EAST CENTRAL COLLEGE

Higher Learning Commission
Assurance Argument
Year 4: Comprehensive Evaluation 2022

EAST CENTRAL COLLEGE

Office of the President

March 24, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to present the Assurance Argument prepared for our comprehensive visit by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). This report strongly illustrates the work that goes on at East Central, specifically as this work relates to the Criteria for Accreditation. I am eager for the visiting team to examine the Assurance Argument and visit the campus April 11-12. They will be impressed.

The preparation for the visit has been coordinated by the HLC Steering Committee and I appreciate their commitment to the institution. Meeting the Criteria for Accreditation is not easy. However, doing so ensures that we are serving our students in the fashion they deserve.

Our preparation has been described as a journey, and we are nearing the final stop. You will see in the Assurance Argument that we are ready. Beyond the report itself is the impactful and substantive work that supports it. The Assurance Argument illustrates this work but is not a substitute for it. Faculty and staff have worked collaboratively to ensure that we are providing the highest quality academic experience for our students—however and wherever that occurs.

The HLC journey has been led by Dr. Robyn Walter, Vice President of Academic Affairs and our Accreditation Liaison Officer; Dr. Michelle Smith, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness; and Jennifer Higerd, faculty member and tri-chair of the committee. I am deeply grateful for their leadership. Many others were involved in the research, writing, and editing of the Assurance Argument. Everyone on campus has had a part in the work that is reflected here.

My hope is that you read this report and take great pride in the work that goes on at East Central. Ours is a special calling. Thank you for bringing that calling to life.

Sincerely,

Jon Bauer, Ph.D.
President

Assurance Argument

East Central College

Review date: 4/11/2022

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 articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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 and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1. A.1 The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

Mission: Empowering students and enriching communities through education.

Vision: East Central College will be a leader in higher education, inspiring academic excellence and driving community development.

ECC's current mission statement was embedded in the SOAR to 2024 Strategic Planning Process. In fall 2018, East Central College (ECC) established a Strategic Planning Committee and began a thorough planning process that included assessing and articulating the mission and related statements. The College's Strategic Planning Committee was aided by an outside consulting firm (Campus Works), and this expert assistance facilitated participation by the entire campus community, including leadership, and ensured the mission was developed through a process suited to ECC. This process involved all College stakeholders in a systematic manner. Led by tri-chairs representing all three employee groups--Classified Staff, Faculty, and Professional Staff--the Strategic Planning Committee ensured widespread engagement of internal and external stakeholders in the planning process. Committee membership included nearly 50 people from all employee groups who met at least monthly. Stakeholder involvement included in-person meetings and multiple opportunities for electronic survey input. Thus, the Board of Trustees developed the mission and vision of the College with considerable input from campus stakeholders. Thorough attention to collaboratively developing the College mission and vision engendered meaningful connections between mission and priorities.

The committee established the timeline, process action steps, and benchmarks. They also oversaw the

completion of the following stages:

- **August/September 2018**: The process began with campus-wide engagement, including students, through an initial workshop, which resulted in the development of the Student Experience Statement. During this time, the Strategic Planning Committee invited the entire campus to participate in a SWOT analysis survey.
- **October/November 2018:** The Institutional Research Office presented key data regarding enrollment, retention, and other key measures to the campus. Following this presentation, the Strategic Planning Committee analyzed data from the SWOT analysis and began to define areas of focus.
- **January/February 2019**: Based on those areas of focus, the committee held a Future Summit during which carefully selected speakers presented "Ed Talks" on relevant subjects. To create impact statements, College personnel and community members broke into discussion groups facilitated by members of the Strategic Planning Committee. Following the Future Summit, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed these impact statements in scan teams, and three different focus groups captured students' unique insights.
- **March 2019:** Scan teams concluded their research and shared their findings, providing the basis for strategy development. Meanwhile, the entire campus participated in the creation of campus values (p.4), and the Strategic Planning Committee used these discussions to organize and distribute a campus survey. Finally, the Strategic Planning Committee refined draft values statements.
- **April/May 2019:** The Committee presented these strategies and values to the campus community via online survey and utilized results for strategy revision.
- **May/June/July 2019:** Key budget managers and members of the Strategic Planning Committee crafted objectives and action steps for strategy implementation.
- **August 2019:** The President presented the plan to the Board of Trustees with the tri-chairs. The board unanimously approved the plan and the college publicized to the community.
- **September 2019:** Strategy sub-teams began implementation and sought student feedback.

