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 ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
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 ensure 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 ensures 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 ensures that the credentials 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.

Argument

Response to 4.A.1

SCC has dramatically enhanced its approach to the program review process by hiring a Dean of Institutional Research and Effectiveness whose primary responsibility is program review and assessment.

Program review processes were enhanced during the 2019-2020 academic year and is on a cycle in which a third of programs are evaluated every three years. It includes multiple stakeholders including faculty and advisory groups. The process begins with a review of the program data, the contribution margin analysis, and assessment and curriculum review. The contribution margin analysis is calculated using revenue from tuition, fees, and grants minus expenses including materials and instructor costs divided by credit hours to determine financial strength of the program. Then, the department develops their SWOT analysis with input from any relevant stakeholders followed by goal development, long-term planning, and any budget/staffing requests necessary to complete those goals.

Departments submit updates on goal progress to the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and their Division Dean annually. Then, departments receive feedback on their program reviews from their Division Deans.

SCC is committed to continuous improvement; the data reviewed and feedback process is in the process of further enhancement in 2021-2022 to allow for more relevant and actionable data reviews and additional feedback through the work of the program review committee. The program review form provides additional details regarding the process and expectations. The 2019-2020 Program Review Annual Report shows a comprehensive view of the program reviews and a log of which programs completed reviews.

Program review has now been integrated into how we operate throughout the college through changes such as:

- Added to job descriptions and evaluations where appropriate.
- Developed a committee dedicated to giving feedback during the program review process.
- Annual training to better understand data to inform the program review process.
- Budgetary allocations are directly tied to program review requests, including a transparent process for granting additional allocations.

The enhanced program review process has yielded meaningful action based on our findings to both our curricular and co-curricular areas. For example:

- In both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years the program review process indicated that our engineering and science programs had reached their capacity due to the number of General Engineering and Physics I and II courses we offered . Our inability to offer courses created a bottleneck in Physics for the Engineering program contributing to the low enrollment in the Engineering program. These courses had high fill rates in current offerings at 88% in SP21. Since our Physics program has a positive contribution margin (attached), the decision was made to add a full-time physics position for the 2021-22 academic year.
- Human Resources completed a comprehensive staffing analysis in 2019 as part of the program review process. This analysis compared SCC's staffing allocations to that of State, Regional, National, and Student Success Community College Leaders. The analysis served as benchmark data to inform Cabinet staffing decisions. In Spring 2020, several positions/vacancies were frozen as a result of the pandemic and reallocated in some cases based on the data from the program review. In Spring 2021, Cabinet re-evaluated progress toward goals to ensure personnel matched up with our strategic plan goals.
- During the 2019-2020 program review, the art department discovered that they have a negative contribution margin of -$360,881. An analysis of the studio courses indicated that the faculty pay rate for these courses exceeded the average tuition paid by the students enrolled, even at maximum capacity. For a short-term solution, we reduced studio offerings for Spring 2021 based on survey data of art and graphic design students to ensure timely degree completion. For long term solutions, two major changes were made to improve the viability of the program: 1) In Fall 2020, both the faculty and administration agreed through the faculty negotiation process to decrease the studio/lab pay ratio from .86 equivalent credit hours per clock hour to .83 equivalent credit hours per clock hour. 2) In Spring 2021, the college decided to spend approximately $80,000 to increase room capacity in the visual arts building. This renovation is scheduled to take place in December 2021.
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2017 indicated that our population in St. Charles County is aging, and we would likely need to increase our science lab capacity to support our healthcare programs in response to our increasing community healthcare needs. The greatest need for increased lab space was chemistry followed closely by biology and physics. This was negatively impacting our completion rates in this program resulting in early transfer. Since Student Success is our first and most important strategic plan goal, the college identified funds to fix this problem. In Fall 2020, a bond initiative (Prop CC) was approved by the community and plans are underway for the building of 5-6 new lab spaces for the 2022-23 academic year totaling $5-$6 million, allowing chemistry, biology, physics, and engineering to increase their course offerings.

- In the 2019-20 AY, our Office of Student Life, informed by their program review and student exit survey results, signed an agreement with an outside contractor to provide personal counseling services and subscribed to two digital services, Meta and Sanvello, in order to meet their program goals. Additionally, they instituted a "Tuesday Tips" program twice a month to focus on student wellness and stress management

- In response to DEI Program review in 2018-2019, it was determined by the CDO and BRIDGE committee to conduct faculty DEI professional development to help improve support, success and retention of underrepresented students. Professional development presentations about general DEI cultural awareness and multicultural communications were delivered in faculty department and division meetings in fall 2019 and spring 2020.

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- During the 2018-2019 AY, the ACE Tutoring Center identified several strategies to increase usage in some under-utilized areas such as: embedded tutoring, classroom visits, bridge workshops, College 101 tours, and midterm grade interventions. They also determined the need to increase staffing in writing to help serve the needs of students. Their proposal to increase the budget for peer tutoring was approved during FY 2020.

Response to 4.A.2

St. Charles Community College (SCC) awards college credit from regionally accredited colleges and universities. Courses from non-accredited institutions and any credit for prior learning are evaluated by the Department Chairs for equivalent learning outcomes by reviewing course syllabi, textbooks, and faculty credentials. Coursework must be transferable at 100 or 200 course level. Developmental/remedial coursework will not be accepted in transfer to apply toward a degree; however, it may be used to meet prerequisites.

