aligned to the Common Core State Standards and ECC college entrance standards, this course has been adopted in three of four school districts (six high schools) for students who would not otherwise take math during their senior year. Of the students who completed the course and participated in pre- and post-testing, 66% moved up at least one ECC math course level. The Alliance is one of ECC's flagship programs and has garnered national attention.

3.D.3. The mission of the Student Success Center at ECC is to foster collaborative student-advisor relationships to promote learning. ECC's academic advisors guide and empower students to make well-informed, strategic decisions that encourage student development and meaningful, timely pathways. In May 2014, the college transitioned from a counseling to a caseload based academic advising model, thereby requiring each advisor to manage a certain number of students from the point of entry to completion, transfer, or career. Students meet with their assigned advisor at designated milestones based on the number of credits earned. There are also advisors for particular groups of students, such as veterans, international students, and athletes.

Program directors in CTE programs and health professions provide academic advising for their students. Further, two career development specialists assist undecided students in choosing a major. During the 2014-15 academic year, advisors met with 17,491 students (some students had multiple meetings). Course planning and transfer information requests were the most common reasons students sought the assistance of advisors.

In addition to milestone-based interventions, academic advisors reach out to advisees for success interventions. Advisors meet with advisees in poor academic standing (i.e. pre-suspension, suspension, dismissal) to create success plans. Faculty can raise an 'early alert' through ECC's Early Alert system if they believe a student is at risk for not completing a course successfully. Current retention practices are under review by the college and will be updated to include more data points to identify students at risk before they begin to falter. Academic Advising and Transfer Services also hold events throughout the year:

- Student welcomes

- Quick Stop Advising for students with quick questions
- Roosevelt University Pre-Pharmacy Partners Program Information Sessions
- Graduation workshops
- Transfer workshops
- New Student Orientation Group Advising
- Career development Internship opportunities
- Private Illinois Colleges & Universities College Fair (on campus)
- State College Fair (on campus)
- College Night (on campus)
- State School Tours (Northern Illinois University and Western Illinois University)
- Spring Break Big 10 Universities Tour

Finally, to encourage planning, ECC implemented an Ellucian-supported student planning module in October 2014 to provide students a web-based tool to chart progress, plan coursework, register for classes, and make payments. Advisors can make course recommendations and leave notes for students within the same tool. Prior to implementation, few students created course plans, but since adoption, over 50% of current students have used this tool to plan or register for coursework, a figure which continues to increase.

3.D.4. ECC has a solid infrastructure and dedicated resources to support effective teaching and learning (see 5A1). The campus consists of 209 acres containing thirteen buildings. Buildings A through O house smart classrooms, academic laboratories, science laboratories, welding laboratories, an auto mechanic lab, health profession simulation rooms, art production rooms, art galleries, two theaters, two auditoriums, a library, an events center, student study spaces, a student-run restaurant, and a university and business center. The campus also houses athletic fields and maintenance building.

Since 2009, ECC has implemented its [campus master plan](#), expanding and renovating the campus per a referendum passed in April 2009. The plan resulted in the following improvements:

- Expansion from 837,690 to 1,108,073 square feet of space
- Renovation of two former light-industrial properties into a 71,000 square-foot Building K (Multipurpose Classroom Facility) featuring 26 new classrooms and 5 new computer labs
- Construction of Building A (Health Careers Center of Excellence) featuring state-of-the-art healthcare training facilities that simulate a working hospital
- Construction of Building C (Renner Academic Library and Learning Resources) which replaced an outdated library that was less than 1/3 its size
- Renovation of Buildings B, D, and portions of Buildings G and M featuring renovated classrooms, labs and offices, revamped lounge, and cafeteria
- Updated signage and way finding throughout campus
- Construction of a Public Safety Training Center in Burlington

The college has been recognized for sustainability and design from the campus master plan. Building K received the Preservation/Adaptive Reuse Award from the American Institute of Architects Northeast Illinois Chapter, 2011 Design Awards. Dewberry Architects received a

Merit Award for the Renner Academic Library through the Association of Licensed Architects. Spartan Drive was awarded the American Public Works Association (APWA) Project of the Year for the Fox Valley Branch in 2009 and the APWA Chicago Metro Chapter Project of the Year Award for its category. Buildings A and C have received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver designations.

ECC utilizes an integrated student information system to support academic administrative services for students, including admission, testing, advising, registration, financial aid, student payment, and student records. Renovations ensure that all faculty, including adjunct faculty, have adequate office space to work and meet with students. Faculty and students utilize D2L as the learning management system and with the Department of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning providing technology assistance for faculty, lab coordinators, and students. A dedicated helpdesk assists faculty and students with technical issues. The campus has free secure Wi-Fi hot spots as well as computers in the library, First Stop, and academic computing labs. Faculty, staff and students are given storage space on the network that is accessible on and off campus and college-issued email accounts associated with Google Apps. Other technology infrastructure improvements include:

- Providing adequate bandwidth connection to support the demand for high-speed internet
- Implementing a multi layered emergency alert system and upgrading the campus wide surveillance system to further the safety of faculty, staff, and students
- Upgrading the phone system to a voice over IP (VOIP) technology and expanding the system to all classrooms as well as multiple hallways in addition to offices and conference rooms
- Implementing special physical remote access controls to a quadriplegic faculty member empowering him to open doors and operate elevators from his chair mounted laptop

Additional facilities on campus foster student learning and co-curricular development. The ECC Visual and Performing Arts Center houses a state-of-the-art Blizzard Theater that is home to ECC student performances, community ensembles, and nationally renowned events throughout the year. The college maintains an art collection (valued at more than \$500K), which exposes students and community members to different visual cultures and promotes a sense of artistic and cultural diversity. An onsite Early Childhood Lab School provides opportunities for students studying early childhood education to gain valuable hands-on experience. Finally, the college contracts with local hospitals and other agencies to provide clinical sites for students in education and in health professions.

3.D.5. As stated in 3B3, ECC employs professional librarians who provide reference services, bibliographic instruction, maintain library databases, circulation and periodicals; and support interlibrary loan. A dedicated distance learning librarian coordinates information literacy instruction and library resources for distance learning students. Librarians collaborate with faculty on library research assignments, host workshops for classes, conduct student research appointments, provide one-on-one reference service, conduct research for faculty, staff, and administration, and provide library programs on academic issues, cultural events and campus-wide activities. Students are able to use online search of library resources as well as an instant chat feature. These skills are emphasized in many courses such as ENG-101 (English

Composition I), CMS-101 (Fundamentals of Speech), and several from the Psychology Department. Skills are also reinforced within several general education outcomes, as discussed in section 3B2.

As of June 2014, the library's collection includes 86,249 print books and 24,922 eBooks, and 6,597 non-print items (i.e. CDs, videos, and DVDs). There is a print collection of magazines, journals, newspapers, course reserve materials, ECC archives, and online access to thousands of full text journals and magazines.

Sources

- Home - Lib Guides at Elgin Community College
- Math-Lab Brochure
- Piece of PIE - January 2014
- Strategic Campus Plan - June 2012
- Student Resource Guide

3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

3.E.1. Co-curricular learning opportunities at ECC include skills and arts competitions, cultural excursions, educational visits, athletics and wellness, guest lectures, clinical field experiences, volunteering/service programs, civic/governance opportunities, study abroad, and entertainment/stress release events. Section 1D3 explains service and cultural opportunities available to students, and 3B4 details foreign study opportunities. Coordination of co-curricular programming resides in the Student Life Office, whose mission is *to promote student learning and success in co-curricular programs through student leadership and an overall campus climate in which students thrive*. The office averages 295 events a year which together impact 32,850 students, employees, and community members. This office also oversees student clubs and organizations, which collectively hold nearly 100 activities annually, including those listed in 1D3.

The Student Life Office is supported by the college's auxiliary budget. This budget supports staff salaries and benefits as well as operating expenses like supplies, software, and travel. In addition, the office maintains a separate budget for student activities, which is funded from a \$1 fee per credit hour of tuition calculated from annual audited enrollment totals. A portion of these fees is used by the Student Government to invite speakers, exhibits, or events to campus. In this program, ECC faculty apply for funds (typically \$2,000 per year), and the Student Government Association, under advice of Student Life administrators and faculty, chose programs to offer. Student Life facilitates professional service contracts and purchases, while students coordinate event planning, promotion, and marketing. This program is quite popular with students. Not only does it provide them a voice in their co-curricular experiences, but it has led to many successful partnerships between individual faculty and experts in higher education, government, journalism, literature, and the arts.

While we are proud of all co-curricular efforts, two outstanding examples from the 2014-15 academic year included ECC's participation in the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, in which 14 students in our Organization of Latin American Students club were selected to attend the a national Collegiate Leadership Development Program free of charge. This is a seven-week interactive training program in public policy for emerging Latino leaders, and we expect to participate next year and into the future. In addition, we are working closely with our Military Branches United club to recognize high achieving veterans in the SALUTE honors

society. Finally, as mentioned in Criterion 2, ECC participates in the Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference in men's and women's sports, including baseball, basketball, cross-country, golf, soccer, tennis, and volleyball.

In June 2011, Student Life moved into a newly renovated larger space within Building B and adjacent to the cafeteria. The space provides a central location from which to plan, promote, and engage in student activities. There are dedicated conference rooms and cubicles for student organizations, the student member of the Board of Trustees, scholarship recipients, *The Observer* student newspaper staff, legal clinics, and student creative work. In addition, a full-time Coordinator of First Year Programs and Spartan student peer leaders occupy the First Year Program Office within this space. Overseeing new student orientations and related programs, First Year Program staff participate in the Illinois Community College Activities Association, Association of Campus Activities Administrators, and Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities. They utilize best practices of these organizations, maintain listservs, and routinely present at professional conferences. In addition, students present to the ECC Board during Committee of the Whole meetings.

3.E.2. Claims made about ECC's contributions to students' educational experiences are validated through: measurements gathered about participation in and perceptions of these experiences; positive feedback from students, instructors, and advisory committees about co-curricular and service learning experiences; and improvements made various areas resulting from evidence gathered about students' experiences.

We gather data on students' participation in co-curricular activities in several ways. First, the annual Performance Report displays numerical trends in memberships of student clubs. These figures, while rough, provide a lens to gauge students' interests and shape their experiences. For instance, from the FY2014 report, we know that membership has grown in recent years for clubs focused on diversity (e.g., Black Student Association) and advocacy (e.g., Advocacy for Disabled and Abled People Together). We also tally student participation in service learning opportunities within classes (e.g., student consulting services described in 1D3) or outside them (e.g., mock trial competitions), which again provide insight that the college makes contributions to enriching students' experiences. Finally, as stated throughout Criterion 4, SLAAC assesses the impact of co-curricular experiences on general education outcomes, while GIST reviews and funds culturally-based co-curricular opportunities within particular courses. Since 2008, GIST has awarded 42 cultural infusion grants for ECC courses, totaling over \$42,000 and impacting 1,852 students (see 1C1).

Perceptual feedback from students, instructors, and advisory committees is another means by which we validate our claims that co-curricular opportunities are beneficial. Through the CCSSE, we are able to benchmark ECC students' engagement in service learning against comparable institutions nationally. We are proud of the fact that, from 2012 to 2014, we improved our own CCSSE factor scores in many areas, and in 2014 we outpaced other community colleges on items related to active and collaborative learning, which entail applying knowledge to real-life settings. In another example, [post-graduation surveys of former students](#) and the economic impact study in 1D1 demonstrate that students contribute to the social and economic fabric of our region. Among CTE graduates, 96% are satisfied or very satisfied with

the content they received in their ECC programs, while 92% believe ECC prepared them well for further education, and 89% for job preparation.

Lastly, the college's ability to learn from data and its willingness to reorganize services in co-curricular areas is testimony to its commitment. Through analysis of data, we have reorganized or added positions in several areas which augment the student experience: financial literacy, student career services, academic advising, and student wellness. Student Wellness Services was reorganized concurrently with the launch of the Student Success Center in 2014, and the program's current platform of services includes discussion/support groups and Student Health 101, an online magazine containing articles, online videos, and blogs focused on student physical and mental health. Relatedly, the Strengthening Educational and Workforce Partnerships Team of the SSI is currently leading efforts to create a campus-wide handbook for advisory committees in CTE programs and co-curricular areas. This team has already committed to providing logistical assistance (e.g., event planning, invitee tracking, etc.) for programs preparing for advisory team meetings. Finally, the college's faculty-student entrepreneurship organization, formed in 2014, is working with area employers to assess "soft skills" deemed critical for new hires. Students' skills in analyzing information critically, working in teams, and delivering presentations were among many assessed via surveys in spring 2015, and we intend to repeat these surveys over time to position entrepreneurship for future growth.

Sources

- Piece of PIE - January 2014

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC cultivates an environment in which every student benefits from high-quality learning opportunities. An effective institutional infrastructure ensures programs and courses are developed to meet excellence and respond to student and community needs. In addition to career-focused courses and programs, the college provides general education, co-curricular, and support programs which prepare students for global citizenship and leadership.

ECC employs over 600 full-time and adjunct faculty who provide oversight for curriculum, instruction and assessment of student learning. A cadre of student support services include: the Student Success Center, where academic advisors encourage students to complete via timely pathways; the Alliance for College Readiness, which ensures academic preparedness for incoming and returning students; and the Financial Literacy Program, which assists students to overcome financial barriers en route to completion. Finally, ECC fosters an open-access, welcoming environment where diverse populations are able to thrive.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

4.A.1. State requirements for five-year program reviews are explained in 3A1. All UT, CTE, cross-disciplinary, and student support services participate in reviews, which are guided by the college's Curriculum and Assessment Office. ECC's [18-month review timeline](#) occurs in four phases: (1) review of prior department goals, when instructional coordinators and deans highlight accomplishments, collaborations, and innovations in terms of ECC Strategic Plan goals; (2) curricular review, when programs review prerequisite courses, articulation, learning outcomes, and course alignments to program and general education outcomes; (3) program need and quality, which is based on review of historical enrollment and student success data and cost information; and (4) one-year and five-year action plans, including hiring and other major financial resource needs.