Because East Central College engaged a broad coalition of internal and external stakeholders, the mission development process was eminently suited to the institutional context.

1.A.2 The mission and related statements are current and reference 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.

The Board of Trustees adopted the mission, vision, values, and student experience statement in 2019 (p.5). These statements reflect the college's dual focus on students and communities. The College's commitment to students encompasses the priorities of instruction, scholarship, and inspiring creative works. The College's commitment to community development is demonstrated through clinical service, public service, significant contributions to economic development, and support of arts, culture, and diversity. The mission and vision are current and deeply embedded in ongoing work in all areas of the institution.

To meet opportunities and challenges of students and the community, East Central College (ECC) consistently establishes partnerships with educational institutions, businesses, government offices, advisory boards, students, faculty, staff, and community members. The process for the development of the strategic plan and the ongoing process of implementation and assessment (described in 4.B.1),

reflect continuous engagement with constituents, who participated with College personnel in an integrated planning process (described in 1.A.1) to ensure the mission and related statements accurately reflect current institutional values and address the community's current needs.

East Central College is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct. Employees and constituents recognize that the College is held in trust for the community.

ECC lives its values in numerous ways, with these examples reflecting a small part of that story:

- **Integrity:** The College demonstrates integrity through its commitment to shared governance in multiple forms, such as the Shared Governance Committee (p.35), Collective Bargaining (p. 231) with faculty, and support for all employee organizations (p.35).
- **Diversity:** ECC recognizes its influence in the community and with students, publicly committing to a stand against racism and working to support LGBTQ students. The work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has brought policy changes, such as the use of preferred names in IT infrastructure.
- **Learning:** A robust tuition reimbursement system(p.231) and professional development offerings(p.253-254) support the growth of faculty and staff. Education is valued for both credit learning and community development. Community education programming has continued to grow, including an expanded summer learning academy program for school-age children.
- **Service:** Students and staff engage in service via a Month of Service campaign. ECC's commitment to the environment is evident in its annual HVAC eco-friendly replacements, and installation of water bottle filling stations. In addition, students, faculty, and staff volunteer for multiple blood drives each year and most recently volunteered for community Covid-19 vaccination clinics.
- **Empowerment**: Faculty empower students through thoughtfully designed classroom learning activities within courses such as Falcon Seminar, program-specific capstone coursework, and other key milestone courses. The Learning Center offers workshops for students on time management, stress management, and self-advocacy. Employees can seek further educational opportunities and professional development through a generous tuition assistance program.
- **Collaboration**: ECC accomplishes its work through a vast network of committees and work groups and enables employees to participate in employee organizations at all levels.

Through institutional values, ECC's commitment to clinical service, public service, economic growth, and diverse culture is embedded in the curriculum. For example, over 100 students annually participate in Mercy Healthcare System clinicals in nursing, medical assisting, occupational therapy assisting, and paramedic training. Additionally, those students often work part-time while going to school as student externs, meeting community needs and providing economic impact. ECC has been instrumental in the development of the public good and celebrating diversity with an annual comprehensive Film and Lecture Series.

These examples reveal a vibrant institutional culture that actualizes its relevant mission and related statements through activities of all departments.

1.A.3 The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

East Central College primarily serves residents in a taxing district and extended service region(p.3). Voters formed the district in 1968, and the State of Missouri later established service regions for areas not included in a community college district. In addition to the main campus in Union, ECC

has two Rolla sites, approximately 60 miles to the southwest. East Central College's taxing district includes 10 school districts in portions of Franklin, St. Charles, Warren, Gasconade, Washington, and Crawford Counties. The service region includes the district as well as all or portions of Osage, Maries, Phelps, Dent, and Texas Counties. With the exception of St. Charles County, all counties in ECC's service region are rural, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, though with scattered urban clusters. As an affordable, open-access institution, the College serves students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and geographical locations. The student population and constituent communities are complex, diverse, and widely distributed. ECC's mission and related statements are necessarily broad to encompass the large scope and varied nature of its service region and avoid unintentional exclusion. The College relied on the comprehensive, collaborative process to develop the mission and related statements, which ensured the nature, scope, and intended constituents of educational offerings and services were identified and their needs and concerns were represented in the strategic plan.