Official Transcripts

To have transfer credit evaluated, transfer students must submit official transcripts from each of their transfer institutions. The transcripts must be issued as official by the transfer institution and sent directly to St. Charles Community College. Transcripts issued to the student will not be considered official.

Transfer course work is evaluated for students who have applied for admission and are degree-seeking. The student submits a 'Request For Transfer Evaluation (RFTE) Form to the Office of Admission, Registration and Records.

Credit by Examination

Credit granted through one of the non-traditional processes will count towards the total credits earned towards graduation; however, the credit will not be calculated into the cumulative GPA. Colleges or universities to which you may transfer might not accept this credit. Likewise, SCC may or may not accept credit by examination taken elsewhere. The College Level Placement Examinations (CLEP) allows for the evaluation of knowledge acquired through sources other than traditional college course work. SCC will grant credit for certain subject CLEP examinations according to departmental guidelines. SCC does not grant credit for general CLEP exams. Additionally, SCC grants credit for Advanced Placement (AP) administered through area high schools.

Response to 4.A.3

Determination of Course Equivalencies

Initial determinations of transfer credit equivalencies are made by the Office of Admission, Registration and Records through a comparison of course titles and descriptions. If substantial similarity exists between a course taken at another institution and an SCC course, and a passing grade was received for the course, transfer credit will be awarded for the course. Courses which are major-specific in the career and technical education area will be reviewed by the appropriate Division Chair or faculty member. Students may be asked to provide additional course information prior to the review. Once an evaluation of course equivalencies is completed, students will be sent an email detailing how to view the courses that were accepted in transfer in Student Planning. Courses that

are accepted as transfer from another institution will be included in the cumulative hours of credit but will not be calculated in the grade point average. SCC utilizes Global Credential Evaluators to do course by course evaluations of transcripts from international schools.

Credit Hour Equivalencies

College credit is converted to semester hour equivalents. Quarter hours are converted to semester hours by a conversion factor of 2/3. When conversion results in a fraction and the number is less than the amount needed to fulfill credit hour requirements, the student may need to take additional courses to fulfill credit hour requirements. If a course at another institution is offered for fewer credits than an equivalent course at SCC (e.g., if a three credit hour course at another institution is substantially similar in content to a four credit hour course at SCC), the student will be awarded transfer credit for the equivalent course at SCC but only for the number of credit hours earned at the other institution. In such cases, the student may need to take additional courses to fulfill credit hour requirements. If a course at another institution is offered for more credits than an equivalent course at SCC (e.g., if a four credit hour course at another institution is substantially similar in content to a three credit hour course at SCC), the student will be awarded transfer credit for the equivalent course, but only for the number of credit hours that the course is offered at SCC.

Courses that are part of the CORE 42 general education block are guaranteed to transfer to any public institution in the state of Missouri. Those courses have been evaluated by the SCC Faculty and Administration for transferability and approved through the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

Transfer Credit Limit

Students are required to complete at least 15 hours in residence to earn a degree or certificate.

Appeal of Transfer Credit Evaluation

Students who wish to appeal their transfer credit evaluation should follow the Transfer Credit Appeal Process.

Response to 4.A.4

The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for overseeing the development of the curriculum, including courses and programs. The primary source of advice on matters of curriculum development is the Curriculum Committee. Proposals for new courses and programs, course deletions, course changes (including course title/number, credit hours, prerequisites/corequisites, course objectives, and content), and inclusion in the general education distribution requirements may come from the appropriate faculty, divisions, subcommittees, and task forces.

Recognizing the importance of faculty involvement in curricular decisions, the majority of members on the committee will consist of faculty representatives. The Curriculum Committee may recommend/not recommend approval of new curriculum or revised curriculum. The Vice President for Academic Affairs may receive and seek advice from others affected by proposed actions and may need to consult at certain times with the Curriculum Committee regarding recommendations they have made, working collaboratively to make any amendments needed. Curriculum recommendations made by the committee are approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, with the exception

of new degree programs, which will be approved following consultation with the College President.

Authority for Prerequisites

Academic requirements such as prerequisites are governed by the Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee receives proposals on course and program requirements including prerequisites from the faculty academic departments which are then approved by deans to be submitted to the committee. The committee is made up of mostly faculty with representation from advising and academic affairs administration serving in ex-officio roles. The committee then approves the curricular changes and provides final recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Rigor of Courses

In 2018, the State of Missouri began the Core42 General Education program. Core42 mitigates which courses are allowable as part of the Gen Ed curriculum in an effort to guarantee better credit transfer within state schools and to help remove student confusion by limiting excessive course choice. SCC abides by the Core42 guidelines; however, the rigor of the courses still lies with SCC. Faculty maintains learning objectives and outcomes, grading standards, and course requirements, and SCC adheres to HLC Assumed Practices in this regard. In addition, faculty determines curriculum and content, approving all changes through the Curriculum Committee. After committee approval, SCC submits changes to the state for final approval.

Expectations for Student Learning

Syllabi are required for every course, with each faculty member required to include learning objectives/outcomes and to present the syllabus to students on the first day of class. The curriculum review process for approving/editing courses requires review of all courses for appropriate expectations of student learning by the faculty, the dean, the committee, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs which are then later assessed for student learning. See 4B for details.