Since 2011, the college has strengthened the 18-month cycle by adding intentional checkpoints along the way for programs to receive feedback. The manager of outcomes assessment provides workshops and consultative support as programs complete this work. In the fall, programs meet with members of the PIE Office to review program-specific data and begin the most challenging phase – analysis of quality, which includes analysis of enrollment, retention and completion trends. Since 2011 the PIE Office has created a monthly data newsletter, the [*Piece of the PIE*](#), containing specific topics of interest to programs. In late fall and early spring, feedback from members of the ECC Review Team (see 5C2) assists programs as they compile drafts. A summary meeting is held in spring between Review Team liaisons, members of the Curriculum and Assessment Office, program deans, associate deans, and instructional coordinators. By August, ECC's college-wide [annual report](#) is assembled by the Curriculum and Assessment Office and sent to the ICCB. In September, copies are reviewed by the Board, Cabinet, and Deans Council and posted on the intranet portal and external website. The Curriculum and Assessment Office assembles an [executive summary of needs and opportunities](#) with a presentation by the managing director of curriculum and compliance to the Committee of the Whole. Finally, upon submission of the report, goals from program action plans are transferred into the Annual Goals Database (see 5A3) for annual reporting and monitoring.

Examples of recent improvements made as a result of formalizing program review include standardization of common data requests (e.g., disaggregated enrollment and success metrics by student demographics, credit hours taught by full-time and part-time faculty; and so on) and modification to the review schedule to encourage cross-departmental collaboration. Planned improvements include customizing wage and labor market data and translating tabular data into graphical displays.

4.A.2. Course instructors are exclusively responsible for grading students' class work and assigning grades (see [Administrative Procedure 1-103](#)), and the registrar is responsible for recording grades and grade point averages (GPAs) on a student's permanent record. All courses for which an incomplete grade is assigned must be completed by the due date assigned by the faculty member. The college recommends completion within 120 calendar days after the last day of the semester, and a failing grade (F) is recorded for courses not completed within the date assigned. All grade changes must be completed within one calendar year of the course-end date.

In addition to ECC course grades, the college recognizes that students may attain credits at other regionally and nationally accredited institutions. The process for transcript evaluation starts with a request for evaluation on the ECC website. Students must file official transcripts from each institution with the Records and Registration Office, officially declare a major at ECC, and create an educational plan with an ECC academic advisor. Courses must apply to the ECC degree or certificate the student is earning and appear on an official transcript, and the transcript must show that the course was passed. The most frequently used tools for evaluating coursework are:

- www.itransfer.org for general education courses at participating Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) institutions

- <http://tes.collegesource.com>, a widely-used interactive database of course data from institutions of higher education

Course descriptions and, as needed, course syllabi are reviewed and logged by a credentials analyst to determine transferability, and if information is needed beyond what is provided by a course description, instructional coordinators of academic departments are consulted. The registrar is currently formalizing this process into a new administrative procedure.

Credits earned at ECC also transfer to other institutions. As a member of the IAI (see 3A2), ECC's general education courses are reviewed for continued articulation status every five years during program review. No course submitted for renewal has been denied. For courses completed successfully as part of AA or AS degrees, the Board of Trustees guarantees acceptance of credits at transfer institutions, backed by an offer of a refund of tuition for any courses not accepted (subject to the terms outlined in the [College Catalog, p. 24](#)). Similarly, the Board provides a vocational skills guarantee. Students graduating with AAS degrees in occupational programs are guaranteed competency in the technical skills, backed by an offer of up to 15 credit hours of retraining at no additional cost (subject to the terms outlined in the [College Catalog, p. 32](#)).

Credit may also be awarded for learning experiences other than formal instruction. [Administrative Procedure 1-101](#) describes processes by which ECC evaluates and awards credit through Advanced Placement (AP) testing, CLEP testing, proficiency credit, non-college institutions, non-US credentials, foreign transcripts, and military experiences. Definitions of each category are provided on the ECC website. Availability of credit is included in each course description, and each department determines the means by which credit may be granted (e.g., oral exam, written exam, portfolio review, or demonstrated skills, see [College Catalog, p. 91](#)). Proposed changes to availability and type of proficiency credits are brought to the Curriculum Committee for discussion and vote. Students seeking credit for learning experiences must be enrolled or have applied for admission to the college. Students begin the evaluation process by completing a proficiency request form and reviewing the information with an academic advisor or instructor. Once signed, the request is submitted to the instructional dean for approval, and if approved, the student pays a designated fee. The college conducted an audit of proficiency credit in 2014-15, and proficiency credits for over 800 courses became standardized as a result. This information is currently provided in the College Catalog for every course.

In addition to written procedures, various tools are available to assist with credit evaluation. First, a [class time calculator](#) is available to office coordinators to determine end times for class sections based on start times, required contact hours, and total number of sessions. Second, a [credit/contact hour vs. schedule report](#) is used to evaluate if schedules provide necessary minutes of instruction per ECC's and the ICCB's minimum requirements. This tool is available to deans, associate deans, and office coordinators as course schedules are being built. Updates to credit policies, procedures, and tools are communicated regularly. Deans, associate deans, instructional coordinators, and office coordinators attend biannual TLSD Operations Update meetings, which highlight curriculum and assessment

practices. During the fall and spring terms, [TLSD Operations monthly newsletters](#) containing updates and reminders are distributed to academic divisions.

4.A.3. As described above, ECC accepts credits earned at other regionally and nationally accredited institutions. The Records and Registration Office uses standard resources (e.g., www.itransfer.org and <http://tes.collegesource.com>), and course descriptions are evaluated by a credentials analyst to determine transferability. During evaluation, cumulative GPAs for students earning associates degrees for transfer are calculated from all ECC courses numbered 100 and above as well as courses from other institutions where a student earned a grade of A through D. In 2014, the college developed an academic residency procedure ([Administrative Procedure 1-301](#)) to clarify the amount of transfer credit that can be applied towards ECC degrees or certificates.

4.A.4. As described in 3A1, master course outlines are maintained within the CurricUNET course management system. These contain course descriptions, course topics, and learning outcomes, and they are approved by the [Curriculum Committee](#) when proposals are brought by division faculty. Committee bylaws state:

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

At a minimum, courses are reviewed by program faculty every five years when undergoing review. However, updates are made as needed to ensure that master course outlines are clear and reflect appropriate rigor. Any proposed changes must be brought to the Curriculum Committee and are not discussed unless a program representative is present. Within this proposal process, support for crafting learning outcomes is provided by the Curriculum and Assessment Office following Bloom’s Taxonomy. It is further expected that course syllabi reflect the content of the outlines from which they derive. Many ECC programs are beginning to harmonize syllabi and course content across faculty to ensure standard learning expectations. For example, the Biology and Chemistry Departments are creating standard lab manuals, while the Math Department has instituted a practice of common final exams and common review sessions among sections of developmental courses. The English Department has standard syllabi for developmental and college-level composition sequences. Finally, in 2013, the ICCB requested that articulation status become part of program review; as such, all articulated courses have begun formalizing details about course requirements in master course outlines. For example, updates to the English Composition II (ENG-102) [course outline](#) were recently presented to the Curriculum Committee after English faculty delineated research paper guidelines (e.g., page length, proportion of final grade, etc.) in response to IAI review. A taskforce of associate deans is currently reviewing ECC master course syllabus templates to formalize required components which reflect best practices.

As described in the 2009 HLC Focused Visit Report, minimum competency requirements ([Administrative Procedure 1-104](#)) were formally implemented at ECC in 2006. This improvement standardized college readiness in reading, English, and/or math for all IAI transfer-level courses. Since that time, non-IAI courses in both UT and CTE areas have added prerequisites or required concurrent enrollment in prerequisites and program courses to improve student success. For instance, the Biology Department added a math prerequisite (MTH-090) to its required nutrition course (BIO-101) and reduced the number of D, F, and W grades issued in one year from 38% to 28%. Members of the Curriculum Committee created a [resource guide](#) to assist programs in selecting the most appropriate prerequisite courses. The Curriculum and Assessment Office has also created algorithms in the student information system to identify prerequisites during course registration.

Another example of rigor is assurance of basic skills through placement testing. ECC faculty periodically calibrate placement cutoff scores for college readiness – and with the ECC Strategic Plan focused squarely on accelerating the progression of students through developmental sequences – we have carried out research to determine how accurately students are placed. Generally, students' ACT scores are considered first. Students who do not meet ACT cutoffs take Compass placement tests in math and reading and/or a writing assessment designed and scored by English faculty. Our research and dialog around placement testing has resulted in new pilot programs mentioned in 3D2 and 4B3. The college has also begun discussion on placement options once the Compass is discontinued after 2016.

Standards for faculty qualifications are outlined in [Administrative Procedure 5-103](#) and discussed in 3C3. Qualifications vary by course type (e.g., UT courses, CTE courses, Adult Basic Education, library, and performing arts courses), and if additional requirements apply to individual courses, details are specified in master course. Currently, all dual-credit courses are taught on campus by ECC faculty and high school students in these courses are integrated within regular sections. All participating high school students are assessed and must meet the same minimum competencies as all other college students. High school applicants for Middle College general education courses must have a 3.0 high school GPA or be in the top 10 percent of their class, and CTE dual credit students must have a minimum 2.0 high school GPA. Dual-credit students participate in a dual-credit orientation and receive training in how to use the college's course management software. They have access to college resources, including the library, tutoring, IT help desk, and so on.

As part of the college's program review process (see 4A1), any program with dual-credit or CTE articulated credit offerings includes them in their analyses of need, cost, and quality. Student enrollment figures and success rate data for early-credit high school students are disaggregated in pivot table tools provided by the PIE Office (see 4B4). In addition, advisory committees for CTE programs include teachers and administrators from secondary schools, and articulation agreements are reviewed on set schedules every two years. An annual report for all early-credit opportunities is given to the ECC Board. The college is currently exploring ways to expand dual-credit courses to more qualified high school students.

4.A.5. Many CTE programs maintain specialized approvals with outside agencies (see [College Catalog, p. 19](#)). Of note, ECC's substance abuse counseling program is the only one in Illinois

to carry voluntary accreditation from the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission. Additionally, some programs build certification exam preparation into specific coursework: welding (WEL-218 and WEL-220); automotive services (AUT-296), computer and information sciences (CIS-256 and CIS-257); HVACR (HAC-220); magnetic resonance imaging (MAM-106, MRI-205); office administration technology (OAT-250, OAT-251, OAT-252, OAT-253); physical therapist assistant (PTA-250); radiography (RAD-240); and truck driving (BRG-201).

Various ECC offices support programs preparing for accreditation review. In particular, the PIE and Curriculum and Assessment Offices work with programs during their self-studies and have been invited to interview sessions conducted by the external reviewers. Additionally, the registrar explains records procedures; the library outlines resources available to students; and so on. The phases used for the five-year reviews (see 4A1) include an area for programs to indicate associations to which they belong or aspire to belong. The review process can thus assist programs to define steps needed toward accreditation candidacy.

4.A.6. Programs assure their graduates are prepared for employment or further study in many ways such as program review and assessment, advisory committees, and surveys of alumni and employers. During program review, a curricular mapping exercise is completed which asks programs to explain how key knowledge and skills are introduced, practiced, or mastered throughout the program's courses. Additionally, maps are completed to indicate how program curricula reinforces ECC's general education outcomes. Mapping exercises encourage faculty to reflect on course content, ensure correct course sequencing, consider elective courses, and, along with advisory committees, discuss the success of their graduates

Curriculum adjustments are made when feedback suggests areas for improvement. An example comes from ECC's criminal justice program. Advisory committee feedback indicated that graduates' writing skills were insufficient for employment; thus, the program began to require the English composition sequence (ENG-101 and ENG-102) rather than business writing courses (BUS-101 and BUS-142). In another example, advisory committee feedback indicated that students in the communication design program were starting to freelance in the marketplace, and curricular mapping did not show a distinct place to introduce these particular skills. Partnering with the entrepreneurship program, communications faculty designed a new course ([CDN-217: Freelance Principles and Practice](#)) to introduce concepts such as self-marketing and billing to students.

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

Through IPEDS, ECC reports standard three-year completion rates for first-time, full-time students. The most recent data available ([Performance Report, p. 10](#)) shows the graduation rate

at 29% and the combined graduated and/or transfer rate at 50%, both of which are higher than comparable institutions regionally. Through AtD, ECC also reports four-year, five-year, and six-year completion for first-time students regardless of enrollment status. The most recent data available shows steady incremental improvement but varying patterns when disaggregated by race/ethnicity (see [AtD Annual Reflection](#)). Finally, completion data are disaggregated to the program level during program reviews. For many programs, these analyses provide insight into whether graduates seek additional education after leaving ECC. From data supplied by ECC's most common transfer universities, we know that ECC transfer students earn higher cumulative GPAs than other college transfer students (see [Performance Report, p.18](#)), and building upon this, we plan to mine data from the National Student Clearinghouse to determine disciplines and types of credentials students earn after transferring. In addition to transfer enrollment, another indicator of successful completion in many CTE programs is the pass rate on state or national licensing examinations. Data reported in the [Performance Report \(p. 9\)](#) indicate that, for ECC health professions, rates often exceed state and national averages.

Each spring ECC surveys graduates from CTE programs as mandated by the ICCB. Additionally, ECC conducts its own annual UT Survey for graduates from university-transfer programs. The CTE and UT Surveys go hand-in-hand to provide a glimpse into the career and educational experiences of alumni. In 2013 (the most recent year for which comparable ICCB data is available), the [Career Technologies Student Survey](#) was sent to 1,405 graduates a year following graduation with an overall response rate of 21% (N=301). Survey results indicate 84% percent of graduates are employed – either full-time (62%) or part-time (22%) – and that 61% percent of those employed work in a field that is related to their ECC program of study. Of those employed, 84% reported feeling very satisfied (49%) or somewhat satisfied (35%) with their current jobs. From all Illinois community colleges, ICCB calculates the state-wide employment rate of CTE completers – a figure which is 77% for 2013. Thus, ECC's rate of 84% well exceeds the state average. ECC uses this information to assist programs undergoing review to assess the employability of graduates.

Programs undergoing review are invited to include additional survey questions to assist in the identification of needs and opportunities. Most ECC health programs are required by professional accreditors to monitor the employment of graduates. Further, many ECC programs have developed capstone courses focused, in part, on preparing for post-graduation employment: art (ART-290); clinical lab technology (CLT-230); communications design (CDN-214 and CDN-217); computer-aided design/drafting (CAD-119); histotechnology (HST-113); massage therapy (MAS-250); nursing (NUR-224), radiography (RAD-240); music (MUS-155), paralegal (PAR-239); physical therapist assistant (PTA-250); and surgical technology (SGT-120). The Career Development Services Office (see 3D1) assists students in choosing majors and careers through resume assistance, mock interviews, courses, and career counseling. Internships are overseen by this office as well. A marketing campaign was launched in 2015 to link employment opportunities to students, alumni, and employers. The number of employers offering internships to ECC students has been increasing in recent years.