The Strategic Planning Committee facilitated the creation of East Central College's Strategic Plan, SOAR to 2024, through the process described in 1.A.1. The Committee gathered information from all intended constituents, including students, faculty, staff, advisory boards, businesses, and a wide array of community members at events like the Future Summit. The strategic planning process yielded the College's mission, vision, and values, which reflect the needs and concerns of a large, diverse service region. The mission focuses on all students and the transformative nature of education for diverse individuals and communities. The Committee collaborated with internal and external stakeholders to establish central tenets and strategies. These strategies were crafted to further clarify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services, as identified in the Mission Statement. Further, the committee created metrics (see table below) for each strategy to ensure that actions across all areas of the institution are assessed with respect to support of mission statement intent to serve a complex and diverse constituency.

The College monitors the fluctuating socio-economic conditions to meet educational, financial, and social demands while enriching communities and empowering students, which is the purpose of the institution. For example, the College recently collaborated to plan for new and expanded healthcare programs in Rolla, distance delivery of a cybersecurity program, a new applied technology program, and increased Early College offerings for career technical and transfer degrees. The College has implemented Guided Pathways and integrated this model throughout the academic and student support areas. Most recently, the College began construction of the Falcon Career Center and hired staff focused on the career and social well-being of students.

Strategy	Representative Metrics	Intended Constituents

Pathways - Develop clear academic and career pathways with personalized support to increase enrollment and promote student success.	Increase annual credit hour production to 60,000 by June 30, 2024 (baseline 52,000) Award 720 degrees and certificates annually by June 30, 2024 (baseline 522)	Students and potential students
Partnerships - Strengthen partnerships with local high schools, higher education institutions, and employers to drive intellectual and economic development in the region.	Increase early college headcount to 660 students by October 31, 2024 (baseline 443) Create ten new in-operation training partnerships for specific programs as part of a Work Here, Train Here initiative by June 30, 2024	K-12 district partners, higher education partners, community and industry partners.
Employees - Create a culture of collaboration and learning to attract, retain, and develop diverse and talented employees.	Enhance the knowledge and skills of employees through relevant professional development as measured by the professional development section of the Chronicle Great Colleges to Work For Survey (65% positive responses by the 2024 survey administration; baseline is 61%) Strengthen collaboration among employees as measured by the collaboration section of the Chronicle Great Colleges to Work For Survey (65% positive responses by the 2024 survey administration; baseline is 48%)	Employees, potential employees
Rolla - Expand institutional presence and offerings in Rolla to enhance the college's impact throughout the region.	Implement the Rolla comprehensive plan as defined in January 2021. Increase Rolla annual credit hour production to 9,000 by June 30, 2024 (baseline 5,877)	Stakeholders in the Rolla area

Financial Strength - Secure financial strength to sustain institutional viability.	Improve the Comprehensive Financial Index to 2 by June 30, 2024. Implement a comprehensive budget process that includes forecasting by June 30, 2021.	Taxpayers, community members, all stakeholders.

1.A.4 The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

ECC's academic offerings, student support services, and enrollment profile documents are consistent with the institutional mission and vision to serve the community. East Central College is dedicated to its mission, "empowering students and enriching our communities through education." The Soar to 2024 Strategic Plan outlines five priorities (outlined above) and corresponding goals to ensure that the institution's academic offerings, support services and enrollment profile are consistent with the stated mission.

ECC's academic offerings, student support services, and enrollment profile documents are consistent with its mission and vision to serve students and the community. The College's enrollment profile (Fall Census this year) includes approximately 2,657 full and part-time credit students. There are 673 first-time, full-time students and 627 dual-credit students. The average age is 21. Most students (90.7%) identify as white, and those identifying as an underrepresented (Native American, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic 2 or more races) constitute 9.3% of the student population. The college's mission to empower these students and enrich local communities is operationalized through the five strategies in support of the strategic plan, including Guided Pathways to Student Success, Partnerships, Employees, Financial Strength, and Rolla. These strategies meet the diverse needs of students and communities in the ECC service area, including adult education, preparing students for transfer, or facilitating entry into the workforce.

The ECC community ensures the empowering right to equitable educational access through an open-access admissions policy and availability of support systems, such as Aviso (student retention and coaching program) to help students with diverse learning needs and socio-economic backgrounds.

In alignment with the College mission, the Student Development Division provides support services to prospective and enrolled students, including Admissions, Student Services, Student Life and Leadership, Student Athletics, Financial Aid, Advising, Counseling, Career Services, and the Office of the Registrar.