Access to Learning Resources

All students (including part-time, online, and dual credit) have access to many learning resources that are available both online and face-to-face:

- Learning Resource Center is where our library services are offered. Students have access to computers and printers, to online learning materials and library databases, and our librarians.
- An ACE Tutoring Center, where students have access to full-time writing, math, and science tutors. There is also a computer lab, with 50+ terminals. (We also have a computer lab in our Tech building with 15 computers.) In addition, students have 24/7 access to tutors through an online service called NetTutor.
- Electronic resources such as email and our LMS (Canvas) incorporate many learning resources.
- A Case Management Service to help students with internal and external concerns.
- Our Bookstore, with digital and paper offerings.
- An Assessment Center that aids faculty and students with specialized testing.
- Career Services, which provides valuable help for our many students who wish to seek a career or develop an educational plan.
- International Student Services to assist our international students with educational and other

concerns.
- Mental Health Services to assist our students with any troubles they may be experiencing.
- New: 24/7 Information Technology helpdesk for 2021-22 academic year.

Faculty Qualifications

SCC carefully examines employee records to guarantee all faculty credentialing standards are met.

In Fall 2017, department chairs and deans reviewed all faculty records to ensure faculty were properly credentialed as described in the HLC March 2016 document "Determining Qualified Faculty through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices." Department chairs and deans reviewed faculty transcripts and completed a Faculty Information Form on each faculty member. In some cases where the minimum 18 graduate credit hours in the field were in question, course descriptions or syllabi for graduate courses were requested for a full review. If tested experience was to be used as the basis for qualification, an updated resume or CV was requested and reviewed by the department chair and dean. If a faculty member did not meet the criteria set in the guidelines for the discipline they were teaching, they were informed of this and asked to begin working to fulfill them. If the faculty member was unable or unwilling to pursue the necessary qualifications, they were no longer assigned credit-bearing courses in that discipline after the Spring 2018 semester. Some faculty met the guidelines in other disciplines and were able to be shifted to that coursework.

As a process improvement, all new faculty hires subsequent to Fall 2017 were reviewed by both department chair and dean to ensure the minimum qualifications were met, and Faculty Information Forms were completed and will continue to be completed moving forward.

Dual Credit Program: Qualifications, Equivalent Learning Outcomes, Levels of Achievement

High school instructors who teach in the Early College Program have credentials that meet the Higher Learning Commission standards. During the spring term prior to the next academic year, the school district posts available dual credit teaching positions. The district then selects candidates and forwards their academic transcripts to the SCC AVP. The transcripts are reviewed by the appropriate SCC Academic Department Chair for approval to teach. The high school teachers are assigned an SCC email address and have access to the SCC Faculty Portal to view their class rosters and submit grades.

SCC academic department chairs provide course syllabi (with learning outcomes) and textbooks to the high school faculty and discuss curricular alignment to ensure they are the same as the on-campus course. Classroom observations are conducted the first semester and every 3 years after to ensure instructional quality and course learning outcome alignment. Additionally, student learning is assessed at the departmental level to ensure equivalency and level of achievement are maintained.

Additionally, high school faculty are invited to participate in the SCC pre-semester in service meetings and trainings. SCC applied for an "Additional Location" for the Wentzville School District Early College Program. The visit was completed in the spring of 2021 and the application approved.

Response to 4.A.5

The College maintains specialized accreditation for the following programs, staying in compliance with program review, curriculum, and assessment requirements.

- [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)](#)
- [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)](#)
- [Health Information Management – Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM)](#)
- [Medical Assisting – American Medical Technologists (AMT)](#)
- [Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA)](#)
- [Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE)](#)

Response to 4.A.6

The College evaluates the success of its graduates in several ways:

- Career placement. Each year the office of Career Services sends surveys via email, text, and USPS to each student who graduates with an AAS or AS degree or certificate in career-technical programs 180 days after graduation. 83% of students responded in 2020. Of those who are seeking employment, 52% were employed in a field related to their degree.
    - [2019-2020 Grad Survey Results](#)
    - [2018-2019 Grad Survey Results](#)
    - [2017-2018 Grad Survey Results](#)
- Licensure pass rates:
    - [NCLEX](#)
    - [NBCOT](#)
    - [CAHIIM](#)
    - [MOGEA](#) - After evaluating the 2018-2019 report, SCC decreased in pass rates for the writing exam. At the course level, SCC instituted more performance-based writing assignments and assessments, particularly focusing on the persuasive essay and data based questions/responses. Additionally, we worked with the ACE Center to develop writer refresher training. The education department also saw students struggling with the science/social studies portion of the exam. The Education department chair met with the science department chair to review the framework for the science portion of the exam, and curriculum adjustments were made at that time. Additionally, the education department increased the offerings of our new Social Science/Education course, Multicultural Education, as the social issues addressed in this course were a missing piece of knowledge from the education program. By academic year 2018-2019 our 1st time passage rates on the Science/Social Studies portion of the exam had increased from 69% to 82% in 2019 -2020.
- Certified Bookkeepers exam - Accounting offers a certified bookkeeper course (ACT-125). As part of the course students are able to sit for a four-part, industry-recognized credentialing exam issued by the *American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers* (AIPB). Non-credit students may take the course through continuing education as well. However, the cost of the exam for the student is prohibitive, so improving on the exam completion rates has been a challenge.
- Quickbooks Certified User exam - The Computerized Accounting (ACT-115) class recently changed to a new textbook that allows students to learn Quickbooks during the first half of the semester and prepare for this industry-recognized exam. The exam is an additional cost for the students, so not all students opt to sit for the exam.
- Students in our A.A.S. Business programs take a capstone course in their final semester which requires the Education Testing Services Major Field Tests for Associate Degree Business Programs skill exam to be taken during the course. During the FA2018-Sp2020

timeframe, 70.5% of SCC students (24 of 34) scored in the 50th percentile or higher. Average scores were well above the national average for each section of the exam as well.
- As part of our Solid Modeling II course (CDM-222), students are eligible to sit for the Certified Solid Works Associate–Academic exam. This industry-recognized credential was awarded to 82% (9 of 11) of students in the Sp2019 cohort, 100% (11 of 11) of the Sp2020 cohort, and 85% (6 of 7) of the Sp2021 cohort.