Sources

- Admin Proc 1-101 Credit for Learning Experience
- Admin Proc 1-103 Student Grades
- Admin Proc 1-104 Minimum Competencies
- Admin Proc 1-301 Academic Residency
- Admin Proc 5-103 Minimum Requirements for Appointment to Faculty
- Career Tech Exec Summ 2013
- CDN-217 Outline
- Class Time Calculator
- ECC Program Review Process
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog (page number 23)
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog (page number 28)
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog (page number 36)
- ECC-2015-16_Catalog (page number 95)
- Elgin Community College - 2015 Data Template
- ENG-102 outline
- FINAL BYLAWS Curriculum Policies 4-3-15
- FY14 Program Review Summary of Needs and Opportunities
- FY15 Program Review Report ECC
- FY15 Program Review Summary of Needs and Opportunities
- MinComp Course Outcomes Chart to Assist with PreReqs
- Performance Report FY2014 - Completion Rates
- Performance Report FY2014 - Licensure Exams
- Performance Report FY2014 - Transfer GPA
- Piece of PIE - October 2014
- Sample Schedule Report
- September 2014 TLSD Updates

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4.B.1. Student learning is the primary focus of Goal 1 (Foster a learning-centered environment) and Goal 2 (Promote student goal completion) of the institution's strategic plan, and helps define the work of programs, divisions, offices and committees. Through the Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative, we are beginning to connect program and department goals to institutional budgeting. Discussed more in Criterion 5, budgets for programs and committees are allocated in accordance with demonstrated evidence of impact on student success.

Annual reports to AtD (Annual Reflection) and to the ECC Board of Trustees (Performance Report), include key success targets – success in college-level courses, developmental courses, and gateway courses; persistence; and completion – as well as 32 indicators mandated by the Board Policies Handbook.

Outcomes for general education, described in Criterion 3, are reviewed periodically to ensure relevance. Feedback from the 2009 HLC Focused Visit Report indicated that SLAAC was expending concerted effort on measurement of general education outcomes, but not allowing comparable time for dialog and action planning. In response, ECC has adopted a multi-phase approach to the assessment process which intentionally incorporates reflection of evidence and findings. SLAAC and the manager of outcomes assessment use a three-phase cycle: (1) review of current data and revision of outcomes language (if needed); (2) research, develop and implement improvement strategies; and (3) measure and evaluate results. The timing of each phase varies by outcome. SLAAC maintains a [multi-term schedule](#) to monitor these phases. Assessments include a mix of [both direct and indirect measures](#) for each outcome.

SLAAC sets an example for programs and departments by establishing its own [committee goals](#) each year and reporting progress and accomplishments at the end of the year. Outcomes appearing on master course outlines are mapped to all courses during program review. The most recent version of the course assessment report template provides a section for programs to indicate how assessment results align to general education. The next phase of this curriculum

alignment project is to translate each department's work into the curriculum management system and master course outlines.

All instructional programs, co-curricular, and student services have [defined learning outcomes](#) for students (see example from the literature program). Outcomes are updated during program review. Many programs also publish learning outcomes in student handbooks (e.g., [Massage Therapy Program Handbook](#)) and on the ECC website (e.g., [paralegal webpage](#)). Student service areas, such as Financial Aid and the Student Success Center (advising), also participate in program review and have defined learning outcomes for students. For instance, the Student Success Center has compiled a comprehensive assessment plan with learning outcomes for students, process delivery, and advisors. From the plan, an [advising syllabus](#) and fillable [success plan forms](#) have been created. Finally, co-curricular areas such as the honors program and learning communities have [formalized learning goals](#) for participants. Like academic and career programs, service areas rely on both direct (e.g., tracking student activities/behaviors) and indirect measures (e.g., perceptions gathered from the CCSSE and Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory) to assess outcomes.

The college follows curriculum standards set by ICCB. Master course outlines contain teaching objectives and student learning outcomes – which hold steady regardless of delivery format (face-to-face, hybrid, or online), duration of session (standard 16 week session or shortened), location (main campus or satellite), or student type (college or dually-enrolled high-school student). The manager of outcomes assessment works with faculty to write clear and measureable outcomes for master course outlines, and review of these outcomes is essential to course assessment and program review.

Processes followed for course-level assessment are outlined in a [TLSD PETAL procedure](#) (see 2A1), which is available on the portal and a shared network drive. Faculty are free to select their own methods for assessment (e.g., exams, projects, etc.) and are encouraged to respond to students' varied learning styles. Programs are asked to assess at least one course each year with a goal of assessing all within the five-year review period. Faculty are free to assess lessons or outcomes as they choose, although they are expected to use varied techniques in doing so. Recent efforts such as the SSI's Faculty Research Community (see 3B5) and GIST cultural infusion grants are beginning to incentivize faculty to test, measure, and report the impacts of new techniques used assessing activities and assignments.

The course assessment process has been streamlined with [one comprehensive form](#) and a sliding due-date format. Before the semester of assessment, a plan is submitted to the dean and logged by the manager of outcomes assessment. The semester following the assessment, a report is completed and submitted for approval. The college continues to investigate large-scale planning software for course-level assessment and, over the years, has migrated from paper to CurricUNET to an all-digital system of email and a shared drive. Schedules, plans, and reports are currently tracked with an MS Excel-based Course Assessment Tracking Tool. In addition, specific resource documents are available online and include: [course assessment considerations](#), [course assessment plans](#), and [course assessment reports](#).

To reinforce the cyclical nature of assessment and planning, the Curriculum and Assessment Office adds any goals or actions noted on course assessment reports into the Annual Goals Database. (See sample reports from the [Introduction to Legal Technology course](#) from the paralegal program and the [Medical Ethics and Law course](#) from the radiography program). These become part of annual department planning.

4.B.2. A consistent tool used to measure general education outcomes has been the [Collegiate Assessment of Academic Performance \(CAAP\)](#) a standardized instrument by ACT, which was used annually to assess reading, writing, math, and science from 2005 to 2009 and again in fall 2013. Although costlier and more disruptive of class time, the test provides benchmark comparisons to other institutions which ultimately helped to prioritize writing as target for improvement. More recently, SLAAC has shifted to more authentic measures of assessment and refining the language of general education outcomes. A brief summary of additional methods of measurement for each outcome is provided below.

- **Writing.** Data on student writing is gathered in different ways: the CAAP writing test, holistically scored essays, a TurnItIn pilot project, and samples of student work rated with rubrics. Students have also been surveyed about writing importance and applicability through: the Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges (NILRC) Graduate Assessment of Information Literacy, a feedback survey on A Guide to Writing at ECC, faculty surveys, [2014 CCSSE results](#) and indirectly through course-level assessments. Writing is included in all program review maps and the comprehensive 2015 curricular alignment project, which aligns courses to general education outcomes. The curriculum requirements for all degrees and vocational certificates have a minimum written communication requirement (see [College Catalog, pp. 26-34](#)) from either the English or business programs.
- **Reading.** Originally assessed with the CAAP reading test and part of course-level assessment, reading is also assessed on the CCSSE. Reading is included in all program review maps, and because the language of this outcome was significantly revised by SLAAC in 2013-14, it has become a central focus in the 2015 curricular alignment project. Language of the new reading outcome emphasizes how comprehension pertains to more than written words and includes film and other forms of diverse media. As a result, SLAAC will join other institutional efforts to focus on interdisciplinary literacy. This effort will be led by the Reading Department which has significantly revised its curriculum for fall 2016.
- **Math/Quantitative Literacy.** Math has been assessed with the CAAP test and the CCSSE, as well as the curriculum alignment project. It is part of course-level assessment in math, engineering, and physics and included in all program review maps. All ECC degrees have minimum math or science components. A SLAAC subcommittee is currently finalizing revisions on new language for this outcome, and once recommendations are made in fall 2015, it is anticipated that disciplines such as economics, business, psychology, and political science will find new ways to link course content to this outcome.
- **Scientific Literacy.** Scientific literacy has been assessed with the CAAP test and is part of course-level assessments. It is included in all program review maps and is a central focus of the curricular alignment project, as outcome language was significantly revised in 2013-14. The new

language expands opportunities for other programs to assess scientific literacy through course assessment. For instance, Speech Department faculty assess students' abilities to "make reasoned judgments about the impact of science on the individual, community, society and environment" within class presentations/speeches. With the requirement that all ECC degrees have math or science, some programs (e.g., digital forensics) specify preference for biology (BIO-110) or chemistry (CHM-101), leaving math as an elective.

- **Information Literacy & Technology.** Information literacy has been assessed with instruments based on the Bay Area Community College Information Competency assessment and the NILRC. This outcome is included in all program review maps, in the curriculum alignment project, and on the CCSSE. SmarterMeasure is a tool the college has recently implemented to assess readiness for online coursework. The college also participated in the Educause Student Technology Survey in 2012 and 2015. Lastly, a survey of entrepreneurial concepts was sent to ECC students and faculty in January 2015, and questions were related to using technology for learning. Discussion has not yet advanced toward making any recommendations regarding this aspect of the outcome.

- **Critical Thinking.** Critical thinking has been directly measured with the [California Critical Thinking Skills test \(CCTST\)](#), as part of many course-level assessments, and reflected in program-level assessments. Students respond to questions related to critical thinking on the CCSSE, and related items are on the NILRC information literacy assessment and entrepreneurship surveys. The outcome is included in all program review maps and the curriculum alignment project, as the language was significantly revised in 2013-14. As with reading, SLAAC views professional development in teaching critical thinking as an important avenue; thus, as programs rearticulate/realign their courses, resulting maps will reveal a core set of courses where critical thinking can be assessed.

- **Global Awareness and Diversity.** Growth in this outcome is assessed through course-level assessments and GIST cultural infusion projects. In addition, the GIST and MAGIC committees as well as the entrepreneurship program have collected their own data via surveys of faculty and staff and feedback forms at events. Items related to global awareness and diversity are contained in the [2014 CCSSE results](#). A comparison of results from this survey shows that ECC students report that ECC places a greater emphasis on encouraging contact with students of diverse backgrounds than other comparable colleges (see survey item 9c). Many co-curricular goals are connected to this outcome and assessed formatively during program reviews. A faculty subcommittee is currently studying revisions to the language of this outcome and expects to make a recommendation to SLAAC in the 2015-16 academic year.

As part of review, all ECC programs map program-level outcomes to courses. As described in 4A1, mapping charts indicate how knowledge and skills are introduced, practiced, or mastered for each course. This exercise allows faculty to see connections between elements of programs and overall goals. Any misalignments (e.g., facets of curriculum which do not anchor to outcomes, or outcomes without appropriate scaffolding) indicate areas where curriculum design can be improved. For service areas (e.g., advising, etc.), major functions and activities are mapped instead of courses.

For Adult Basic Education and health professions, program-level assessment includes pre- and post-testing, and for health students, formative and summative feedback from clinical instructors. Such programs often conduct follow-up of graduates beyond the alumni surveys conducted by the PIE Office. Radiography, for example, has an extensive [suite of tools](#) to survey graduates and must maintain a five-year average employment rate of 75% for accreditation purposes. The [nursing program](#) surveys its students as they complete their second and fourth semesters.

For UT programs, assessment methods vary by program. Portfolio review in the arts and final performances in theatre and music are considered culminating achievements of the program. The English Department considers course assessment of ENG-102 as a summative competency for writing composition. The Biology Department, as mentioned in 4B4, assesses all students with a program-wide quiz. Biology faculty have aligned their prerequisite lab courses (BIO-110 and BIO-113) to upper-level courses (BIO-245 and BIO-265). Similarly, the Math Department ensures that introductory courses (such as MTH-133: Calculus I) adequately prepare students for more advanced work (MTH-134: Calculus II).

Faculty assess course-level learning annually for at least one course per program. This occurs regardless of program type (UT, CTE, developmental, and Adult Basic Education). As indicated in 4B1, the semester prior to assessment, a plan is submitted, indicating the course, the term, which outcomes will be assessed, and a brief methodology. When the project is completed, a report is filed with data, results, and conclusions. The Course Assessment Tracking Tool described in 4B1 is one way the college quantifies and communicates the nature of course assessment activity occurring in programs. The manager of outcomes assessment logs the [number of course assessment plans](#) and end-of-year reports annually as part of the program review process.

Beyond the curriculum mapping mentioned above, co-curricular programs have adopted assessment protocols to assess students' experiences at various points in time. Upon entry, the First Year Program Office reviews data and provides direction for improving students' first years (via student orientations, family/parent orientations, welcoming convocations, peer leaders, focus groups, etc.). The team has adopted a student passport program, whereby students can earn points in a personal passport/log each time they use/visit student services areas (e.g., tutoring, advising, etc.). The program provides a rough estimate of how many students use co-curricular services, and rewards are built in to incentivize participation.

During the course of a semester, ECC's skills labs (i.e., the Write Place and the Math Lab), the Tutoring Center, IT help desk, and the Renner Academic Library use point-of-service surveys, summative semester surveys, and content analysis to determine how student outcomes are met. An Early Alert system is in place to assess progress of students who exhibit difficulty during the first critical weeks of a semester, and the Student Services and Development Office monitors first-term GPAs per [Administrative Procedure 1-102](#) (Standards of Academic Progress). These formative measures operate uniformly regardless of program type, and results are discussed during program review and in other departmental reports.

Within the Student Services and Development Office, the Student Success Center has identified and prioritized goals and measures in their own [assessment plan and logic models](#). These

includes direct and indirect measures across various domains. Finally, end-of-semester assessments are administered to students in COL-101 and learning community (LC) sections. Currently, we use chapbooks and presentations for COL-101 and surveys for learning communities. The surveys ask the same questions as the CCSSE and thus provide within-student comparative data for students who complete both the CCSSE and LC surveys. Data gathered to date show that [LC students feel more connected](#) with classmates and instructors and engage in successful behaviors more often than the overall ECC student population.

The ECC Athletics Program uses the ACE ([Athletes Commit to Education](#)) model to assess student learning in a formative manner. In collaboration with coaches and a dedicated academic advisor, students participate in an orientation and mandatory study tables in the Renner Academic Library or the Tutoring Center. They must also maintain satisfactory GPAs. If an Early Alert is triggered for a student athlete, coaches participate in advising conversations. Academic results for ECC's student athletes are impressive: many teams maintain 4.0 grade point averages, and many students achieve Academic All-Conference status.