The Admissions Office recruits, admits, and communicates with prospective students about academic programs, student services, and campus resources to assist students with their future goals. Admissions staff have grown the Early College program as part of the strategic plan to increase enrollment and strengthen partnerships. During initial Covid-19 restrictions from March 2020 – May 2020, ECC Admissions Counselors worked via Zoom, phone calls, and emails. Since students were not able to access placement testing like ACT, staff developed on-line Accuplacer placement exam options.

The Student Services Office supports admitted students with registration, advising, and onboarding. During the initial Covid-19 restrictions from March 2020-May 2020, students were able to access

support through zoom meetings, telephone, and email. By June 2020, students could meet with advisors via Zoom or in person with masks and protective glass. Currently, students with disabilities are provided accommodation through the Student Access Office. Veterans and military-connected students work with the veterans' coordinator on eligibility related to veterans' programs and support. International students are admitted and enrolled through the services of a specifically trained International Student Services Advisor. Career Services provide students with opportunities for career exploration, employment searches, and job placement. The Falcon Career Center is under construction and will expand services for career counseling and social service needs. The Student Life and Leadership department provides educational and social events and activities (in-person and virtual) to help students engage and connect with the campus and community. In conjunction with academic programming, clubs and organizations contribute to networking and other forms of personal and professional development. Students actively participate in advising with professional advisors. A faculty mentoring pilot program is in place for selected programs of study. Professional advisors and faculty mentors work collaboratively to support students through their academic programs.

The Registration Office serves students through securing student records, scheduling courses, and providing documentation and services related to registration, graduation, academic program record, and advanced standing credits. Additionally, The Registration Office provides faculty and staff with data, safeguards the integrity of ECC's records and degrees, ensures compliance with FERPA, and provides transcripts through the National Student Clearinghouse.

The Financial Aid Office aims to administer financial aid equitably with integrity and consistency while adhering to state and federal regulations and institutional policies. It is committed to supporting the College's socioeconomically diverse student population by removing financial barriers to postsecondary education, so students can attain their educational goals.

The College has structured recruiting and retention efforts to incorporate strategic financial incentives that package financial aid awards from admission to graduation. The Financial Aid Office has a role in the administration of institutional and foundation scholarship funds and works closely with the Admissions Office, Foundation Office, Academic Departments, and the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee to find new, innovative ways to leverage data to better understand and serve students.

Another source of financial support involves the East Central College Foundation. From providing students emergency funds so they can continue to attend classes to furnishing a textbook when there is not enough money at the end of the month, the ECC Foundation strives to fill a variety of financial gaps. Scholarships provide extra encouragement and financial assistance to make education accessible and affordable. The Foundation also engages the campus community and the entire community in generating priority ideas for fundraising campaigns to ensure innovative transformational ideas to help the College meet the needs of students, local businesses, and the overall community.

Student athletes are valued at ECC as evidenced in the Athletic Department with the addition of two additional student teams. Women's soccer was added in Fall, 2020, and men's baseball in Fall, 2021. Specifically, at the NJCAA level, prospective students can obtain an athletic scholarship, enjoy increased playing time, and find development opportunities to better prepare them for the four-year level. Once the prospective student commits to the College, the coaches strive to cultivate an environment conducive to students' academic and athletic success. By providing student athletes with competitive opportunities, the department builds a community within the College and the

surrounding areas. In this way, ECC produces outstanding members of society who contribute in a positive way well after their years as an ECC athlete.

Academic support is provided by [The Learning Center and Testing Center](#). The Learning Center provides tutoring, study skills support, life coaching, adaptive technology assistance, proctored testing, and customized workshops. It also houses the Retention Program and Aviso Success Coach program. Aviso is the ECC Retention software that supports communication between advisors, faculty, success coaches, and students. The Retention Coordinator manages the Aviso software and coordinates retention efforts with assigned success coaches. Each student has an assigned success coach who communicates and guides support services. Referrals can be automatic, as with attendance-based alerts, or made by faculty. Referrals are made for concerns about absenteeism, academic performance, and distance learning needs. The Learning Center services promote student advocacy and empowerment through role modeling and support for success.