Transfer information to four-year partners and their success at 4-year institutions are referenced here.

Departments and programs use this information to inform and, as needed, adjust their curricula. This is included as part of the revised program review process.

Sources

- 1 MATH158 working syllabus template
- 2016-2018 NBCOT
- 2017-2018+Graduate+Survey+Results
- 2018-2019+Graduate+Survey+Results
- 2019-2020+Graduate+Survey+Results2
- 2020-2021 MoGEA Data Report HLC
- 2021 Committee Structure and Charge
- 21-140 Service Desk Support
- 4A.1 libraryprogramreview_1496_5393913_ProgramReviewupdate2020
- ACE Tutoring Center Data
- ACEN Accreditation 2021
- ACOTE Accreditation
- AMT Program Approval
- Assessment Center
- Bond Issue Prop CC-STEM
- CAHIIM Accreditation
- Canvas
- Career Services Center
- Case Management Services
- Classroom Observation Form
- Contribution Margin Analysis - FY20
- CORE42 Guidelines
- CORE42_InstitutionCourseSubmissionForm4_21_21
- CORE42_TransferCreditAppeal
- Course Management
- CSHSE Accreditation
- Curriculum Course Approval Form Fillable
- Curriculum Minutes Prerequisite Approval
- Curriculum Prerequisite Approval
- Diversity Data DEI Goals Stat 07.17.2020_IR-9-30-20
- English Language and Culture Institute Accreditation
- FIF Credential Form

- FY19 Contribution Margin Analysis
- HIM Certifcation Rates 2018-2021
- International Student Services
- Lab Space Justification Presentation
- Learning Assessment Report Fall18-Spring20
- Library
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- Mental Health Counseling
- Mental Health Counselor Survey
- MOC INFO PACKET-SP21
- NCLEX Pass Rate
- Non-Traditional Credit (AP-CLEP)
- Physical Science CM data FY20
- Plan Worksheet FINAL-reviewed 1-15-2021
- PR Three Year Cycle Statement With Cover Page(3)
- Program Review - Athletics - 10.22.2019
- Program Review - Continuing Education 11.26.2019
- Program Review - Engineering
- Program Review - Student Life - 02.03.2020
- Program Review Data Example - I.T.
- ProgramReview.Form
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- ProgramReviewForm
- Request for Evaluation of Transfer Credit
- Saint Charles Community College approval letter holt hs
- SCC Full Environmental Scan 2017_9-6-17
- SCC SolidWorks Certification Results 2018-2021
- SCC Student Transfer Instituion Report
- Sciences Program Review
- Spring 2021 Studio Art and Graphic Design Survey(1-51)
- St. Charles Community College Bookstore
- Studio-Lab Pay Ratio
- Success at 4-year institutions with cover page
- Transfer Credit Limit-Graduation Credits
- Tutoring Services

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

SCC recently completed the HLC Assessment Academy in June 2021 and received excellent feedback from the mentor and senior scholar on our impact report for the progress we have made on assessment practices at SCC.

Response to 4.B.1

Clearly Stated Goals for Student Learning

SCC has clearly stated goals for student learning at the Institutional level (ILO), the program level, and the course level as well as the Core 42 General Education for the Associate of Arts**,** for the Associate of Arts in Teaching, and for the Associate of Applied Science degrees. SCC is working on more clearly articulating the general education learning outcomes for the Associate of Science and the Associate of Fine Arts degrees. The Institutional Learning Outcomes are also used for co-curricular outcomes; however, co-curricular assessment may also have additional learning outcomes beyond the Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Faculty clearly define student learning objectives/outcomes on their syllabi, which are documented in Curriculum Committee files located in the Office of Academic Affairs. Any changes to learning objectives/outcomes must go through our Curriculum Committee, which ensures goals for student learning are clear and relevant. Goals for each program are stated on the Academic pages of our website, while courses that fulfill General Education requirements have common learning objectives/outcomes that have been agreed on by colleges and universities in the state of Missouri.

In 2018, the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) instituted its Core42 initiative. This requires all colleges and universities to get General Education courses approved at the state level to help guarantee consistency in course outcomes and assure transfer at state schools. This process adds another layer of oversight to guarantee course goals are clearly stated.

Lastly, SCC began implementation of a new assessment practice in 2016 (see below for more details). Since then, we've worked on shifting our focus from learning objectives to measurable learning outcomes. This conversion is an ongoing process, but at present we've converted over 600 learning outcomes.

Effective Processes for Assessment of Student Learning and Achievement of Goals

After beginning the HLC Assessment Academy, SCC began a new assessment process in 2016-2017. Our new model focuses on program-level and course-level learning outcomes assessment as well as alignment with the [Institutional Learning Outcomes](#).