Because of the mix of program and degree/certificate types we offer, the college does not have a uniform end-of-program summative measure for all students or co-curricular areas. As previously indicated, large-scale surveys of student services (e.g., the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and the CCSSE) provide insight into students' awareness, interest, and use of co-curricular offerings. During program reviews and review of accomplishments from the Annual Goals Database, survey results are consulted along with the formative data described here.

4.B.3. Institutional Improvement. As an AtD Leader College, ECC has received extensive external coaching in using data to guide strategies. Access to, and understanding of, data has grown tremendously since joining AtD in 2009. The AtD [Principles Assessment Survey](#), given annually to ECC employees, shows positive gains in perceptions of planning and data use in meeting student success goals. Collectively, two ECC offices – the PIE Office (under the direction of College President) and the Curriculum and Assessment Office (under the direction of the Vice President of TLSO) – are hubs for data analysis and project evaluation. As Data Rangers, this group of eight professionals meet bi-weekly to discuss SSI initiatives and other projects stemming from program reviews and assessment. Providing guidance to project initiators, they serve as “critical friends and thought partners,” to quote our AtD coaches. Our model of intrusive data support has been recognized by AtD as an innovative practice, and in conjunction with Purposeful Budgeting (see 5A3) – has been tied to resource allocation. We use a [reflective checklist](#) to determine how to best scale interventions and, at times, must suspend projects which were not as promising as first thought.

The college has implemented a constellation of interventions all aimed at improving student success in one way or another – Early Alerts and referrals, minimum course competencies, a mandatory student success course, an expanded First Year Program, learning communities, placement testing pilots, modifications to academic advising, and pilots in diversity, equity, and inclusion. A few highlights are included in this section.

Academic Advising. One of the most significant examples of institutional change was the introduction of a new case-management advising model in spring 2014. The decision to reorganize this function was informed by survey results from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz SSI as well as the CCSSE which consistently showed that ECC students were dissatisfied with advising/counseling services. Additionally, the college's 2012 participation in the NCCBP used an advising question from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz SSI as an indicator. ECC ranked in the 27th percentile among its peers. Future administrations of the CCSSE and other large-scale surveys will help to assess future improvements.

College Readiness. A cooperative partnership between ECC and local school districts, the Alliance for College Readiness has been a model for cooperative partnerships, guided strategically by data and assessment of student outcomes. [Longitudinal data](#) on incoming district freshman reveals a steady increase in the percentage who place entirely college-ready in reading, English and math, as well as a decline in the percentage needing developmental coursework in all three areas.

An example of how the Alliance used data to improve programs comes from math, where one of the earliest strategies we adopted was a summer intensive “boot camp” program. Running from 2008 to 2014, the program allowed incoming students who placed just below college level status to improve their skills prior to fall enrollment. Over the course of the program, 72% of the 219 program completers moved up at least one placement level (pretest to posttest). To scale the intervention into local high schools, ECC faculty, high school teachers, and faculty from Northern Illinois University created a 4th year high school math course in 2013. This course, now offered in three school districts, has exponentially increased the impact of the Alliance district-wide. To date, 65% of over 400 course enrollees have moved up one level of developmental coursework through Compass pre- and post-testing. Other activities of the Alliance include aligning curricula between high school and college, and more recently, discussing results through analyses of datasets shared among the schools.

Placement. Correlations of placement test cutoff scores with course success have been used to modify procedures. In fall 2014 the ECC Math Department implemented a practice of allowing students with high school GPAs of 3.5 or higher and who place one level below college level to enroll directly into college-level math. Data collected by ECC math faculty in 2013 indicate that high school GPA significantly predicts college-level success beyond placement testing alone. Following suit, the English Department is piloting their own placement revision, allowing students with high school GPAs of 3.0 or higher who place one level below college-level writing to enroll directly into courses for which college-level English is a prerequisite. Data will be analyzed in spring 2016. Finally, the Reading Department completed curricular redesign for two developmental courses based on current research, Illinois Common Core State Standards, ECC's revised general education outcomes for reading, and recognition of best practices in teaching developmental students. Faculty will draft a recommendation for an authentic reading placement tool to assess college reading expectations by fall 2015 as the Compass tool expires. ECC health programs added the PSB-HOA placement exam to entrance requirements in 2011, replacing the Compass reading placement. Preliminary completion rates for surgical technology students increased from 54% to 75% since adopting the test.

Developmental Curriculum. Nationally and at ECC, developmental education is a dynamic and evolving field. ECC created the College Transitions and Developmental Education Department in 2010 to coordinate developmental efforts, and since that time, the Dean of College Transitions and Developmental Education has guided a [number of innovations](#) detailed in the department's 2014 program review report.

Building upon the success of the Accelerated Learning Program (see 3D2), the English Department is moving towards full implementation in 2015-16. ECC faculty are changing their notions of developmental instruction and increasing expectations for what students can do. A course revision proposal approved by the Curriculum Committee in spring 2015 formalizes this [shift in philosophy](#) in developmental English, which now mirrors the ENG-101 course but provides additional scaffolding and support. This philosophy is part of the revisions within developmental reading as well, where increased standards and higher expectations are being introduced. An ongoing developmental education Community of Practice faculty team meets twice annually under the guidance of the Dean of College Transitions and Developmental Education to provide a forum for cross-disciplinary faculty discussions.

Curricular Improvement. Many curricular improvements are identified through review and assessment processes. These occur at the following levels: general education, program/division, course, and co-curricular.

- General Education Improvements. SLAAC's primary responsibility is to collect and analyze data regarding learning across general education outcomes. The committee has implemented a variety of improvements in assessing writing and information literacy skills in recent years. In 2013-14, for example, samples of student writing were collected and assessed with a rubric. Data were matched with demographic characteristics, and [results showed](#) that students' writing skills improved as composition courses (ENG-101 and ENG-102) and credits are completed. However, questions emerged regarding academic dishonesty/plagiarism and whether students' writing skills might be confounded by language barriers (as many ECC students do not speak English as a primary language). As a result, faculty have begun to clarify writing expectations in master course outlines, aligning them to IAI standards, and investing in CETL faculty workshops on writing and literacy. SLAAC members also began a small-scale pilot with TurnItIn, a plagiarism detection software program. [Research and writing guides](#) have been created by library faculty as a result of writing assessment done by SLAAC.

Another example comes from information literacy. In May 2013, an online skills [assessment in information literacy](#) was emailed to UT and CTE students who had applied for graduation. One hundred thirty ($N=130$) students participated and scored 75% correct on average. The concept of source selection emerged as the surveyed item with the fewest correct answers. As a result, SLAAC partnered with librarians to design a short video tutorial and graded quiz on source selection in D2L.

- Program/division improvements. ECC's program review process provides a consistent method for reviewing outcome data and quality. Examples of how specific programs have used program review insights are contained throughout this report. Additionally, results have been helpful in guiding the TLSD division as a whole. For example, analysis of success in gateway courses (i.e.,

courses with high enrollment and generally low success) has been used to understand course sequencing, to inform the work of the Student Success Center, and to prioritize SSI projects. In another example, the Vice President of TLSO holistically examines data on generated credit hours to aid in prioritizing hiring requests. Finally, instructional coordinators in math, biology, chemistry, and physics have relied on program data to study course-taking patterns of STEM students. Awareness of which courses tend to be taken together has led to the creation of a new strategic scheduling system, aided in part by instructional space created during renovations of Buildings A, D, and M.

Review of assessment data often results in changes to administrative procedures and, relatedly, revisions to administrative procedures necessitate careful monitoring of data. As indicated in 3A3, removal of telecourses was based on data showing that success in these courses was unacceptably low. Review of [Administrative Procedure 1-102](#) (Standards of Academic Progress) resulted in adopting an Early Alert notification for at-risk students. The Student Success Center now requires assessment of goal attainment at particular milestones: a program of study/major must be declared at 15 credit hours, and intent to transfer or seek employment at 30 credit hours. Finally, benchmarking of ECC's within-course retention/withdrawal rate with other institutions (i.e., the [2012 NCCBP Report](#) indicated that the proportion of withdrawals reported by ECC ranked in the 85th percentile nationally) resulted in changes to [Administrative Procedure 1-103](#) to include "Z" grades. Previously, any student who withdrew during the first few days of a semester (or who registered but never attended) would have received a W (withdrawal) grade and been counted in calculations of course retention/withdrawals. The newer version of this procedure gives such students a Z grade, which is excluded from within-course retention/withdrawal calculations. This adjustment brings ECC into closer, and more accurate, alignment with other institutions.

- **Course.** Information gathered about student performance within courses has been used to make curricular improvements. [Course assessments](#) within the English as a Second Language program, for example, have revealed that students' knowledge varies within levels of the program, necessitating extra scaffolding and sharing of resources (e.g., lesson plans, evaluation tools, etc.) among instructors. In another example, ECC's one-credit hour introductory student success course, COL-101, has undergone several revisions since its debut in 2006. Faculty reinforce students' self-monitoring skills – a central learning outcome of this course – by requiring capstone portfolio assignments and pre- and post-testing with the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI). As a result of these analyses, the Academy of College Excellence (ACE) model has been offered to COL-101 students to introduce affect, culture, and self-management. Faculty have also incorporated principles from ACE's Experiential Learning Institutes into the outcomes of COL-101. Finally, ECC's histotechnology program has been offering Saturday drop-in lab sessions with seasoned mentors. This change was made from student feedback indicating that additional practice time was needed. The program also changed how it assesses clinical experiences based on feedback from advisory groups, which indicated that students should practice speed, as well as skills, when performing lab tests on patients.

While course-level assessment is generally focused on the course itself (regardless of modality or section), funding for section-level assessment has recently been offered as well. Several mini-

grants accepted into the Faculty Research Community and GIST cultural infusion program are being used by faculty to assess the effectiveness of individual class assignments, assessments, and activities.

- Co-curricular and student support. At the co-curricular level, ECC uses assessment data to improve support services. The First Year Program, for instance, relies on an advisory taskforce to review feedback gathered from all first-time students to pilot ideas for new approaches to student orientations. Data gathered to date shows that a higher percentage of ECC students attend on-campus orientations than students at comparable colleges (e.g., [2014 CCSSE](#), 59% for ECC v. 42% for Promising Practices respondents) and that students who attend ECC's orientations are more likely to be retained and complete than students who do not (see ECC's [AtD 2012 Leader College application \(pp. 7-10\)](#)). ECC has now made orientations mandatory for all first-time students and has tailored the content and timing of orientations to better meet students' needs.

4.B.4. Assessment efforts at ECC follow best practices espoused by leading experts. As stated in 3A1 and 4A1, program review follows guidelines from the ICCB, while assessment strategies follow best practices adopted from national conferences (e.g., the HLC annual meetings in Chicago and the Assessment Institute annual conferences in Indianapolis), the statewide conferences (e.g., the Illinois Community College Assessment Fair) and from leading books and journals. In addition, ECC and neighboring Waubesa Community College founded the local TAG (The Assessment Group) network which brings us into contact with assessment professionals at other institutions. ECC's manager of outcomes assessment and several faculty have presented at recent conferences.

Assessment efforts are led by faculty and carried out in service of students. The Board/ECCFA contract defines program and assessment responsibilities for full-time and unit adjunct faculty as:

- Utilize learning outcomes assessment and measures to improve learning/instruction
- Develop/review/revise courses and course outlines
- Assist in setting departmental goals and learning outcomes
- Participate in assessment of student learning outcomes at the college, program, and course-levels
- Participate in program review
- (Librarians) Assess effectiveness of library instruction program; modify and reassess as needed
- (Instructional coordinators) Lead development and implementation of departmental assessment program(s)

The faculty self-assessment form in the [Faculty Evaluation Handbook](#) requires a summary and evaluation of performance in carrying out the above duties. With support from deans, associate deans, and the Curriculum and Assessment Office, instructional coordinators are sufficiently equipped to lead course assessment, and in most areas, all faculty participate. In biology, for example, faculty conduct an annual program-wide quiz in their individual classes and gather as a group to review results.

SLAAC is a standing committee under the authority of the Vice President of TLSO. A chair is elected from ECCFA and divisional faculty members are elected for two-year terms, which are renewable. Membership is staggered to ensure a mix of new and experienced members. The current chair will soon begin his fifth year, and several faculty have extended their membership well beyond their two-year terms. The college provides administrative resources to support SLAAC. A budget for the committee was established in 2006, and a manager of outcomes assessment became a permanent position at that time. The manager is an administrator who works alongside SLAAC faculty and consults with departments/programs to discuss options for course assessment, guide faculty professional development, organize events, compile reports and data, and champion assessment throughout the college.

In the 2009 HLC Focused Visit Report, the HLC visiting team strongly encouraged ECC to "find additional ways to document and bring forward assessment success stories" and "ways to celebrate and recognize assessment success." To this end, we have established an annual event, the Assessment Diaries, which allows faculty and staff to share experiences, triumphs, and frustrations with assessment. First held in February 2010 and funded through the college's new initiative program, this event now occurs annually, growing each time. In 2013 ECC hosted the 17th Illinois Community College Assessment Fair and co-branded the event with the Diaries. A highlight of the 2015 event included faculty awards given out by the President, and in 2016, we will showcase improvements from other campus committees, such as the SSI, the Faculty Research Community, and GIST. Recent [Diaries events](#) have featured presentations by ECC students, and we hope to make this a tradition.

Through the Vice President, opportunities for faculty to learn and discuss assessment are offered throughout the year, and faculty are encouraged to attend. Professional development is provided by the Center for Enhanced Teaching and Learning (CETL). Assessment 101 is a workshop on general education, and more advanced sessions focus on writing outcomes (Assessment 102), maximizing quiz/test results (Assessment 103), and aligning the curriculum development process with assessment (The Life Cycle of a Course). Special sessions are held for individual departments as requested, most recently for paralegal faculty as well as library personnel in 2015. During all-college convocations, faculty and staff are invited to presentations on various topics, such as affective learning, inter-generational teaching and learning. At the spring 2015 convocation, we launched "10 Minutes with the Professor," a spotlight for sharing a particular teaching practice with a broader employee audience. Finally, the SLAAC chair has developed a series of quick training videos about assessment on the employee portal and the committee will explore additional ways to provide relevant resources to faculty.

