



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HLC Accreditation Evidence Document

Quality Highlights Report

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TRUST INTEGRITY VALUING OTHERS STUDENT SUCCESS QUALITY

Introduction

Seward County Community College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution offering 45 programs of study, including Adult Education, certificate programs and associate of arts, science, general studies and applied sciences degrees. SCCC serves a student body of 2,500+ students ranging in age from 15 to 85, in a majority-minority county with one of the highest foreign-born percentage populations in the U.S. The rural service area population is about 51,000 in seven Southwest Kansas counties and a five-state region that includes Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico.

Strategic Issues

The systems portfolio review team wrote that SCCC has identified activities undertaken by the College to attain its mission and goals, but the activities did not appear to have been developed into formal processes with measures, benchmarks, and results. SCCC has focused on business process documentation since the previous portfolio in order to address knowledge capture and to mediate employee turnover in operations. A new president, new vice president of academic affairs, and reorganization of executive and dean level leadership for instruction and student services since 2015 has resulted in improvements in implementation of measures, benchmarking, and use of results for improvement from the strategic plan, retention, enrollment management, and instruction, particularly when compared to previous portfolios. In the next section, improvements within the core components are described which include documentation of the use of measures and results for organizational learning.

Core Component Updates

Each of the review team comments from the core components rated as “Adequate but needs improvement” are below. The narrative describes improvements that have been implemented by the College, clarification where needed, and additional evidence for the core component.

Core Component 2.B

Team Feedback: Information regarding institutional accreditation was found but programmatic accreditation was not addressed.

Improvement

A website upgrade was likely responsible for the loss of program accreditation information at the time of the systems portfolio review. Program accreditation information is available on each program’s webpage.

Evidence: [Program Accreditation Webpage Links](#)

Core Component 2.C.3

Team Feedback: The review team asked for clarification on the interpretation of Board Policy 112 as to the level of involvement of the taxpayers in the college’s business and the influence that has on the Board members.

Response: Taxpayers are included in the policy to remind board members of their responsibility to the taxpayers as good stewards of tax monies and taxing authority. Taxpayers have no formal authority in decision making at the board level.

Improvement: The review team also recommended consideration of a Conflict of Interest Policy applicable to the Board membership as evidence for this core component. The Board adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy at the May 6, 2019 meeting. Board members also sign an Annual Disclosure Statement acknowledging the policy and agreeing to the stipulations.

Evidence: [Board Policy 204](#), [Board Minutes 5-6-19](#), [Board Disclosure Statements](#)

Core Component 2.D

Team Feedback: The Board Policy 415 speaks to free speech and the peaceful assembly. However, from review of these two policies, it is unclear whether freedom of expression in scholarly practice is covered. The College may wish to include in the policy classroom practice. Also, while policies exist, evidence was not provided showing execution of the policy.

Improvement: An academic freedom policy was drafted by faculty and approved by Academic Affairs Council during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Evidence: [Academic Freedom Policy](#)

Core Component 2.E.1

Team Feedback: Seward County Community College's IRB assists faculty and staff in protecting individuals who participate in human subject research. All research projects involving human subjects must be submitted to the IRB for review.

Improvement: The portfolio review team requested documentation of the use of the IRB process. The team also noted the lack of a research misconduct policy, which has been developed.

Evidence: [IRB Approvals](#), [Research Misconduct Policy](#)

Core Component 3.A.3

Team Feedback: It is unclear from the evidence provided that the dual credit classroom receives the same level of evaluation as other courses offered. Also, it appears from the evidence that much of the responsibility for the quality of online programming is given the EduKan rather than remaining with the College.

Improvements: We described a plan in the systems portfolio to implement an eWalk system for classroom observations that would provide more robust data across all modes of delivery. The eWalk system was piloted during the 2018-2019 academic year and all courses were evaluated at least once. Full implementation with all courses will take place in 2019-2020. The data reports allow comparison across all modes of delivery by course, faculty type, and location.

All faculty are required to submit course outlines and time audits for their courses each semester. As described in the systems portfolio, current practice is course documents and evaluations are reviewed by deans, lead instructors, and the director of outreach. If an issue is noted in the course evaluation, deans address the issue with the dual credit instructor. Deans, Division Chairs, and lead Instructors are also involved in evaluating courses and compliance with credit hour requirements as well as reviewing common finals results and comparing final exam scores with final grades. Formal documentation of the results of this process will be an improvement for 2019-2020.

Effective academic year 2019-2020, Evaluation Kit will be integrated into Canvas to provide student course evaluation for all SCCC courses in all modes and locations. This will provide more frequent feedback from students in all courses concerning the quality of instruction.