In developing and implementing the new assessment model, processes focused on program improvement and sustainability. This includes:

- A straight-forward [assessment cycle](#), with an [easy-to-follow timeline](#)**.**
- An assessment [hub](#) on Canvas which includes [training](#), [forms](#), [help](#), and a [centralized location](#) to submit updates and view reports.
- A new position that was developed to oversee assessment and program review processes. As of Summer 2021, the Dean of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness directs assessment activities.

 Our programs assess across multiple courses and sections and use many methodologies to gather data.

- Some areas use [rubrics](#) to assess, such as the [English Department](#).
- The [Math Department](#) also uses a rubric to evaluate low skill, competency, or mastery for their outcomes.
- [Music](#) uses a unique mix of multiple choice and a [listening-based skills](#) assessment.
- In Chemistry 101, they use a departmental final and utilize a [rubric](#).
- [Business Tech](#) recently implemented [assessments](#) in their capstone course.
- [Developmental Math](#) has found multiple choice tests the best way, using our LMS (Canvas) or external vendor tools to help compile data.
- In addition, programs are incorporating [indirect assessments](#) (mostly self-reflection surveys).

 We have other aspects of assessment that keep us moving forward to achieve student learning goals.

- The VPAA circulates a [weekly newsletter](#) that has sections dedicated to assessment.
- A feedback tool called an [Assessment Health Meter](#) was developed and piloted in FA19. COVID-19 stalled its official implementation, though the Assessment and Effectiveness Committee will begin sharing the responsibility for feedback to departments submitting assessment.
- Reports are created and shared.
- Once a year, a [Comprehensive Assessment Report](#) gets shared with all faculty.

Response to 4.B.2

SCC utilizes assessment to improve student learning in both our curricular and co-curricular programs.

On the curricular side, we use both program-level and course-level assessment data to improve student learning. 75% of our programs have implemented improvement plans based on data.

Here are a few examples:

- Chemistry - As a department, they gathered data from a final exam. They determined that more practice was needed prior to exams. Online quizzes were setup that all sections could import into Canvas. At first, Chemistry made the quizzes extra credit, but when participation lacked, they made the quizzes part of the grade.
- Transfer Math - They gathered data from a final exam and analyzed it. When it came time for an improvement plan, individual teachers set up their own. Once a semester, Math faculty would meet to discuss their improvement plans, doing so in an environment of collaboration and sharing. Teachers could borrow and learn from each other through this process, and all improvement plans would be shared with adjuncts and stored in a common location. By using different tools in their improvement plan, faculty determined what worked and what didn't. For instance, faculty learned that regular review of topics was an effective way of helping students learn and retain the information, so faculty found new ways to help students review the topics.
- Theatre- They gathered data from a critical analysis of a live production as a basis for character analysis. Faculty discussed their assessment results and decided to begin incorporating student projects/presentations into their sections. These projects/presentations revolved around their CLO - meaning the students would learn more about play analysis both from creating a project and from watching others present their projects. There was a drastic improvement in learning outcomes after this implementation.
- Developmental Math – They gathered data from a final exam and used item analysis to analyze it. They found that students were in fact having difficulty combining math skills in questions. Based on their data they implemented final exam review quizzes, which improved student scores.
- English Department – English Faculty gathered data from essay assignments. As a result of their assessment, the English department implemented a department-wide learning tool.
- Music – Music used a two part final exam assessment that consisted of playing excerpts of music students had studied, and they had to answer questions regarding composer, style, and musical elements based on listening alone. For the second part, students selected one of the pieces that was played for the test and wrote a short essay answering instructor chosen questions. As a result of this assessment the Music faculty implemented a listening notebook and tweaked the wording of the assessment.
- Business Tech – For Business Tech, students created an end of program portfolio. Assessment results revealed that all of the students placed at competence or mastery. For their improvement plan, Business Tech faculty offered a Zoom discussion specific to the end of program portfolio, which was meant to get more students in the mastery range and to decrease the probability of student procrastination.

The college has also used assessment to improve student learning in co-curricular programs. SCC defines co-curricular learning as learning activities embedded into student-facing services, programs, and experiences that reinforce the our mission and compliment the curriculum. Examples of co-curricular learning opportunities and their assessments are listed below:

- The library utilized a national survey program (ACRL Project Outcome) to gather data, evaluate class information literacy instruction, and compare results to other colleges. While the results were overall positive, they developed a plan to improve and saw some improvement from the FA 20 to the FA 21 results. They further developed a plan to increase the scores across the board, particularly the confidence and application scores.
- The library also assessed quality of sources used across several courses that utilize library resources. In reviewing longitudinal data, they saw an increase in mastery from 19% to 42%.