[Donald R. and Barbara D. Means Library](#) at East Central College provides the informational resources and services that support the educational and recreational pursuits of students. In addition to friendly, helpful reference services, the ECC Library provides Instructor course reserves, library research class instruction, online chat and text, device check outs of laptops, hotspots, graphing calculators and study areas. The Library subscribes to over 30 academic online database available to any on or off campus student. The 25,000 item print collection is enhanced with a membership of the MOBIUS consortium with over 30 million items available. The [Library staff supports faculty](#) with Affordable and Open Textbook curation, focused library guides, and as library liaisons for collection development. The Library provides support to students at Rolla sites through a small onsite print collection, direct MOBIUS borrowing, and library research class instruction. Community members aged 18 and older may use certain resources of the ECC Library and check out up to 6 items at a time.

Rolla Student Support

The Rolla Student Success Center (SSC) provides tutoring services, academic workshops, and success coaching on-ground and online for students in the Rolla area. Tutors also assist with ACCESS services by providing accommodations, such as reader, scribe, non-distractive test environment, and others as needed. In addition to tutoring, the SSC also provides Student Success Coaching. This proactively provides weekly success tips to all students registered in the Rolla site. The success coaches also contact students to follow up on alerts provided by instructors and Aviso, and connect the student with the appropriate campus personnel to assist them with whatever their need may be. The SSC also keeps a selection of course reserve materials such as resource books, calculators, and videos that students may check out as needed.

In all these ways, East Central College demonstrates its academic offerings, support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission to empower students and enrich communities through education.

1.A.5 The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

ECC clearly articulates its mission to over 150,000 citizens in its 10-county service area. The Public Relations department uses the College [website](#), publications like The ECC Viewbook, direct mailings, social media platforms, commercials, and radio as communication tools to reach constituents with the College's mission and values.

ECC also shares its mission, vision, values, and goals in signage throughout its facilities at all locations. The mission, vision, and values are embedded in multiple operational documents, including board policy(p.13), the course catalog (About the College), the faculty handbook(p.5), and as part of the employee recruiting and onboarding process.

The mission is operationalized in large and small ways on a continuous basis. For example, efforts to grow early college enrollment empower younger students; the Finish Your Investment initiative enriches the lives of former students and provides opportunities for additional educational success; the commitment to rigorous Covid-19 mitigation practices and a Covid-19 vaccination incentive have enabled face-to-face learning for students.

Sources

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
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 external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1B.1 The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

ECC is an independent public community college and has no superordinate entity. The college is accountable to the state of Missouri, the taxpayers in its taxing district, and stakeholders in its service area. Its primary purpose is to provide associate and certificate degree programs and course offerings to meet the educational needs of students. Additional programs serve the public in multiple ways including:

- A wide array of community education programming for all ages.
- A Fine and Performing Arts Series that provides cultural enrichment for the community.
- An Adult Education and Literacy program that provides services throughout the service area.
- The Center for Workforce Development, which provides services to businesses, healthcare, and manufacturers in the region.
- An annual Film and Lecture Series centered on social justice and equity.
- Annual collaboration to host a program in recognition of Martin Luther King Day.
- Prairie trail habitats on campus.
- A Walking Trail open to public use.

1.B.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

The college's educational responsibilities are its primary focus. ECC commits to its taxing district and service region by providing affordable course and program offerings, community education, workforce development, and Adult Education Offerings. No efforts or expenditures are directed toward external interests. Summary figures from the 2021 audit (p.11) demonstrate the college spends 66% of its budget on Instruction, Academic Support, Student Services, and Institutional Support.

FY21		

Instruction	$8,013,310	29.5%
Academic Support	$3,640,723	13.4%
Student Services	$1,502,781	5.5%
Institutional Support	$4,823,835	17.7%
Operations and Maintenance	$2,364,010	8.7%
Scholarships and Fellowships	$1,410,919	5.2%
Payments to Students	$1,333,201	4.9%
Depreciation	$2,114,161	7.7%
Auxiliary Enterprise	$1,005,190	3.7%
Total	$27,208,031	

1.B.3 The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

ECC engages external constituents and responds to their needs through various means, including public representation on the board, active advisory boards, and community engagement.

The Board of Trustees is an elected body, representing the college district. Every two years the district elects two members to serve on the board.