With regard to responsibility for the quality of online programming in the EduKan consortium, faculty representatives from consortium colleges act as EduKan peer reviewers while the EduKan Learning Manager facilitates the process and provides summary reports which are then sent to the chief academic officers for each college to review. The consortium college Presidents comprise the board of directors for the consortium and one of the Presidents serves as chair on a rotating basis.

Evidence: [Course Outline and Credit Hour Audits](#), [Dual Credit eWalk Aggregate Report](#), [Common Final Evaluation](#), [Edukan Faculty Evaluation Summary](#), [Edukan CAO Agendas and Minutes](#), [Edukan CAO Course Evaluation Email](#), [Edukan Course Evaluation Summaries](#)

Core Component 3.C.4

Team Feedback: Policies provide for professional development, but no evidence was provided to indicate it was occurring and to what degree.

Clarification: The review team interpreted the board professional development policy as the only avenue for faculty and staff professional development. The board policy 605 provides funding beyond departmental professional development budgets to support faculty and staff in pursuing a higher academic degree. However, there are also other sources of funding for professional development for college faculty and staff. Up to fifty percent of the annual Carl D. Perkins grant award can be used for professional development for career and technical education faculty and staff. Department/program operational budgets may also include funds for professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Improvements: Examples of internal professional development tracking were provided in the systems portfolio and a new process for tracking external professional development in our timeclock and employee leave system was piloted during the spring 2019 semester. Evaluation of the pilot showed the guidelines for logging professional development need to be clarified and periodic reminders need to be provided to team members to improve accuracy, particularly for web-based professional development.

Evidence: [On-campus PD Activities 2012-2019](#), [Board Policy 605 Prof Dev Grant](#)

Core Component 3.C.5

Team Feedback: There was no evidence of how online or remote students access faculty, how the current process is monitored, and how it is assessed for effectiveness.

Clarification: Online or remote students access faculty through the Learning Management System (LMS) which is currently Canvas. Course surveys assess student satisfaction with faculty access and responsiveness. In the EduKan consortium, student satisfaction results are shared with faculty who must then respond with an improvement plan if any students rate access or responsiveness as unsatisfactory. Seward Online students complete a satisfaction survey in the allied health online programs. The results are reviewed by program Directors, Instructors, and Deans.

Improvements: A project currently underway is to align all student satisfaction surveys and data for Seward Online programs and SCCC taught EduKan courses through one delivery system (Evaluation Kit) in the Canvas LMS for all distance learning courses. The EduKan evaluations include both a mid-course and a summative satisfaction survey.

Evidence: [Edukan End of Course Evaluation](#), [Edukan Faculty Eval Summary SP2019](#), [MLT Faculty Access Survey Results](#)

Core Component 3.C.6

Team Feedback: Seward County Community College uses results from student satisfaction surveys administered every six years to determine if student needs for services are being met. A timelier process may do a more effective job of determining this for the College to be more proactive around staffing.

Clarification: The Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and CCSSE are on a 4-year rotation. In order to manage survey fatigue for students in a small institution, our institution-wide survey rotation is one year for the SSI, a year without a survey, followed by the CCSSE the next year, a year without a survey, then repeat the cycle. Student feedback and suggestions collected during SCCC Student-Board of Trustees dinners are also used to determine if student needs for services are being met.

Evidence: [Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI Power BI Web Source](#), [Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI Summary Page](#); [CCSSE](#)

Core Component 3.D.3

Team Feedback: Documentation around advising was provided; however, it was unclear what processes are formalized by contractual agreement or College policy, and which are assumed, particularly around faculty and athletic advising. Data to support this was missing.

Clarification: SCCC is committed to provide quality services in the area of Academic Advising and believes it is critical to the success of its students. To ensure that, it provides the number of qualified academic advisors the role of advising is embedded in the job descriptions.

In the job descriptions of all SCCC's full time instructors, it indicates that 15% of their time will be spent on academic advising and/or assessment. It is also an expectation in the job descriptions of the coaches, either with the assistants or the head coach, depending on the sport. To ensure that coaches provide quality advising to the student athletes an Athletic Advising Coordinator was hired two years ago.

Evidence: [Faculty Job Description](#), [Coaches Job Descriptions](#); [Recommendations to Extend Athletic Advisor Position](#); [Agreement to Continue Athletic Advisor Position Through 2021](#)

Core Component 3.E.1

Team Feedback: While Seward County Community College's co-curricular programming is suited to its mission, more evidence could be provided to show how this programming enriches the learning environment and meets the intended goals of supporting students' personal growth through

leadership development, community service, self-advocacy, working in teams, and understanding others.

Improvements: Student learning outcomes for each of the co-curricular programming areas have been mapped to the co-curricular goals and results are now available, providing evidence for how the programming meets the intended goals.