- The Athletic department evaluates co-curricular learning in relationship to the learning outcomes of their sport (such as Leadership, Social Skills (getting along with others), Teamwork, Responsibility (showing up for school/practice), Time Management, Confidence, and Motivation as well as the role of student-athletes in the classroom. The assessment results indicated steady improvement in their athletic-related goals but indicated a need for improvement for the classroom related goals, so they implemented an incentive-based study hall and department-wide mantra of being a "student first."
- Career Services conducts networking and interviewing presentations and completed a pre and post assessment. Based on the data, Career Services instituted changes to the Fall 2020 presentation and submitted an improvement plan as part of their assessment report .
- The dual credit program has co-curricular outcomes in addition to the curricular outcomes that are maintained by each academic discipline. Those learning outcomes measure a student's understanding of registration processes, how to navigate college, and the work habits of a college student. While results indicated a high degree of student learning, the greatest opportunity for improvement is helping students understand degree requirements. In the future, the dual credit advisor will make sure every student has a pathway map and understand it during the registration process.
- In the ACE tutoring center, students report the tutoring they receive helps improve their learning.
- The Performing Arts Department assesses student learning by surveying the participants in a production (cast, crew, vocalists, musicians) at the conclusion of the culminating event (performance, concert, etc.) evaluating the development of transferable skills, namely 1) the understanding of teamwork, 2) increased self-confidence, 3) expanded creative thinking, and 4) developed responsibility and accountability skills. The director, faculty, and performing arts staff use the assessment information to deepen the engagement with the students and enhance the long-term impact that occurs from these experiences.
- The Department of Public Safety developed an improvement plan to ensure students are understanding the concepts that students struggled with during the post-test.

 While SCC has made significant progress, the college continues to seek continual improvement in assessment practices to ensure student success. Some opportunities to improve include:

- Increasing the quality and number of CLOs being assessed.
- Encouraging more rubric-based assessments. We feel too many assessments are multiple-choice based; we're hoping to get more skill-based assessments added.
- Empowering faculty to implement and share creative, best practice improvement plans.
- Encouraging involvement of more adjunct faculty in all stages of the assessment process.
- Gathering data at a granular level (see note about software below) so we can disaggregate data, identify equity gaps, and formulate more directed improvement plans.
- Developing Professional Development materials to assist our faculty in high-quality assessments. (The plan is to partner with our Professional Development Committee in this endeavor.)
- Improvement in the quality of reports and data distribution.
- Increasing just-in-time training in Fall 2021 to aid faculty in planning meaningful interventions.

Response to 4.B.3

Process and Methodology

SCC has been guided by HLC's Assessment Academy, and we know our assessment model reflects good practice. While our enrollment in the Academy ended in the summer of 2021, the Dean of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness and others will regularly visit HLC events and the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis, in addition to keeping current by following the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

 The process is articulated in the Assessment Guide and utilizes a template for both curricular and co-curricular assessment set-up as well as a reporting form for both curricular and co-curricular assessment. The steps are:

1. Identify outcomes and goals
2. Develop a strategy to assess.
3. Collect evidence.
4. Analyze the results.
5. Share the results; get feedback.
6. Develop a plan to implement change.
7. Assess the impact of change.
8. Repeat process.

In Summer 2021, the College purchased Watermark for Assessment and Program Review. Implementation of the software began in Fall 2021 and will follow similar steps, but the software will allow the college to better disaggregate student learning data and identify equity gaps in student learning.

Substantial Participation

The college has 100% participation on our curricular side with all departments submitting at least one departmental assessment annually. their annual assessment reports with representation from full-time, part-time, online, and dual credit faculty.

On the co-curricular side, we have excellent staff participation regarding assessment for continual improvement of our programs with 45 assessments created; however not all of those were related to student learning. We are committed to student learning outside the classroom as well, and we continue to make progress with the assessment of student learning outcomes in all of the co-curricular areas with 14 co-curricular assessments of student learning.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve 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, 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

Response to 4.C.1

St. Charles Community College (SCC) has five clearly defined goals and aligned objectives included in the Strategic Plan (2019-2023), all of which support, either directly or indirectly, student retention, persistence, and completion. St. Charles Community College defines goals as bold, measurable declarations and aligned objectives as precise, measurable statements indicating what we intend to achieve.

The objective for both retention and completion are to increase the rates by 3% by 2023 to 68% for full-time and 44% for part-time retention, and 33% for full-time and 10% for part-time completion.

These goals and aligned objectives are:

- Ambitious as we set targets for incremental improvement over a period of five years based on SCC's trend data and comparisons to best performers where appropriate.
- Attainable because we have outlined and deployed numerous strategies and action plans to address performance gaps.
- Appropriate to our mission of a focus on academic excellence and student success.
- Appropriate to our student populations as they align with other Community Colleges in our Carnegie class.

Response to 4.C.2

The College collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion for each academic program. These data are collected each year for IPEDS , then used in the Strategic Plan and DEI Action Plan. The data are also used during the Program Review process to help make data-informed decisions regarding student success (see 4A & 4B for more details on Program

Review). Examples of Retention, Completion, and Program Review data are provided in the [Program review process](). These program specific data are used in combination with institutional retention, persistence, and completion data to help make informed decisions regarding programmatic approaches to improving persistence and completion. Other data collected include a [Student Opinion Survey](), the [Survey of Entering Student Engagement](), the National Community College Benchmarking Project ([NCCBP]()) data, and grade [distribution rates by course](), by [discipline](), and by [instructor.]() Student success results are (a) compared to our targets, (b) trended over three to five years, (c) compared to best performers where possible, and (d) segmented to determine the depth and breadth of outcomes.

SCC has implemented a [Guided Pathways]() initiative and is now [tracking]() student intent through the pathways. As we begin to expand our definition of student success, student intent has become an important part of that conversation. For community college students, the intent is not always to earn a degree (or they may change their goal/intent), so part of our pathways will be to [track]() that intent so that we can be responsive to students' goals/needs rather than responding to the narrow IPEDS definition of success.