One area that has received tremendous interest lately is use of institutional data for inquiry and evaluation. Through the annual [Principles Assessment Survey](#), we have noticed gains by faculty, administrators, and staff in terms of their interest and capacity for accessing data. Assessment and institutional research professionals from the Curriculum and Assessment and PIE Offices consult on most student success projects and programs, removing the mystery in managing data and refocusing conversations on interpretations and insights. Since 2009, data on student performance have been available to all programs through pivot table tools located on a common shared drive. Drawing data directly from the student information system, these tools allow deans and faculty to access current data on course success, persistence, and completion – which, in

turn, can be drilled up to a divisional level or down to a program level. Data are refreshed by the PIE Office each year. Programs undergoing review are required to answer specific questions about their students through this system, and all programs are encouraged to review their data annually. Faculty and deans are pleased to have data available at any time, and some have become adept at conducting their own analyses. There has also been a concerted effort across the institution to encourage general discussions about data and evaluation. Some examples include the annual Assessment Diaries presentations (see 4B4), semi-monthly research brown bags hosted by the PIE Office, standing data discussions at monthly Administrative Team meetings, and [monthly newsletters](#) about ECC data/research.

Best practices in assessment also extend to national surveys. We have used the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory to assess satisfaction with campus services and programs, and in 2009, 2012 and 2014 we administrated the CCSSE, the results of which were essential for redesigning academic advising last year. We plan to administer the Survey of Entering Student Satisfaction (SENSE) as one means to gather feedback on the change in the near future. Other national instruments we regularly use include the LASSI and the Educause Student Technology Survey. Local or homegrown surveys are used for surveying new students, alumni, and employees.

Nationally normed and validated instruments have been used to assess student learning in general education, namely the CAAP and CCTST. SLAAC is committed to striking a balance between standardized and authentic measures and in 2012-13 adopted a rubric from the English Department for scoring blinded samples of student writing from across the curriculum. Results, described in 4B3, validated what we believed anecdotally – that students’ writing improves as students matriculate through their programs and score the highest once they have completed ENG-102. SLAAC intends to develop other authentic assessment measures for additional outcomes.

Finally, best practices extend to peer review. Under the direction of the PIE Office, the college has established an internal Review Team, tasked with reading and responding with essential feedback about program review reports. Program review participants benefit from the objectivity and candor of peer reviewers, and Review Team members increase their own understanding about ECC programs during the course of reviews. This model of engaging in cross-departmental dialog and asking questions is being applied to the work of similar reviewing bodies, such as the Equity Coordinating Council and the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council.

Sources

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1. ECC's objectives for student retention, persistence, and completion are anchored in ECC Strategic Plan Goal 1 (Foster a learning-centered environment) and Goal 2 (Promote student goal completion) and in the student success priorities established by the SSI, whose mission is to *promote broad engagement around student success by focusing on innovations that produce systemic results*. Sample SSI initiatives related to Goals 1 and 2 are detailed below. As shown, our initiatives include a number of direct and indirect reforms – accelerated courses, academic advising, etc. We intentionally focus on interventions that target fulfillment of short-term (formative) milestones (completing 20 credit hours in the first year), as both internal and external research has shown that attainment of early milestones or "momentum points" is predictive of longer-term (summative) successful completion (Adelman, 2006; Tinto, 2012).

Priority areas which guide SSI are identified annually through a number of methods, including qualitative discussions among SSI workgroups, examination of disaggregated student data through Achieving the Dream (AtD), and statistical modeling. By systematically disaggregating student success data (e.g., by enrollment status, race/ethnicity, gender, and income), we develop and modify SSI priorities. Gaps that exist through disaggregated analysis typically define our target populations, which have included first-generation students, students placing into developmental education, and students of color, particularly African-American students. Each year we reevaluate targets for accuracy. Inspired by Completion by Design and the Pipeline Study from Broward College, our approach to identifying [SSI priorities](#) for 2015-16 has expanded to include student behaviors. In particular, we have found that ECC students are more likely to complete if they: (1) complete a certain number of successful credits early on (i.e., 10 hours within the first semester and/or 20 hours the first year); (2) are college-ready in math; (3) enroll continuously the first year; and (4) register early. SSI projects will be subsequently

evaluated based on the degree to which they encourage the fulfillment of one or more of these milestones. A celebratory Student Success Week is held each term to recognize the progress made by ECC students, and particularly target groups, in fulfilling key milestones.

Objective 1.1. Expand the use of supplemental instruction models

Accelerating Opportunities (AO) - The AO offers contextualized career-technical education courses for adult education students.

- The AO program has scaled from 32 students in 2012-2013 to 46 students in 2013-2014 (in welding, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) operator, dental assisting, and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVACR)).
- Since spring, 2012, 104 total students have participated in AO out of 392 total students enrolled in the welding, CNC, dental and HVACR programs. This represents 27% of the entire target population.
- 84% of AO students earn program certificates within one year, compared to 22% of a matched sample of non-AO participants in the same programs.
- The success of AO students has led to additional program options. AO began in welding and CNC in spring 2012. A dental assisting program was added in fall 2012, and a HVACR program in spring 2013. ECC's Integrated Systems Technology (IST) program is being offered in the 2015-16 academic year.

Objective 1.4. Ensure alignment among ECC, high schools, and senior institutions

Transition Academy (TA) - The TA program introduces training about college-going, positive academic choices, and mentorship for at-risk high school students.

- The TA has expanded from 48 students in 2013 to 132 students in 2015.
- Pre- and post-test comparisons on the LASSI shows that high school seniors who have participated in the TA have significantly diminished levels of academic anxiety. Scores fall in the 42nd percentile (pretest) to 88th percentile (post-test) on average.
- The TA has expanded to include a two-week summer intensive onsite program with area businesses. Enrollment has increased each year since 2013 and by 175% overall. Future evaluation of the TA program will examine college-going rates for high school seniors who completed the program and compare them to rates for all District 509 high school graduates.

4th-Year High School Math Course - ECC's prior summer bridge intensive program has transitioned into a new 4-year high school math course, which has been jointly developed by ECC faculty and member schools of the Alliance for College Readiness.

- The number of high school students served by this intervention has increased from 300 students in academic year 2012-13 to 602 in 2014-15 and over 800 in 2015-16 so far. The 4th-year math course was first offered to ECC summer bridge students in 2012-13. The course was launched in one of ECC's four high school districts in 2013-14 and

then expanded to two additional districts in 2014-15. The evolution of this intervention shifted responsibility for administration from ECC to local high schools and from ECC students to *potential* ECC students. This means that many more students are directly impacted, whether or not they chose to enroll at ECC.

- Approximately two-thirds (65% in 2013 and 67% in 2014) of high school students who enrolled in the course advanced at least one level in math placement after completing it. Less than one-third (29%) of students who enrolled in this course went on to enroll at ECC following high school graduation.

Objective 1.5. Build a comprehensive approach to student advising

Self-Service Advising - ECC launched its Student Success Center and a web-based self-service advising and registration system (Student Planning Module) in 2014.

- To date, 5,741 ECC students have used the planning module from fall 2014 to fall 2015 students, which reflects a 56% increase.
- Prior to implementation, few students created course plans, but since adoption of the module, over 50% of current students have used this tool to plan or register for coursework -- a figure which continues to increase.
- The Student Success Center formed in 2014; ECC hired nine full-time advisors and two full-time wellness professionals.

Objective 2.1. Accelerate student progression through coursework

Hybrid Math (MTH-099) - This course combines two developmental algebra courses into a single course.

- In fall 2011 the Math Department introduced a developmental course (MTH-099) which blends two levels of developmental math (MTH-096 and MTH-098) into one combined course. Students placing on the higher end of the Compass test but below college-level cutoff score are eligible to take MTH-099 and thus save time and tuition.
- Results show that students are as likely to be successful in the combined course as a stand-alone courses (66% receive C or higher v. 65% in MTH-096).
- Math faculty have proposed a practical math course (MTH-095) to be added to the developmental math sequence starting in fall 2016.

Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) - The ALP program combines developmental and college-level writing courses back-to-back in a single term.

- Since fall 2013, ECC has offered an ALP, thereby enabling students who place into developmental English the opportunity to enroll in developmental and college-level English concurrently.
- Pilots carried out in fall 2013 and spring 2014 showed that students earn grades of C or higher in ALP developmental courses more often than regular developmental courses

(83% v. 65%) and just as often in ALP college-level courses as regular college-level courses (69% v. 70%).

- The number of students taking advantage of ALP offerings has increased from 93 in academic year 2013-14 to 138 in 2014-15.

Objective 2.4. - Improve placement processes to assist and support various student populations

Multiple Methods for Placement - ECC piloted the use of high school GPAs as an additional index of college-readiness.

- Students who placed into MTH-098 (one level before introductory college-level) but had high school GPAs of 3.50 or higher were permitted to enroll directly into a college-level math course at ECC. There were 96 students who met this criteria in the 2014-15 academic year, and 27 of them (28%) took advantage of this opportunity.
- Students who took advantage of the program had a combined success rate (grade of A, B or C) of 85% in college-level math. This rate is statistically equivalent (though higher) to the overall combined success rate (76%) in all ECC college-level math courses during the 2014-15 academic year.
- The use of high school GPA for placement has been replicated by the English Department for the 2015-16 academic year.

At an institutional level, ECC tracks progress in accomplishing initiatives and meeting milestones via the [SSI Project Updates](#), [AtD Annual Reflection](#), and the annual [Performance Report](#). Additionally, the PIE Office reports progress in supporting target populations in the [Underrepresented Groups Report](#), which is prepared for the ICCB.

At a broader level, ECC's SSI milestones align to key metrics of voluntary organizations. These include: Complete College America, which focuses on success in first-year courses and course completion rates; AtD, which focuses on completion of developmental and gateway courses; and the Voluntary Framework of Accountability, which focuses on percentage of Adult Basic Education completers who continue enrollment and two-year and six-year cohort completion rates in developmental education, among many other important completion metrics. The Illinois performance-based funding model (Illinois Board of Higher Education) bases a portion of ECC funding on evidence of student attainment in a number of momentum points (e.g., proportion of developmental students completing the highest level of developmental coursework or the proportion of Adult Education students who progress to college-level coursework). Through the Alliance for College Readiness partnership, National Student Clearinghouse data is shared collaboratively between ECC and local high school districts to examine college-going rates, first-year persistence and completion rates for all public high school graduates in District 509. In joining these efforts, SSI projects contribute to the national agenda on completion. Following each spring graduation, ECC tallies its contribution to [President Obama's national call](#) to produce the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020 and for many years has

contributed more than its targeted share (e.g., for FY2014, ECC exceeded its target completion goal by 11%).

4.C.2. Each year, the SSI collects and analyzes the following five measures of student success in AtD Annual Reflections:

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

For each metric, data are [disaggregated by demographics](#) (gender, race/ethnicity, age) and socioeconomic (Pell grant) status, and monitoring results helps prioritize projects under the SSI. This information is shared annually with the SSI Equity Coordinating Council to facilitate discussions around priorities and objectives for the following year. In addition, the college analyzes and reports progress in reaching the following key performance indicators indexed in the Board Policy Handbook:

- Mastery of student learning outcomes
- Success in developmental courses
- Success in gateway courses
- Pass rates on licensing examinations
- Program and degree completion rates
- Persistence from term to term and from year to year
- Tenth day-to-midterm completion
- Completion of developmental courses
- Transition rate from Adult Basic Education and ESL to college
- Transition rate from developmental education to college
- Number and percentage change in students qualifying for academic probation
- Performance of ECC students who transfer to Illinois public universities
- Placement of ECC graduates into the workforce
- College readiness rates of incoming high school graduates as determined by ACT scores and placement testing
- Number and percentage change in annual degrees and certificates awarded

Again, each metric is disaggregated by various demographic characteristics, and results are used to set goals and prioritize future projects. Results appear in the Performance Report.

Since joining AtD in 2009, ECC has been able to improve metrics in many areas. For example, we have raised the college readiness rate of incoming high school graduates from 24% to 37% in seven years. Similarly, the three-year completion rate of first-time, full-time students at 29% for the 2010 fall cohort (per IPEDS) falls in the 83rd percentile on [NCCBP metrics](#), while the combined rate for students who either graduate and/or transfer within four years for all first-time in college students (whether full-time or part-time) has increased from 41% for our fall 2007 cohort to 54% for our fall 2010 cohort. ECC's success rates remain higher than other AtD

institutions. In our AtD Annual Reflection, we describe [gains among Hispanic students](#) outpacing gains in other race/ethnicity groups. While a source of great pride, a gap still persists among African-American students. To remedy this, the SSI has funded the Transition Academy (see 4C1) and recently introduced Welcome Receptions for African-American students. Our first event held in August 2015 was attended by 26 incoming and 25 returning students. Meanwhile, the college's overall number of degrees and certificates awarded in spring 2015 ($N=2,577$) reflects a 30% increase since 2009.

Beyond the SSI, ECC offices regularly examine data specific to their department missions. For instance, since 2012, the Admissions Office tracks conversion rates along the “[enrollment funnel](#)” (from prospects into inquiries, and from applicants into registrants) to set enrollment goals for new students. Through this process, we have been able to identify gaps in student onboarding to mitigate withdrawals and foster completion. The Math Department often incorporates statistical modeling and analysis into their regular departmental discussions about student enrollment and success in math courses (see MTH-099 and placement in Criterion 3). In another example, the Marketing Office and the Budget and Finance Office rely on enrollment forecasting and community surveys to understand student targets, completion patterns, and anticipated staff and resource needs (see Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative). Finally, the use of [MS Excel pivot tables](#) for program reviews (see 4B4) have helped sharpen goals within individual programs and service areas. For instance, by monitoring the relationship between program changes and student outcomes, the College Transitions and Developmental Education Department has adopted a number of accelerated models which have narrowed achievement gaps in specific disciplines.

4.C.3. The improvements listed in 4C1 are based upon ongoing analysis of formative measures known to impact longer-term retention and completion. Strategic initiatives are assessed by the SSI, the President, and Board on an ongoing basis -- including formative metrics like college readiness, progression through developmental education, and completion of credit hours during students' first years. More recently, the college has explored the impact of college-going behaviors and attitudes on overall success (see ECC Strategic Plan Objective 1.2. Teach students the skills needed to assume responsibility for their own learning). These include educational planning (tracked through the Student Planning Module), class attendance and completion of required assignments (tracked through Early Alert) and non-cognitive mindsets – like affect, will to learn, and self-regulation – which are tracked through the LASSI. Through analysis of results, we have begun to infuse an affective learning framework from the Academy for College Excellence (ACE) into our College 101 courses and use it to offer professional development for faculty.