ECC employees participate in public organizations like the Union Chamber of Commerce, Franklin County United Way, and the Rotary Club. The college allows community use of its campus facilities in multiple ways. The college maintains a walking trail and prairie trails, which are open to the public, and campus facilities provide space for blood drives, testing from external agencies, and usage as a voting precinct. The Conservation Department uses Rolla facilities for Hunter Safety courses. The college supports cultural enrichment of the community through the Fine and Performing Arts Series, musical performances, theatre productions, music performances, and art gallery exhibits involving community members and professional artists. Community Education offerings occur throughout the year, with a Summer Learning Academy for school-age children. In summer 2021, ECC provided the Summer Learning Academy free of charge and expanded it to include locations in Rolla. Community advisory boards in Health Science and Career Technical Education provide input for specific programs.

A recent example of responding to community needs occurred at the Medical Assisting Advisory Board meeting(p. 3), where a health-care partner requested a way for employees to complete the MDA program in the evenings. This will begin in 2022. Comprehensive (program) reviews regularly

include input from community members, such as area secondary teachers or administrators. In addition, community members are encouraged to connect with the college through membership in the ECC Foundation. Community input for the SOAR to 2024 Strategic plan came in the form of a Future Summit, which included public participation (January 2019), and input from the Rolla area through a community survey (Fall, 2020). In addition, the college partners with the Franklin County United Way for an annual employee campaign. Most recently, college employees donated $14,597 through payroll deductions.

The ECC Center for Workforce Development (CWD) serves the community, business and industry partners, business professionals, and job seekers in a comprehensive manner. CWD's mission is to be an innovative training provider and a resource for the community while providing lifelong learning opportunities to employers and individuals for career and personal development. CWD strives to be the premier leader in workforce training by providing the community with solutions-driven educational opportunities. To accommodate high demand, the CWD is divided into three divisions, each of which serves the community in integrated but diverse ways. These divisions include Community Education, Workforce Training and Community Development, and Adult Education and Literacy.

Throughout the pandemic, the College served its communities as a central information point, establishing effective campus mitigation strategies and modeling those for the community. In Spring 2021, as vaccines became widely available to the general public, ECC partnered with a local pharmacy to provide a large-scale Covid-19 vaccine clinic that served nearly 1,400 people. This effort involved logistical support from employees and students across campus, as well as medical support from Allied Health faculty and students, who administered vaccines. In an effort to meet the community's needs during the pandemic, ECC was a Covid-19 testing and vaccination site. Faculty and staff are allowed time away from work to volunteer.

A recent example of engagement and response involves the college's sponsorship of three health care programs in Rolla. Through engagement with Rolla Public Schools, the college learned of the school district's interest in moving away from adult programs. Enrollment in the programs and employer engagement provided evidence of ongoing need. The college responded by assuming sponsorship of the Radiologic Technology, Licensed Practical Nurse, and Surgical Technology programs.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C.1 The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

Beginning in fall 2019, faculty and staff began to update ECC's Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs). These outcomes were formally approved by the Academic Council on February 11, 2020. ISLOs include general skills, knowledge, or applications that students should demonstrate after completing their program of study.

- **Critical Thinking** – Students will be able to integrate knowledge for creating solutions to novel challenges.
- **Communication** – Students will be able to effectively express ideas and exchange knowledge in multiple ways.
- **Social Responsibility** – Students will demonstrate an understanding of social responsibility.
- **Personal and Professional Development** – Students will take responsibility for their personal and professional development.

These student outcomes provide the guiding framework the college to encourage informed citizenship and transfer/workplace success. These outcomes are mapped to curriculum and reflected in course and program outcomes. During an open forum, faculty provided these examples which support workplace success:

- **Business:** Students practice job interviews and professional emails, which will be useful in any workplace.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs:** Many programs focus on industry-recognized certifications.
- **Allied Health**: Students can work in clinical sites in Phelps/Pulaski counties where patients are more likely to come from diverse backgrounds. Concept maps of treatment plans for patients develop critical thinking skills. Communication skills and workplace safety are assessed. Students practice in a lab setting prior to clinical sites.
- **Music**: Students can work with professional musicians through the spring Jazz Festival.
- **English**: Students attend the Film and Lecture series; most recently, this enabled them to connect with a Japanese version of Shakespeare.
- **Teacher Education:** Students gain professional experience during practicums in local schools

and personal reflection.
- **EMS:** The program trains future EMS professionals in awareness of mental health needs of diverse populations through infusion of LGBTQI+ mental health issues in the curriculum.

These curricular examples provided by faculty illustrate connections to informed citizenship.