To expand capacity and capability in this area, SCC has hired a new Director of Institutional Research in Summer 2021 with a goal of improving the college's data collection and analysis processes for better data-informed decision making. SCC leadership also signed a contract with ZogoTech in Summer 2021 to further improve data-informed decision-making and purchased SAS software to further enhance our pathways project and utilize predictive analytics to ensure a proactive approach to our student success initiatives.

Response to 4.C.3

SCC takes a multifaceted, data-informed approach to improving retention, persistence, and completion. This includes curricular and co-curricular programs.

Curricular data-informed decisions include:

Student Success data is also embedded into the [faculty evaluation]() process. One portion of the faculty evaluation process is the inclusion of [success rates]() (percentage of students receiving A,B,C, or P) in their courses. Despite these efforts, ABCP rates remain low at SCC compared to other Missouri Community Colleges, (according to the [National Community College Benchmarking Project]()), so SCC has been working on additional initiatives to foster student success. These initiatives include:

- In Computer Science, equity gaps were found in success rates of minority and female students. As a result, several initiatives were implemented. The department redesigned classrooms for more team based learning, planned a mentor program for under-represented students, placed pictures of under-represented students in the field throughout the classroom, clearly defined pathways to complete the programs, and developed transfer agreements with 4-year partners clearly outlining the needed course work.
- In Developmental Reading, we have developed an early exit when students show proficiency ahead of schedule, allowing students to move more quickly through developmental courses.
- Creating [Professional Development]() in Fall 2021 in response to [SENSE]() data. The professional development included a guest speaker on engagement and [presentation]() of the data.
- The developmental English course was developed into a co-requisite model. Statistically, this type of instruction is known to increase retention, persistence, and completion. SCC's 80% success rate in these co-requisite courses is evidence of that increase.

- During the 2020-2021 Academic year, the SENSE survey was administered as a measure of student engagement. After analyzing the results of the SENSE survey, academic administration decided to focus the Fall 2021 professional development on increasing student engagement in areas specifically identified by the SENSE survey results.
- Developing an initiative to improve student attainment in math as the DFW rates were 58% for the department. Initiatives include:
  - Aligning curriculum across sections of courses to allow for more just-in-time study sessions provided by ACE Tutoring Center.
  - Creation of a Math Co-requisite model: SCC now offers a co-requisite option for students to complete MAT-098 without first completing MAT-096 by taking a concurrent course to supplement their learning. The extra hour each week is used to offer just-in-time support for students struggling with the current topic of the week.
  - MAT-098 GRIT Assessment: During the first month of this course, faculty discuss the soft skills necessary for success in college courses. Each student does a self-assessment and then the student and instructor decide on an action plan to improve.
  - Developmental Math is using new placement tests including a multiple measures format based on the math matrix to ensure proper placement. Multiple Measures Placement is based on high school GPA and ACT Math Sub-score. Some students were being placed at a course lower than necessary slowing down time to completion. By implementing multiple measures, we aim to improve completion rates without a negative impact on success in college-level coursework.
  - Implementing a Winter mini-mester math course that acts as a credit-recovery for anyone who fails the course during the Fall semester and provides supplemental assistance for students needing math help.

Co-curricular data-informed decisions include:

- ACE Tutoring Center offers a variety of workshops throughout the semester (pre-semester math prep, math class review sessions, chemistry concept review sessions, MLA workshops, MOGEA prep sessions) in response to high-risk courses and programs or concepts that students traditionally find difficult or barriers to success.
- ACE Tutoring Center has developed a success plan workshop for students on 3rd time waivers (i.e., those repeating a course for the third time).
- ACE Tutoring Center uses DFW rates to target high-risk courses to help students experiencing academic difficulty. ACE Tutoring Center also identifies students who are receiving a D or F grade at midterm and targets intervention approaches according to the number of deficiencies they have (1-2 or 3-5).
- We have recently revamped the entire COL 101 College Success Seminar course as a hybrid course to provide semester long personal contact with COL 101 students as well as provide a robust course in Canvas which teaches students how to use our Learning Management System.
- As tuition and fees continue to increase across Missouri and across the U.S., affordability is increasingly more important to SCC students with over 59% of our students rating it as a "very important" reason for them to attend SCC. In response to affordability concerns for our students, the library has implemented a pilot Open Educational Resources project with a task force designed to expand OER offerings. In Fall 2021, an OER incentive program was introduced.
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) carefully monitors performance measures in response to state funding requirements. Their performance funding target requires consistent assessment of students to gauge their learning. Last year the percentage of our students with a completion

was 83%. They have supported these efforts by having a full-time student support coordinator to contact students directly when they are absent or have issues outside the hours of class. Persistence has increased due to the student support coordinator.

- Student Life has seen an increase in students seeking counseling and support and has increased services accordingly. Services now include:
    - Mental Health Counseling Services
    - Case Management Services to assist students in distress by helping students navigate campus and community resources, provide appropriate referrals, and promote resiliency and student development.
    - Student Life Emergency Fund which provides financial assistance to students who are determined to have a financial need due to a single traumatic event or on-going crisis.
    - Online mental health support (Fall 2020) including META (Teletherapy) and Sanvello (Mobile mental health application)

- The department of Online & E-learning reviews overall success rates and disaggregates DFW rates by course type and by section and reviews the courses with DFW rates greater than 25% to see if the design or navigation can be improved to help improve success rates.