The manner by which we use information and scale projects follows a [Five Step Model of Institutional Improvement](#) adopted when becoming an AtD Leader College in 2012. We begin by gathering ideas; piloting programs believed to benefit students; sustaining them through continuous review; and finally, scaling those which appear promising (and defunding those which do not). Essential to this process is the compilation of easy-to-understand logic models which outline the short- and long-term goals of SSI initiatives, the data sources necessary to measure success, intended results, short- and long-term impacts, and descriptions of how results

inform ECC Strategic Plan goals. This work is conducted by the SSI Data Rangers, who are employees from various departments who work alongside SSI co-leaders to model best practices in inquiry and evaluation. Initially compiled as new projects are approved, logic models allow us to cross-check projects which are on target and on budget, and to decide when/how to bring them to scale. A growing culture of inquiry allows us to accomplish these actions.

4.C.4. ECC methodologies for analyzing student retention and completion reflect commonly accepted best practices. In addition to mandatory IPEDS reporting, which focuses on completion of full-time, first-time students within a three-year window, ECC relies on voluntary efforts mentioned in 4C1: AtD, Complete College America (Illinois Governor's Office), and [Illinois performance funding metrics](#). In general, the tracking done by these organizations better reflects the disparate enrollment patterns of the populations we serve. Additionally, the ICCB requires special reporting of completion among underrepresented groups, veterans, first generation students, students of color, and students with disabilities (see [Underrepresented Groups Report](#)). Metrics are reviewed during program review by deans and faculty and by the President and Board during their annual review of the Performance Report. Finally, ECC reports satisfaction and [employment among recent alumni](#) (see 4A6).

ECC is also a member of the NCCBP and a founding member of the [Voluntary Framework of Accountability](#) (American Association of Community Colleges). Finally, many ECC disciplines rely on industry-specific metrics which support overall retention and completion. For instance, CT programs, in reporting into the Perkins Vocational and Technical Act requirements (US Department of Education), rely on postsecondary skills attainment through GPAs, course and program completions, industry-recognized tests, and success among non-traditional and tech prep high school students. Health occupations, human services, and paralegal programs rely on metrics defined by their professional accreditors; and Adult Education relies on the National Reporting Standards (NRS) of the ICCB. Each organization reflects current best practices in these disciplines.

Sources

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC has established, and continues to build upon, a culture of evaluation and continuous improvement that demonstrates the college's commitment to providing high quality educational programs and support services to students. The institution provides support and infrastructure to departments and programs, which ensures consistency in the assessment process while allowing for flexibility in the selection of measures and methods.

ECC's involvement in national initiatives -- such as AtD, Complete College America, and the Voluntary Framework of Accountability -- emphasizes the college's data-based approach for every institutional decision and, in turn, helps to extend a culture of continuous improvement to all institutional processes.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1. ECC operates as a community college in accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act (110ILCS 805). As such, the institution 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. ECC is [recognized formally](#) as a publically supported entity every five years by the Illinois Community College Board. Recognition consists of a thorough review of instruction, student and academic support services, finance/facilities and administrative functions.

Fiscal Resources. In its policies handbook (see 2A1), the ECC Board has adopted long-term financial planning principles related to budgeting, financial condition, and asset protection in accordance with the [ICCB Fiscal Management Manual](#). Fiscal health is one of the college's key performance indicators (see Performance Report) and is overseen by the college's Business and Finance Office. ECC's financial statements are reviewed through an independent audit each year and submitted to the ICCB.

The college has operated with balanced budgets since its founding in 1949 and benchmarks financial performance against other institutions. ECC maintains a Aaa credit rating with Moody's and a AA+ rating with Standard and Poor's and has received Certificates of

Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 12 consecutive years and a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for five consecutive years from the Government Finance Officers Association. The District contains a strong tax base and outstanding relationships with corporate, educational, and community partners.

Human Resources. The Cabinet monitors the human resource needs of the college by reviewing justifications for new and reallocated positions and unit reorganizations. As of fall 2014, the college employed 1,169 individuals in eight major employment categories, the largest being faculty. Over the past several years, the distribution of employees by class has remained fairly stable (see table), and only slight shifts have taken place to meet strategic needs. For instance, in 2014, the college focused efforts on building a new Student Success Center and hired nine full-time and three part-time advisors, who are professional/technical employees, and two full-time student wellness professionals, who are administrators. In term of faculty, shifting student enrollments lead to variability in the number of adjunct faculty over the years. Faculty employment figures are also explained in 3C1.

Fall Semester Employee Counts by Type: 2010 to 2014

ICCB Employment Class	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
Teaching Faculty	608	620	598	615	601
Academic Support Staff	22	22	24	22	14
Administrative	33	40	43	44	44
Supervisory	83	72	71	73	73
Professional/Technical	111	125	114	122	136
Clerical	141	145	138	146	136
Custodial/Maintenance	98	97	106	115	103
Other	129	63	57	67	62
TOTAL	1,225	1,184	1,154	1,204	1,169

NOTE: In 2011, tutors were moved from the *Other* category to a list of contingent workers, which is not reported here.

Working through the SSI's Promoting a Climate of Cooperation, Equity and Inclusion Team, the Human Resources Office strives to recruit diverse candidates for open positions. Each year the

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](#). In 2014, the office worked with an outside consultant to audit and map employee onboarding processes resulting in recent improvements in [hiring workflows \(pp. 32-41\)](#).

Physical Facilities. In April 2009, the district residents approved a \$178M bond referendum to support capital growth. Since then, ECC facilities have been significantly modernized. Work began in 2009 with the sale of our former Fountain Square campus in downtown Elgin and the relocation of all Adult Education programs, which had previously occupied that site, to a newly renovated Multipurpose Classroom Building on the main campus. Construction of the Renner Academic Library and Learning Resources Center and the Health and Life Sciences Building was completed in early 2012, and both buildings have earned LEED certifications for energy and environmental efficiency. Acquisition and renovation of a new Education and Work Center in Hanover Park took place in 2014 and construction of a Public Safety Training Center in Burlington is scheduled for completion in 2016. As part of these modernization efforts, the college extended Spartan Drive to create a western entrance to the campus and also purchased land adjacent to the campus from the city of Elgin. Finally, maintenance projects which had previously been deferred – such as water, electrical, roofing and grounds upgrades – were completed, as were renovations to the Student Resource Center, the main hub of campus. A [Strategic Campus Plan Report](#) was prepared in 2010 and updated in 2012 in which these updates are documented. New campus plans are generated every five years, and capital improvement requests for state funding ([Resource Allocation Management Projects](#)) are submitted to the ICCB each year.

Technological Resources. The college's Information Technology (IT) department oversees the college's technology needs and maintains the status and workflow of multiple technology initiatives. The department completes these projects through four related offices: academic computing and software support; administrative systems and application development; technology services and the helpdesk; and network operations and information security. These departments are overseen by a Chief Information Officer and advised by an Academic Computing Committee and a Distance Learning Advisory Committee representing faculty and student interests. It also relies on a team of specialized analysts, who work as employees within various college departments, but who serve as liaisons to IT staff to translate business needs into technological solutions. Finally, deans and academic support staff work alongside IT professionals to prioritize budgeting for technology-related instructional equipment annually.

The college's main transactional and reporting platform, Ellucian Colleague, is comprised of integrated modules related to curriculum, student records, finance, and human resources. These map onto the roles played by analysts. Desire2Learn is the college's main Learning Management System (LMS). In addition, Colleague's Student Planning interface offers students and advisors a "one-stop" shop for course registration, monitoring satisfactory completion of requirements, and tuition payment. A Go! mobile application provides access to a number of these same features.

Along with adding facilities, the college significantly improved technology infrastructure and usage since the college's 2006 HLC reaffirmation visit and as part of the 2009 capital

referendum. The college increased its online classes and instituted full online degree programs per a [2008 HLC Change Request and Report](#), and subsequently increased attention was given and resources diverted to the technological infrastructure upgrades. In 2013, the college implemented a major conversion of Colleague from its former UniData system to a SQL Server database, an increase in internet bandwidth through new fiber optic links redundancies in networking and switching capabilities, and converting new and existing classrooms with smartboard and smart projector technologies. Finally, the college has invested in employee and student portals and consolidating email, personal file storage, and portal access into a customizable single sign-on. An independent audit and review was conducted in 2013 to ensure efficiencies in the manner in which technological processes are implemented.

5.A.2. ECC does not have a superordinate body to which it distributes revenue. The college operates as a political subdivision of the state of Illinois with a locally elected Board which, as obligated by voters, oversees the college's resources, revenues, and expenditures. Every five years, the Board approves a new strategic plan from which ECC departments generate operating plans containing all projects and costs needed to accomplish plan goals for a given fiscal year. From these operating plans, the ECC Annual Budget is compiled. Thus, the ECC Strategic Plan is the ultimate and sole driver of all college revenues and expenditures.

The ECC Annual Budget contains all anticipated costs for the fiscal year, classified by fund type and object code. A number of safeguards are built into the budgeting process to ensure that allocations do not adversely affect core academic functions. At the state level, the college follows the ICCB Fiscal Management Manual on how to collect, allocate, and record revenues. The guidelines require independent audits and provide specifications on levying taxes, using restricted funds, unrestricted funds, and fund balances. Resource allocation for state-funded capital improvement projects follows the ICCB's Resource Allocation Management Process (RAMP) from which the Illinois General Assembly approves capital projects based on then-current economic conditions. Additionally, Illinois recently adopted a performance-based funding model, in which state funds are dispersed through demonstrated success in meeting key metrics. Through ECC's [Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative](#), the college has made significant improvements in using metrics to ensure that budget allocations successfully achieve operating (and, thus, strategic) goals.

Additional safeguards exist at the college level. Through its policies handbook (see 2A1), the Board establishes policies related to budgeting, financial condition, and asset protection – and it requires safeguards beyond those outlined in the Illinois Compiled Statutes. For example, the Board requires four months' worth of operating costs contained in fund balances and has adopted a conservative investment approach to maximize principal and liquidity over returns. Separately, [administrative procedures](#) (2A1) protect the distribution of revenue, purchases, and use and accounting of assets. Related procedures govern technology use, travel, student refunds, grants and contracts, and the acceptance of gifts. Finally, at the end of each fiscal year, the [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#) summarizes the actual revenues and expenses incurred to demonstrate the prudent distribution of resources in accordance with stated educational goals. Practices related to debt management, cash management, investing, taxing/revenue capacity, and risk management are detailed in these reports. As outlined in the latest report, for example, the college's net position (i.e., total assets minus total liabilities) has

increased by about 5% each year for the past several years further demonstrating the college's sufficient funding capabilities for fulfilling ECC Strategic Plan goals.

5.A.3. ECC's operational goals and objectives represent the actionable and reportable components of ECC's mission. Annual goals, action steps, anticipated targets, and demonstrated accomplishments are recorded in the [Annual Goals Database](#) each year. This process is overseen by the PIE Office. Since launching Purposeful Budgeting in 2012, summaries of operating goals and accomplishments are reviewed in All College Meetings to ensure they are realistic given organizational resources and opportunities. We use ideas generated from these meetings to refine goals, scale up where needed, and scale back in instances where outcomes are less promising than expected. We also revisit goals and expenses during Deans Council, Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council (SPBC), and SSI meetings.

Aligning goals to budgets is a work in progress, but evidence supports our claim that goals are realistic. First, reports extracted from the Annual Goals Database show how goals are fulfilled. In 2014, 58% ($N=185$) of operating goals were accomplished in full after a year; 13% ($N=41$) completed and sustained; 20% ($N=65$) deferred to a future year; 2% ($N=5$) revamped; and only 8% ($N=24$) not reported on. Since centralizing strategic planning efforts (see 2009 HLC Focus Visit Report), the college has become intentional about using data to evaluate goals, discussing annual accomplishments, and incentivizing departments to collaborate on joint goals/projects. Secondly, results from budgeting surveys conducted in 2013 and 2014 show that 95% of ECC administrators use goals to justify budgets and spending patterns, and if budget cuts are necessary, we believe they are done according to prioritization of goals (49% agree or strongly agree with this item in 2014, up from 31% in 2013). Finally, budget surpluses at the end of each fiscal year have declined over 60% in the past 3 fiscal years, suggesting that budget officers are planning appropriately and spending according to stated goals.

Recognition by outside entities also helps us gauge whether goals are realistic. Since ECC's last comprehensive reaccreditation, the college has been recognized as: a Bellwether Award winner (Community College Futures Assembly) for our Alliance for College Readiness partnership with our K-12 districts that has led to increasing college readiness rates; a Bellwether nominee for its financial literacy program; an AtD Leader College; an Aspen Top 150 College for excellence in tracking student success outcomes; an Illinois pioneer in the Jobs for the Future Accelerating Opportunities program; a 2014 Diversity and Equity Award winner from the ICCTA; a central Regional Equity Award nominee from the ACCT for programs focused on cultural competence for students and employees; and has obtained industry accreditation for the magnetic resonance technology and human services programs.

5.A.4. [Administrative Procedure 5-103](#) outlines minimum qualifications for instructional faculty teaching baccalaureate transfer, career-technical, and pre-college courses, as well as criteria for library faculty. The Board/ECCFA contract contains job descriptions for full-time and adjunct/part-time faculty, which are called upon when recruiting, screening, and hiring faculty candidates, as well as during job evaluations. Faculty, instructional coordinators and deans are directly involved in recruiting faculty, and the Vice President of TLSD approves all faculty appointments. The [Board/ECCFA contract \(pp. 58-63\)](#) contains salary schedules for full-time and adjunct faculty at each qualification level, which is determined by years of education and

experience. Review of faculty by deans and faculty peers occurs regularly according to schedules described in 3C3 and is overseen by a [Faculty Evaluation Committee](#), whose chair is elected from the Faculty Senate. A separate [Faculty Development Committee](#) selects and evaluates professional development, lane movement, and sabbatical eligibility of adjunct and full-time faculty. Sabbaticals are approved by the Board. Both the Faculty Evaluation Committee and the Faculty Development Committee work collaboratively with the Human Resources Office and the Office of the Vice President of TLSD.

ECC faculty are supported in their professional development by the Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) which, through a faculty advisory and review committee, organizes learning and pedagogy workshops throughout the year. In 2013 CETL was combined with professional development for non-faculty employees into a Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Office, which oversees training in college-wide matters, such as emergency preparedness and cultural competency training in diversity, equity, and inclusion. The POD Office significantly increased the number of events and workshops offered to employees – from 258 events and 1,828 participants in 2012-13 to 332 events and 4,475 participants in 2013-14.