Evidence: [Co-Curricular Assessment Plans](#), [Student Services Outcomes Results](#)

Core Component 4.A.3

Team Feedback: The Seward County Community College Registrar evaluates all student academic records to ensure appropriate documentation in the Student Information System and grants transfer credit according to the College and Kansas Board of Regents policy. The dean and faculty from the discipline of the course under consideration evaluate transfer credit from outside of Kansas, and the Registrar uses their decision and justification to award credit. This appears to be a subjective process.

Clarification: The systems portfolio did not clearly describe the role deans and faculty play in the process. They are involved in determining whether SCCC offers an equivalent course if an analysis is needed. The equivalent course analysis is conducted through comparison of SCCC course outcomes by faculty and deans of the academic division.

Improvement: Transfer policies and information provided to students were reviewed and procedures clarified to address the review team concern of a subjective process and to provide accurate information to students.

Evidence: [Transfer Webpage](#)

Core Component 4.B.1

Team Feedback: Program faculty assess program learning outcomes, including those aligned with institutional outcomes, but this process is not fully developed at this time, according to Seward County Community College.

Clarification: There is no statement in 4.B.1 that the program learning outcomes process is not fully developed. There is a statement in 4.B.2 referring to co-curricular outcomes at the program level: "Currently, the process for assessing co-curricular learning outcomes at the program level is not fully developed." The 4.B.2 statement was referring to a few courses that include a community service component and did not identify the community service as a co-curricular outcome.

Core Component 4.B.2

Team Feedback: A complete plan of co-curricular assessment was not completed until 2018 and data will not be analyzed until spring of 2019.

Improvements: Data collection for co-curricular student learning outcomes was completed in May 2019. In addition to results, each area identified action to be taken for improvement. Aggregate data for the co-curricular goals have not yet been analyzed.

Evidence: [Co-curricular Assessment Plan](#), [Co-Curricular Outcomes Report by Department](#)

Core Component 5.A.1

Team Feedback: The College's eSupport work-ticket system provides evidence of ongoing maintenance and repair to facilities, IT and related infrastructures. From the documentation provided it was questioned about deferred maintenance and how well the institution is being maintained.

Clarification: The most recent funding plan for deferred maintenance and capital improvements was reported in the systems portfolio. Historical data were not provided which may have caused the review team to question how well the institution is being maintained. Historical data is provided as evidence of a well-maintained institution.

Evidence: [Initial Long-Range Capital Projects – 2016](#); [Capital Lease List Initial Long-Range Capital Projects – 2016](#);

Team Feedback: Security for IT is a concern, in that the reference was made for security that the IT department resides behind locked doors. In these days of cyber-attacks, locked doors will not suffice to keep institutional and student data safe.

Clarification: Additional evidence for 5.A.1 specifically addresses cybersecurity in 5.P.3 and 5.P.5.

Improvements: The IT department has completed an in-depth analysis of the network infrastructure using industry standards and has developed a plan to address network issues and cyber security. The policy, infrastructure, cybersecurity plan, and funding have been approved by the Board of Trustees. For security reasons, public disclosure of the infrastructure and cyber security evaluation is not provided. The CQR team might consider a meeting with the CIO should additional information be needed.

Evidence: [IT Infrastructure Expenditures FY2011-2019](#), [IT Infrastructure Improvement Plan](#), [Executive Team Minutes](#)

Team Feedback: Budget documents reflect the distribution of revenues to support essential operational areas of the College. Budgets indicate the increase of cash reserves to provide for a less constrained budgets through predicted revenues alone. Yet, it is also a concern that the area of institutional research has only one staff member whose time is also spent on coordinating assessment of student learning.

Clarification: The institutional research staff member (data analyst) does not coordinate assessment of student learning. After discontinuing the director of research and assessment position, the coordination of assessment of student learning and coordination of institutional research became the responsibility of the vice president of academic affairs.

Improvement: The math and science division secretary has 25% time allocated to data clean-up and other duties as needed in the Office of Assessment and Research.

Evidence: [Math and Science Division Secretary Job Description](#)

Core Component 5.A.4

Team Feedback: The College uses a 3-tier system for the training and support of their employees which is monitored at the individual employee level with software. Individual development is supported through department and division budgets from two funds, 1111 and 1112. It's unclear what the criteria are for each fund, as they both include academic units. What percentage of the annual budget is generally allocated to professional development and if that has changed across time was not provided.

Clarification: The college communicated to the review team that professional development is supported through two institutional funds. To provide clarification, fund 1111 is used for all academic programs and non-instructional departments, and fund 1112 is used for career and technical education programs. The college tracks professional development expenditures using three accounts; 7103 Travel for Professional Meetings, 7105 Travel for Instruction, and 7120 Registration & Conference Fees. These expenditures run less than 1% of the total annual budget in any given fiscal year and have not changed over time.

Improvements: While researching professional development expenditures, it was discovered some student services departments were using professional development general ledger accounts to record travel and expenses for items unrelated to professional development, while some professional development expenditures were coded to accounts other than those related to professional development. The Finance department will review their general ledger accounts and communicate clarification to appropriate staff.