Other data-informed decisions include:

The Student Success Committee has engaged in discussions of data related to retention, persistence, and completion, leading and lagging indicators of student success, and the Student Opinions Survey to develop recommendations and action plans related to student success.

A few initiatives resulting from that work include:

- The Student Opinion Survey revealed that over 13% of students report being unsatisfied with their advising experience, and 25% have not used advising services. SCC is updating many of its processes in Advising and Recruitment to recruit, retain, and keep students focused on educational goals to improve first to second year retention. These include:
    - Academic warning and probation workshops were implemented (including Student Lingo for motivation and other workshop assistance).
    - Student Planning empowered students to track their own degree progression.
    - First-time freshmen have a week 3 "regroup" to reflect and discuss student success needs.
    - In 2020, SCC added QLess and Provide Support Now (chat tool) to decrease wait times and ensure students get more access to advising.
    - Improving the class schedule offerings with increased flexibility for students including: mini-mesters (i.e., calendar with additional parts of term), increased time offerings, cohort model for student scheduling in select programs, and Weekend College offerings.

- To increase overall persistence rates, we have:
    - Increased electronic communication to currently enrolled students to add value, provide guidance, and encourage persistence in our programs.
    - Enhanced diversity/equity/inclusion content in SCC communication programs and channels.
    - Enhanced the Faculty Flyer (weekly newsletter from the VPAA's office) which includes instructional strategies to improve student success and retention in courses.
- Dual Credit has also developed a number of intervention strategies including intervention of students receiving midterm grades, special advising for students enrolled in the program,

and offering assistance through the Canvas course created for Early College participants to serve as an online orientation for high school students enrolling at SCC.

- Development of a Pathways model to decrease the number of hours students take to complete their degree. Currently, graduates complete their degrees with an average of 71 credit hours – 11 more than what is required to complete a degree.
- Hired a Dean of Student Success in Summer 2021 to spearhead more data-informed outreach programs as well as an early-alert program.

Response to 4.C.4

SCC's continuously improved processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. For example, the college tracks student cohorts using definitions consistent with IPEDS. The college benchmarks its performance against national and state best performers using the National Community College Benchmark data. SCC uses nationally normed student surveys such as CCSSE and SENSE to obtain student input and to compare performance to best-in-class. SCC has enhanced data analysis capability by using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program's approach to data analysis represented by Levels, Trends, Comparisons, and Integration (LTCI).

- Levels - Current levels of performance are tracked and goals are set in alignment with where the organization wants to be. As evidenced above in 4.C.1, SCC's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, we have set goals and outcomes in order to clearly communicate and measure our student success (retention, persistence, and completion) performance.
- Trends - The College tracks trends in performance as part of our continuous improvement process. SCC continuously tracks IPEDs and NCCBP data each academic year and aggregates that data into 3-5 year data sets, when appropriate, in order to inform academic departments about trends in student performance during the program review process. Additionally, in an effort to be transparent, a Fact Book is publicly released each fall to the campus community and includes a student outcomes analysis. Publication of an annual Fact Book is common practice in higher education. Internal surveys such as our Student Opinion Survey are vetted and typically conducted by our Institutional Research staff, all of whom have extensive experience with writing survey questions and analyzing survey data.
- Comparisons - SCC frequently assesses our comparisons with other institutions of higher education for both retention and completion. As demonstrated in 4.C.2, and 4.C.3, SCC utilizes and reports data and utilizes surveys that are nationally benchmarked, such as NCCBP, CCSSE, and SENSE to determine areas of concern and to set ambitious goals for enhancing student success. Our IPEDs reporting gives us the opportunity to compare our institution to local competitors and other state institutions on a variety of measures, including student retention and completion. Additionally, for the career technical fields, SCC reports, and is benchmarked to, a state-adjusted performance level for several student performance related metrics such as retention, credentialing, and completion.
- Integration - The College uses disaggregation of data and integration in order to ensure student success is studied by specific demographic group, so inconsistencies in student performance can be addressed. The College disaggregates retention and graduation rates by type of degree or certificate conferred and race/ethnicity and gender. We do not disaggregate this further to specific disciplines outside of the career technical fields. Supplying this level of disaggregation to our program chairs will be beneficial as we continue to pursue mechanisms of retaining

students of specific demographic groups in certain degree programs. For the career technical fields, student completion rates by [demographic and career cluster](#) are reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

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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

SCC 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. For example, as indicated in the detailed criterion response, SCC has recently evaluated and refined its college-wide program review process by hiring a Dean of Institutional Effectiveness to lead this area. SCC leadership has allocated dollars to purchase Watermark software to house the data used in making program improvements. A key element of program review is assessment of student learning outcomes. SCC has clearly stated student learning outcomes at the institution, program, and course levels. The assessment process has also gone through a cycle of evaluation and improvement with additional opportunities to improve still being identified and implemented. These include a greater focus on faculty and staff training, more consistency in assessment approaches, focus on using results to improve curriculum, and sharing of best practices among assessment leaders. SCC's strategic planning process includes key performance indicators and targets of performance for in- and end-process measures of student success. These metrics, aligned with goals and objectives, include student in-class success, retention, persistence, and graduation. Other measures of the quality and rigor of SCC's educational programs include licensure pass rates, university transfer rates, university transfer success rates, and surveys of student satisfaction with college support services. For better perspective, SCC compares its student performance to other similar institutions, examines trends, and disaggregates performance by various student groups to ensure over-performance by one group does not mask under-performance by another group.

Sources

There are no sources.