For non-faculty administrative and support staff positions, the Human Resources Office monitors employee onboarding/off-boarding, retention, performance evaluations, professional development, and employee relations. Qualifications for each administrative and support staff position are consistent with levels of responsibility listed on the [Position Description Questionnaires](#) (see 2A1), and from these, job postings are created. Job classifications for administrative and staff positions are carried out quarterly by the [Hay Methodology Committee](#) and form the basis for like groups – positions of similar responsibilities, requirements, and reporting structures which are correlated to established salary levels (see [Board/SSECCA contract \[pp. 42-45\]](#)). The Board/ECCFA and Board/SSECCA contracts are renegotiated every three years, and Human Resources meets regularly with ECC labor unions to ensure that practices are adhered to. Evaluations for administrative and staff employees are conducted annually by managers or directors, filed in each employees' personnel file, and used to guide professional development opportunities. The college's 2015 Employee Survey suggests that ongoing accountability for performance evaluations is an area for future improvement.

5.A.5. To protect the academic core and our ability to deliver quality, ECC has adopted verification practices listed in 5A2. The college has reduced expenditures in all areas by reallocating positions to areas of greatest need (e.g., financial aid, academic advising, etc.), and through Purposeful Budgeting is more intentional about formalizing criteria and broadening communications related to budgeting. As part of Purposeful Budgeting, ECC joined the Government Finance Officers Association Partners in Practice program in 2012 to draft and implement best practices.

Financial monitoring occurs regularly throughout the fiscal year. ECC budget officers monitor expenses and requisitions through general ledger reports available in Colleague. The Controller and her team monitor accounts payable and receivables through Colleague reconciliation software and bank statements. The SPBC meets throughout the year to review spending across all departments to ensure spending is aligned to stated goals. For each public Board meeting, the Business and Finance Office prepares expense reports for each fund type and a summary of

available working cash. On a quarterly basis, the office also prepares expense reports for each external grant received by the college. Finally, it commissions independent audits each summer for the preceding fiscal year, in accordance with the Government Auditing Standards Board (GASB 33/34) and the ICCB Fiscal Management Manual. Audit reports are sent to the ICCB as required by state statutes and posted on the college's website.

Sources

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- Admin Proc 5-103 Min Reqmnts for Appointment to Faculty
- Admin Procedure List_HLC - 081215
- ECC 2015_ICCS_Report
- ECC Cert of Recognition ICCB FINAL thru 9-20-2018
- ECC Hay Methodology
- ECC Planning Database Instructions
- ECC Prelim HR Process Imprvmt Report pp32-41
- ECC Preliminary HR Process Improvement Report
- ECC Preliminary HR Process Improvement Report (page number 32)
- ECCFAContract2013_2016
- ECCFAContract2013_2016 (page number 34)
- Faculty Evaluation Handbook
- Final 14 CAFR - ECC
- Final Faculty Development Handbook 081214
- ICCB Fiscal Mgmt Manual FY15 08-2015
- List of Admin Procedures
- Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ)
- QI Report Elgin Community College IL
- RAMP Report Dist 509
- SSECCA-Contract-2014-2017
- SSECCA-Contract-2014-2017 (page number 41)
- Strategic Campus Plan Report-Update 06-2012

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1. The ECC Board of Trustees operates under the principles of [policy governance](#). As such, the Board sets all policies, executive parameters, and limitations to advance the vision of the college, and the methods by which the college fulfills Board policies are left to the President, who is directly accountable to the Board. The [Board/President relationship](#) is also formalized in writing.

Major leadership bodies at ECC are as follows:

President's Cabinet. The President maintains an executive Cabinet which consists of 11 senior leaders (see [ECC Organization Chart](#)):

- Vice President of Teaching, Learning and Student Development/Chief Academic Officer
- Vice President for Business and Finance/Chief Financial Officer
- Senior Executive Assistant to the President
- Chief Human Resources Officer
- Chief Information Officer
- Executive Director of Communications
- Managing Director of Community Engagement and Legislative Affairs
- Executive Director of the Institutional Advancement and ECC Foundation
- Executive Director of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
- EEO/AA Officer, Title IX and FOIA Compliance Officer and Paralegal
- Chief of Police

Deans Council. The Chief Academic Officer, the most senior of the President's direct reports, supervises a council of 10 deans as well as the Assistant Vice President, who, in turn, oversees the Curriculum and Assessment Office. The Deans Council provides leadership for academic and student support units by executing administrative procedures; supervising faculty; overseeing

academic committees; developing academic and student service goals, curricula, and student learning outcomes; and monitoring assessment practices. The council includes senior leaders from:

- Adult Education & English as a Second Language
- College Transitions & Developmental Education
- Communications & Behavioral Sciences
- Continuing Education
- Curriculum & Assessment
- Health Professions
- Learning Resources & International Education
(recently renamed from Academic Development & Learning Resources)
- Liberal, Visual & Performing Arts
- Math, Science & Engineering
- Student Services & Development
- Sustainability, Business & Career Technologies

Student Success Infrastructure (SSI). The [SSI](#) (see 5A3) is the organizational and leadership umbrella that unites all student success and strategic initiatives on campus. Launched in 2012 as a means to standardize reporting and oversight, the SSI operates under a participatory governance model with co-leaders from faculty and administration. The Equity Coordinating Council is the steering committee which allocates funds and assesses progress according to ECC's Learning-Centered Model of Continuous Improvement which, per AtD, includes 5 interrelated phases: (1) commitment to student success; (2) using data to drive decision-making; (3) broad engagement of stakeholders; (4) reflection upon, review and evaluation; and (5) establishing a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement. SSI team co-leaders currently serve one-year terms, which are renewable upon consent of both the college President and the ECCFA President. Teams align their work to one or more goals of the ECC Strategic Plan as follows:

- Equity Coordinating Council (Steering Committee): aligned to Goal 4
- Learning-Centered Environment Team: aligned to Goal 1
- Student Goal Completion Team: aligned to Goal 2
- Educational and Workforce Partnerships Team: aligned to Goal 5
- Collaboration, Equity and Inclusion Team: aligned to Goals 3 and 6

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 and other national labor organizations. Every tenure-track full-time faculty member and librarian is represented by ECCFA, as are part-time faculty members after fulfilling a minimum number of service hours. Elected ECCFA representatives participate on all college councils, and their interests are represented on the Cabinet by the Vice President of TLSD, the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), and the President, with whom ECCFA leaders meet regularly. A formal contract between ECCFA and the Board is carried out by college administrators. Finally, a standing extra-

contractual taskforce of faculty and administrative representatives meets as needed to resolve matters not otherwise contained in the contract, such as voluntary assignments.

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 college President, the Chief Human Resources Officer, and the Managing Director of Employee Relations.

Electricians. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), AFL-CIO, Local Union 117 is the governing body for a team of ten electricians at ECC and also maintains a formal contract with the Board.

Students. The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the voice of the student body. It consists of current students elected annually by peers for positions of President, Vice President, Vice President of Student Organizations, Secretary, Treasurer, and 16 senators. The Association interacts with students, clubs, and organizations to solicit feedback about college operations, satisfaction, and recommendations for improvements that impact student success. SGA shares information to administration and notifies students of legislation that may impact them. Issues the SGA has championed include the college's no smoking policy, cafeteria prices, textbook rental program, purchase of outdoor furniture, and civility in campus discussions. The SGA holds weekly business meetings with club and organization representatives to share goals, objectives, and accomplishments. SGA members also serve as members to the Student Affairs Discipline Committee.

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

5.B.2. The Board is composed of seven members, each elected for a six-year term, and the Student Trustee, who serves a one-year term. Trustees legislate by majority rule through the formal passage of policies, resolutions, and motions. Agendas and minutes for Board meetings are available on the college's website prior to each open Board meeting and Committee of the Whole meeting. The President and Cabinet prepare the Board's consent agenda, which contains actions for approval (e.g., major purchases, contracts, etc.) as well as reports prepared monthly, quarterly, or annually:

- Strategic Goals and Performance Reports
- Academic Program Review Reports
- Budgeting and Grant Monitoring Reports
- Student Activities Reports
- Community Reports

- Human Resources Reports
- Legislative Activities Reports
- ECC Foundation/Institutional Advancement Reports

Through open meetings, the Board approves the college's mission, vision, and strategic goals; annual budgets; large expenditures; tuition and fees; faculty sabbaticals, and hires for faculty and administrators. As described in 2A1, the Board evaluates the President annually, sets annual goals aligned to ECC Strategic Plan goals, and adheres to an ethics resolution modeled after the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act and expectations for professional development and service state and national levels.

5.B.3. Various ECC committees oversee all major academic and institutional needs. They provide a forum for diverse ideas to be heard, a mechanism for problem-solving and an environment for issues to be studied in a more in-depth manner than could be accomplished individually.

Several committees exist by virtue of job roles, such as the Cabinet, which reports to the President, and the Deans Council, which reports to the Vice President of TLSD. Such committees include:

Committees Designated by Job Role

- Committee of the Whole (led by the Board of Trustees Chair)
- Cabinet (led by the President)
- Administrative Team (led by the President)
- Deans Council (led by the Chief Academic Officer)
- Finance Committee (led by the Chief Financial Officer)
- Strategic Planning Committee and the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council (led by the Executive Director of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness)
- Data Rangers (led by the Director of Institutional Research)
- Hay™ Methodology Team (led by the Chief Human Resources Officer)

Other committees are formalized in labor agreements. Contracts between the Board and SSECCA and ECCFA allow time for their leadership to engage in union work. Further, curricular and faculty needs are codified by contract in the form of standing committees which include:

Committees Articulated through Agreement

- Faculty Association (led by the President of ECCFA/Faculty Senate)
- Support Staff Executive Board (led by the President of SSECCA)
- Curriculum Committee
- Faculty Evaluation Committee
- Faculty Development Committee
- Insurance Committee
- Extra-Contractual Work Team (articulated through Board actions updated annually)

Finally, the following standing committees are recognized by the Extra-Contractual Work Team but are not contractually-obligated so that operations can remain flexible to changing needs. Generally, these groups are co-led by faculty and administrative designees – with administrators contributing time as part of everyday work, and faculty compensated through contractually obligated service hours or stipends for voluntary work.

Current Standing Committees

- Student Success Infrastructure
- Student Learning Assessment Advisory Committee
- ECC Review Team
- Honors Committee
- Learning Communities Committee
- Academic Procedures Review Team
- Academic Technology Committee
- Multicultural and Global Infusion Committee
- Global/International Studies Team

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

Sources

- BOT Policy BPR - Sep 2014
- BOT Policy GP - Sep 2014
- ECC Org Chart - Sep 2015
- ECC Strategic Plan Booklet - 20121024 C
- Final Budget FY16 Report 6-10-15
- Policy Governance Principles - ECC Board
- SSI Chart 2_0
- SSI Chart and Roles-Respon

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

5.C.1. Each year, ECC departments and committees submit budget planning documents for the next fiscal year (beginning July 1). Per the [Annual Planning Calendar](#) (2A1), the process begins in fall, as departments, programs, and offices outline operating goals and all accompanying costs. Tactical and operational in nature, annual operating plans align to college-wide strategic goals and objectives of the ECC Strategic Plan. Auxiliary service units also prepare [annual business plans and budgets](#), which are reviewed by the Board of Trustees' Finance Committee. Budgets for capital and deferred maintenance projects are also compiled as part of the Illinois Compiled Statutes for campus planning.

Budgets and justifications are reviewed collectively by the SPBC and used to create the [ECC Annual Budget](#), which is displayed publicly for a month prior to Board approval in June and launch in July. Budget input worksheets include a delineation of all expenses and, for certain departments, revenue streams and/or fees. They also specify the goals to which budget requests align, ongoing versus one-time costs, and a self-prioritization into one of three levels for SPBC deliberations:

- 1 indicates that the funding request *is essential for current operations*.
- 2 indicates that the funding request *impacts current operations in a minimal way*.
- 3 indicates that the funding request *enhances but does not significantly impact operations*.

Additionally, during late fall/early spring, the SPBC conducts a mid-year budget assessment to ensure spending is on track and redistributes any funds which may not be needed because of changes in plans.

Through the Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative, departments are beginning to formalize specific protocols for budgeting management. Standard formulas for estimating enrollment, state-reimbursed credit hours, and costs for printing and instructional supplies have been

formalized since adopting the initiative. The initiative is predicated on a zero-based approach, in which budgets are prepared from scratch and without assumptions from prior years. In 2015-16, the SPBC will continue formalizing processes for requesting contingency funds, extra-contractual pay for faculty special assignments, and capital improvements. Private fundraising opportunities through the ECC Foundation are also being identified during budget discussions to ensure alignment to institutional priorities.

Projects of a trial or exploratory nature (new initiatives) are funded separately from the department budget process. Overseen by the [Equity Coordinating Council](#) of the Student Success Infrastructure (SSI), new initiatives provide employees and students the opportunity to receive funding for innovations that improve current practices. Funding ranges from \$2,000 to \$20,000 per project per year. If trial funding yields success, it is expected that the project will be renewed – or, if evidence is solid, become a permanent part of a department’s operating plan and budget in future years. Review is rigorous and conducted using a reflective [checklist](#) developed by the Equity Coordinating Council and [logic models](#) developed by Data Rangers. Proposal specifications, review criteria, measurement, and reporting expectations are updated often. Many of ECC’s most noteworthy endeavors -- such as the Financial Smarts Financial Literacy Program and the Assessment Diaries conference -- began as new initiatives.

5.C.2. Program review reports, as described in 4B, and student success reports, as described in 5D, are reviewed by the [ECC Review Team](#) and the Equity Coordinating Council, respectively. Evaluation criteria include evidence of student success, ongoing need, articulation of goals and learning outcomes, and cost effectiveness. The review process also entails historical analysis of costs by function, which is used to determine costs per instructional unit, credit hour, course, and student and to set course and lab fees. Faculty instructional coordinators and deans, tasked with reviewing their programs, and the Equity Coordinating Council are tasked with overseeing student success projects, are expected to incorporate the findings from outcomes into their budget justifications and in the Annual Goals Database for future planning/budgeting cycles.

Similarly, the college’s process for starting new programs ([Program Development Guidelines](#)) follows established guidelines of the ICCB as well as ECC’s own additional requirements. The process includes a labor market needs analysis, proposed curriculum, alignment of curriculum to strategic goals, projected revenues and expenses, assessment methods (e.g., internship, portfolio review, capstone course, team project, written/performance test, or industry/state certification/licensure examination), and plans for continuous review.