Evidence: [Historical PD Expenditures as a percent of Total Annual Budget](#)

Core Component 5.A.5

Team Feedback: Evidence was presented demonstrating that Board Members monitor college finances through monthly board meetings, which they access through an online board docs governance software system. It is questionable as to how employees are held accountable to their budgets.

Clarification: Employees at the department and program level are designated with budget responsibility through job descriptions and are evaluated as to whether they meet expectations. Deans and vice presidents also monitor the budgets for their areas. The vice president of finance and operations runs reports that monitor budget levels across all cost centers.

Evidence: [SCCC Job Description Examples](#) [Employee Handbook](#)

Core Component 5.C.2

Team Feedback: It is assumed, and the College may want to provide evidence to this, that results of assessment of student learning and operations drive the budgetary resource allocations.

Clarification: Resource needs are determined annually by the Assessment Committee and become part of the vice president of academic affairs and Office of Assessment and Research budgets. As described in the systems portfolio, the results of assessment of student learning are evaluated by faculty and improvement goals are then identified. Typically, budget allocation beyond funding annual assessment activities is associated with faculty professional development. When the director of assessment and research position was discontinued in 2016, funding for a faculty chair of the Assessment Committee was approved.

Evidence: [Office of Research & Assessment 2020 Budget](#); [Annual Assessment of Academic Achievement Assessment Budget](#)

Core Component 5.D.1

Team Feedback: The review team struggled throughout the portfolio with the lack of processes and the lack of data provided by Seward County Community College. It is unclear how widely continuous quality improvement is understood across the College. The lack of data and analysis of data due to lack of capacity is a serious issue, and merely providing access to a software tool will not move the campus forward in understanding data.

Improvements: Capacity in the Office of Assessment and Research has been improved by allocating a percent of two division secretary's time to assist with data clean up and repetitive tasks such as collection and data entry. We do not currently have the resources for automation through a data store or data warehouse. While it is true that providing access to data through a software tool (Power BI) will not improve the campus' understanding of data, it is a necessary step. The purpose of the software tool is to 1) simplify the collection and analysis processes for the research analyst and 2) improve access to the data, consumable in a way relevant to data consumers. Aside from basic organization and summative analysis performed by the research analyst using the "software tool", serious data analysis for improvement is performed by data consumers. Data is used to make decisions and improvement within areas such as program review and feasibility, retention, assessment of student learning, and enrollment management. The standard process for any continuous quality improvement project is to first collect and examine all relevant data. Once analyzed by data consumers, an area of improvement is identified, projects for improvement are developed and measures are collected and disseminated to those involved through general reports, faculty or employee workshops, pilot tested rubrics, and other methods, depending upon the improvement project.

Evidence:

[Math and Science Division Secretary Job Description](#),
[Program Feasibility Report: 2018-2019](#),
[Academic Standing Five Year Analysis: 2016](#),
[Enrollment Management Plan: 2018](#),
[Enrollment Management Draft 2019-20](#)
[Math Program Review Annual Update](#)
[Physical Education Program Review 2016-17](#)
[CQI Process Cycle](#)

Core Component 5.D.2

Team Feedback: Seward County Community College provides some evidence that it learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its effectiveness. Specifically, the College has developed a revised Strategic Planning process, a revised Enrollment Management Plan, a revised Performance Evaluation Process, and a Program Feasibility process. Still, while institutional data are available on the website and while Seward County Community College reports on improvement initiatives through updates to the Board and through committee structures, more evidence could be provided to show how the organization learns from these reports and how follow-up is determined.

Improvements: Process improvements include documentation of follow up and justification for adjustments to goals and tracking of results and action through SCCC Strategic Goals and Aspirations. Reports are provided below as evidence.

Evidence:

[Strategic Goals and Aspirations Report;](#)

[Departmental Review – Financial Aid;](#)

[Student Services Improvements based on Results;](#)

Team Feedback: Seward County Community College provides some examples—such as the work of the Mover Groups, the current revision of the enrollment and payment processes, the IT survey results—to demonstrate that the institution uses evaluations and feedback to improve institutional effectiveness. More evidence could be provided to show how the College applies its learning to ensure improvement efforts are supported and sustained throughout the organization.

Improvements: SCCC understands that there is always an opportunity for continuous improvement. The links below serve as examples of how the college has made progress towards improving our efforts to apply learning across the organization to effect change.

Evidence:

[Instructional Team Data Analysis,](#)

[Process Review Scholarship Award Process,](#)

[Action Project Improve Retention and Completion through Scholarship Award Process Revision,](#)

[Third-Party Scholarship Awarding System Proposal,](#)

[Retention Strategies 2018-2021](#)

[Student Services Improvements based on Results](#)