Through Purposeful Budgeting, ECC strives to allocate costs according to strategic goals and assessment of outcomes. Currently, committees rely on discussions of a broad and holistic nature, but recently, the Deans Council and Equity Coordinating Council have drafted [criteria and language](#) reflecting different areas: student learning, student achievement and engagement, cost efficiency, etc. We anticipate that discussions of how to apply criteria will help clarify processes by which programs, initiatives, and budgets are prioritized in the future..

5.C.3. The PIE Office works with TLSD academic areas and non-TLSD services to keep strategic planning as inclusive as possible. For the current plan (ECC Strategic Plan FY2013 through FY2017) a cross-functional team of 20 faculty, staff, and administrative employees

spent nine months synthesizing input from 48 internal, external, and national studies prior to plan adoption. Within the larger committee, separate teams researched particular themes (e.g., college readiness, cultural competence, etc.), and a writing team produced all drafts. By January 2012, three months into the planning process, the Strategic Planning Committee had assembled 102 separate themes which were vetted and integrated to yield the six strategic goals and 23 objectives contained in the current plan. Interim drafts were shared in six All College meetings and two college-wide web surveys.

The perspectives of external constituents shaped the current set of strategic goals. Members of the Strategic Planning Committee included senior leaders responsible for academic programs, public relations, marketing, communication, legislative affairs, workforce development, and related external outreach areas. Documents reviewed by the committee included the college's community survey, a statewide economic impact study, alumni surveys, survey of local employers, and input from the ECC Board and the ECC Foundation Board. Students participated via their Student Club Council chairs and Student Trustee, and the Executive Director of PIE met separately with them to gather their input.

Perspectives of external constituencies are considered during plan development and implementation. Per administrative procedure, many academic units have advisory boards or are accredited externally (see 4A). The perspectives of these boards and accreditors were considered when setting the ECC Strategic Plan and when recording annual accomplishments. In addition, several SSI senior leaders work directly with external constituents (e.g. Strengthening Educational and Workforce Partnerships Team, Promoting a Climate of Collaboration, Equity and Inclusion Team) to receive input and guidance as they carry out their work. The SSI itself is reviewed closely by coaches/consultants from AtD, who not only review the college's [AtD Annual Reflections](#) but provide input into planning. Finally, as described in 5A1, the college carefully considered the needs of district voters when planning for construction and remodeling.

5.C.4. According to the Public Community College Act, a third of operating revenues for Illinois community colleges was to come from state government; another third from local property taxes; and the remaining third from tuition and fees. However, in reality, only 15% of the college's [estimated fiscal year 2016 operating revenue](#) will come from state funds, a figure which has declined substantially over the past ten years. Meanwhile, 29% of operating revenues come from tuition and fees, 52% from local taxes, and 4% from grants and other sources. ECC maintains reserves to offset any burden presented by late payments from the state.

Planning and budgeting at ECC depend on a sound understanding of strategic goals and institutional resources. As departments prepare operating goals and budgets each year (see 5C1), they rely on projections of revenues and expenses compiled by the Business and Finance Office. Each summer/early fall, prior to collection of operating goals, this office prepares projections on a three-year horizon by monitoring enrollment trends, taxation, and equalized assessed values of properties, consumer price index, historical tuition and fees, expected grants, hiring needs, and anticipated reimbursements from ICCB. Careful monitoring of trends safeguards the college against external fluctuations, and through Purposeful Budgeting, the office has continued to refine the formulas it uses for estimation (see 5C1).

Since adopting a zero-based approach in 2012, the SPBC has assumed greater oversight in analyzing whether goals used to allocate resources have, in fact, been accomplished – and thus whether funds have been well spent. Measures for Purposeful Budgeting include meeting minutes, feedback from surveys, and financial trends. For the past two years, budget officers have self-reflected on the priority rankings (5C1) and goal alignment sections of budget worksheets, and these processes continue to be the highest-rated items on [annual budget surveys](#). [Survey results](#) also illustrate the importance of having budget workshops for sharing definitions and estimation formulas. Finally, we have noted in our Purposeful Budgeting report that the quality of budget request justifications have improved for most department and offices. Trends in annual surpluses (i.e., the sum total of funds requested but unspent at the close of each fiscal year) are decreasing, suggesting that budget officers are planning more accurately and spending according to their plans.

The college budgets in a conservative manner and the Board sets a tuition rate only after all other budget adjustments have been considered. Illinois Public Act 89-1 places limitations on the annual growth of property tax collections of most local governments, including ECC, and limits the level of collected tuition and mandatory fees to a third of the college's per capita costs. However, the college is well below this limit (currently tuition is about 20% of per capita costs). As described in 5A2, the college maintains a number of safeguards to ensure that fund allocations do not adversely affect our core goals. At the state level, the ICCB Fiscal Management Manual requires fund transfers do not exceed 10% of the total fund amount set forth in the budget. At the college level, the college has maintained fund balances in excess of Board required amounts. Finally, ECC's financial stewardship has garnered exemplary credit ratings and recognitions (see 5A1).

5.C.5. The planning and budgeting system is anchored around four phases of continuous review diagrammed in ECC's [Planning and Budgeting Guide \(p. 6\)](#): (1) planning/goal setting; (2) budgeting; (3) reporting/communicating; and (4) assessment/review. At each phase, the college anticipates emerging factors influencing what we plan, how we budget, and how we assess and report accomplishments.

During planning/goal setting, Strategic Planning Committee members are guided by a variety of resources: current research from community college researchers (i.e., the Community College Research Council); reports from state agencies (i.e., ICCB and Public Agenda from the Illinois Board of Higher Education); voluntary efforts like Achieving the Dream, Completion by Design, Complete College America, and the American Association of Community Colleges; reports from ECC offices; economic impact studies and labor market reports; student success reports; historical enrollment and completion trends from ECC and other institutions; survey results; previous accreditation reports; and meeting minutes and readings from other campus teams.

During budgeting, the second phase, the SPBC accounts for a variety of emerging needs. In addition to cost estimates listed in 5A2, the council accounts for salary increases and contractual obligations, employee benefits, software and technology upgrades and maintenance, deferred maintenance and capital needs, and auxiliary unit operating parameters. In fiscal year 2013, for example, a year-long migration of data storage from Colleague UniData to SQL databases required project planning and extensive communication. More recently, operating parameters for

all auxiliary areas like the ECC Bookstore are under discussion in light of changes in the field of publishing. In an ongoing fashion, the Human Resources Office anticipates a need for professional development and certifications in areas like emergency preparedness, disaster recovery and risk assessment, per obligations contained within employee contracts and given the realities of modern society.

When it comes to reporting and assessing impact, the Equity Coordinating Council and Data Rangers match the outcomes of our efforts with emerging needs – such as ensuring that success rates match targets, job placement rates match employment trends, and completion rates among African-American and Hispanic students meet regional and national efforts to close achievement gaps. Recent funding for an internship coordinator and a welcome receptions for African-American students are examples of changes which address emerging factors. In another example, a new faculty onboarding project responds to national challenges in enculturation of adjunct faculty.

As described in 4C, ECC is beginning to augment traditional summative metrics (e.g. IPEDS) with formative momentum points from broader accountability efforts such as the VFA, AtD, and Illinois performance funding. The college's statistical models from [2012](#) and [2015](#) are used to predict the impacts of various entry characteristics on student success. These reports support other initiatives occurring under the SSI, such as Student Success Week, a week-long celebration conducted by the Student Life Office to encourage persistence and minimize withdrawals.

Sources

- 5C4 QI Report ECC q7
- Academic Program Effectiveness Criteria DRAFT 022813
- Annual Planning Calendar 2015-07-01 Final
- Business Plan - Bookstore FY16
- Checklist - New Initiative Request Apr 2015
- ECC - AtD 2015 Annual Reflection
- ECC Annual Student Success Report 121912
- ECC Review Team - Sentinel - April 2013
- Final Budget FY16
- Final Budget FY16 (page number 13)
- Logic Models - FY16
- Op Plan Guide Final - 2013-02-15 v3
- Op Plan Guide Final - 2013-02-15 v3 (page number 7)
- Program Development Guidelines FY15
- Results - FY2016 Survey of Budgeting as of 20141204
- SSI Chart 2_0
- SSI Predictive Model 2015

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

5.D.1. ECC documents operational performance in both formative and summative ways. Formatively, ECC divisions and departments, committees, and auxiliary units compile goals and accomplishments on an annual basis. These goals – which align to college-wide goals of the ECC Strategic Plan broadly – are discussed twice annually during All College meetings. Reflections and insights that arise during these meetings are then used to revise goals as they occur – i.e., to leverage projects which appear promising and redirect those which do not.

In addition, the college compiles summative assessments in the form of quantified performance indicators (e.g., graduation rates, key financial ratios, etc.) which are mandated by the Board Policies Handbook. Through the Performance Report, trends are monitored to ensure effectiveness in meeting ECC Strategic Plan goals – and increasingly to ensure we meet regional, state, and national goals. Toward this end, ECC participates in several national benchmarking efforts: AtD, Accelerating Opportunities, NCCBP and Maximizing Resources for Student Success, CCSSE, and the Voluntary Framework of Accountability. Additionally, through the ICCB, the college reports into the Complete College America program and IPEDS. In 2011, the Illinois General Assembly adopted a performance-funding model for public education, whereby a portion of state funding is allocated based upon demonstrated performance in student success, workforce development, and affordable access. Together, formative and summative assessments reflect the primary means by which ECC documents its operational performance.

In addition to assessing quantitative outcomes, ECC maps practices as well. Since the 2009 HLC focused visit, the college has worked with a number of consultants to recalibrate practices ranging from financial aid to human resources (see 5D2). In addition, since launching the SSI in 2012, the Equity Coordinating Council has relied on logic models – documentation of goals and progress made on them – to guide future planning and budgeting for student success. ECC's introduction of zero-based budgeting in 2012 requires department directors to justify annual goals and projects before allocations are made. Participation in the Government Finance Officers Association's Partners in Practice program has also allowed us to compare our budgeting practices to best practices nationally.

5.D.2. ECC has become intentional about using data to assess performance. After adopting the ECC Strategic Plan in 2012, and even shortly prior, the college began formalizing expectations for how programs and committees gather and review evidence. The ECC Review Team, started

in 2011, works with the Curriculum and Assessment and PIE Offices to articulate expectations for defining goals and accomplishments, reviewing curricula, and using data. The Equity Coordinating Council, launched in 2012, assesses progress in fulfilling goals for student success. The SPBC, started in 2012, operates in similar manner. A subcommittee of the Strategic Planning Committee, this council aligns annual budget requests to goals, accomplishments, and self-assessments – then makes recommendations to the President on how to allocate funds. These committees reflect how ECC has learned from its experiences.

Recently, ECC's processes and documented results have garnered national recognition. In addition to being named an AtD Leader College in 2012 and 2015, a Bellwether recipient in 2013, and an Aspen Top 150 Institution in 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation sent a group of researchers to visit ECC in September 2015 to study best practices in student retention and completion. In addition, the college has relied on external experts to assess particular functions and improvements have been made in the following areas:

Area	Dates	Consultant Name	Accomplishment and/or Current Actions
Employee Professional Development			
Cultural Competency	2009 to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kaleidoscope Group Bea Young & Associates Dr. Cris Cullinan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted a diversity audit of community and college Created action plans for rollout of cultural competency training
Emergency Preparedness	2011 to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dewberry Dr. Peggy Mitchell Clark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritized work and assisted in the creation of an integrated Campus Emergency Operations Plan and oversight process Offered employee workshops on emergency preparedness
Faculty Development	2013 to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heidi Eaton, ECC Professor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified a need to onboard faculty through professional development and mentoring during the first year
Human Resources			
Employee Benefits	2013 to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wessels Sherman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved compliance reporting practices per the Affordable Care Act

Employee Hiring and Onboarding	2013 to 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sikich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapped component elements of the hiring process Reduced vacancy fill time for new hires from 192 days in 2010 to under 72 days in 2014
Student Services			
Financial Aid	2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Aid Services, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated award and payment information from Financial Aid and Student Accounts Offices Reorganized positions
Academic Advising & Wellness Services	2012 to 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noel-Levitz, Inc. Dr. Kim Poast Achieving the Dream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched the Student Planning Module Adopted a caseload management model and a tiered implementation plan across 3 years Reorganized existing positions and created the Student Success Center
Continuing Education	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sikich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified opportunities to efficiently and effectively serve a quickly-changing non-credit and contract training environment Reorganized positions
Campus Business Operations			
Marketing	2012 to 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sikich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created and hired a Director of Marketing Strategy
Custodial Services	2014 to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core Management Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified opportunities to improve efficiency, ongoing training, communication, and reduce costs associated with custodial services
Information Security	2011 to 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halock Security Labs, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified vulnerabilities in data security and focus areas for

			business continuity/risk assessment plans
Information Technology	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sikich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a process for articulating dependencies in technology project implementation • Implemented an IT project proposal form
Strategic Planning and Institutional Research	2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Datatel Center for Institutional Effectiveness • Achieving the Dream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed a learning-centered model to govern continuous quality improvement, measurement and review • Established Data Rangers Committee to oversee project evaluation
Campus Planning	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kluber Skahan Associates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed schedule for deferred maintenance of campus buildings and facilities

Sources

There are no sources.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC's operations are built upon an infrastructure that fosters collaboration, maximizing resources, and responsiveness to the future. ECC Strategic Plan goals (and the procedures which flow from them) help guide finances, facilities, personnel, planning, and review -- all of which are designed to be as effective and efficient as possible. Increasingly, the college relies on best practices to frame institutional decisions. Recent examples include the Purposeful Budgeting Quality Initiative and the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Council and improvements in academic program review. Additionally, ECC gathers evidence of its effectiveness through data.

The college's excellent financial stewardship is manifested in balanced budgets since 1949 and exemplary ratings through credit monitoring agencies. The institution's planning-budgeting system is anchored around four phases of continuous review and a zero-based methodology emphasizing excellence in planning and measurement. Residents of District 509 have placed their confidence in ECC to deliver high-quality educational programs, as evidenced by successful passage of a \$178M capital referendum during an economically challenging year for our region and across the nation. Through the public's generosity, ECC has built a new library, new health and life science building, and a public safety training center and has modernized most of the existing campus since 2009.

ECC's efforts have resulted in several national recognitions. Examples include recertification as an Achieving the Dream Leader College in 2012 and 2015, an Aspen Top 150 Institution in 2014, and a Bellwether Award recipient in 2013.

Sources

There are no sources.