- **Civics:** Each student, per Missouri statute, at ECC must pass a Civics Achievement Exam to graduate. The exam is similar to the United States Citizenship exam.
- **Falcon Seminar:** Falcon Seminar curriculum explores community building, community service opportunities, professional writing skills, and diversity issues. All students must complete a Title IX training.
- **Spanish:** Students interview Hispanic individuals who live and work in the community, including Hispanic students.
- **Ecology:** Students assist with the burn of the prairie plot.

In addition to curricular experiences that target informed citizenship and workplace success, ECC provides related cocurricular and extra-curricular opportunities. In 2014, ECC formed a Social Responsibility Committee. Multiple work groups and projects connected to this topic, and in 2019 the Civic and Community Engagement Coalition was formed as an umbrella group that includes the following subcommittees: Green Committee; Global Education; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Service Learning; and the Rolla Engagement Council. Below are examples of activities coordinated by these committees, which support both workplace success and informed citizenship.

Constitution Day: Students can receive a copy of the constitution and take a quiz to test their knowledge.

Earth Day: ECC's Earth Month was held virtually in April 2021 and will also be virtual in 2022.

Month of Service: Each year, ECC challenges students and staff to commit at least one hour to a volunteer project. The Month of Service coordinator contacts community organizations to assess needs, then coordinates and publishes volunteer opportunities. In 2021, there were over 107 participants; many volunteered at large-scale Covid vaccination clinics that served over 1,400 students, employees, and community members.

Research Essay and Poetry Contest: This provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate creativity and research writing skills.

Phi Theta Kappa: ECC's Union and Rolla chapters are active, with chapters regularly receiving national recognition. Currently, the Union chapter is assisting local efforts to place a memorial on campus that acknowledges Erastus Brown, an 1897 lynching victim.

Falcon Forum: In November 2021, students engaged in a town hall event during which they had the opportunity to engage with campus leadership concerning the student experience. Speakers provided students with guidance regarding constructive feedback.

Student Government: This association is led by a team of four officers who lead monthly meetings utilizing Roberts Rules of Order, host regular office hours, and report out at the monthly Board of Trustees' meetings.

1.C.2 The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment

of diverse populations.

Board policy 5.1.1 (p.169) demonstrates ECC's commitment to non-discrimination and fostering support for the college value of diversity: "We value diverse identities and perspectives and are committed to fostering an inclusive community that embraces our differences as essential for success." Multiple processes and activities reflect this commitment to diversity and equity.

ECC's non-discrimination processes and activities provide inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations, as demonstrated by students' perceptions of classroom environments, their experience at the College, and whether they would recommend the College to friends or family. The College measures student perceptions via student surveys at various stages during their educational experience, including the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI). National experts concerning community and technical college research and practice developed this survey, which provides a clear picture of institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with learning and retention. In the 2021 SSI survey, two questions (43, 44) were specifically developed to measure student satisfaction concerning equity and inclusion. 82% of responding students were satisfied or highly satisfied when asked if "the culture at ECC demonstrates respect for different perspectives." 74% of students were satisfied or highly satisfied about their opportunities to learn about diverse groups. Administration, faculty, and various campus committees review and analyze survey results as they build a more inclusive environment at ECC.

As part of the collective bargaining agreement negotiations in spring 2020, faculty and staff established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workgroup for "researching and developing a recommendation for workshops/trainings" for faculty and staff. The work group met regularly throughout the fall semester and presented its recommendation to campus leadership in December 2020. This workgroup is now a permanent committee with the following charges and goals:

"[T]he Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee actively upholds and promotes the institutional value of diversity through policies and practices that celebrate the identity and the authentic self of every individual. The work of the committee is dedicated to fostering an educational culture of inclusivity and open-mindedness, and teaching students to be well-rounded, culturally competent citizens who can live, work, and communicate in a globalized society. In recognizing differences and encouraging inclusion, East Central College effectively supports the whole person and cultivates a safe and supportive environment for all stakeholders of the institution.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee recognizes that all individuals are unique. All should be a part of celebrating that diversity, which might include (but is not limited to):

- Race and ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Gender identity and gender expression
- Individuals with disabilities
- Religion and spirituality
- First-generation college students
- Socioeconomic status
- Immigration or citizenship status
- Neurodivergence
- Physical size and appearance

Some goals of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee include:

- Designing and implementing an assessable framework relevant to its charge that will be included in strategic planning for the Institution.
- Organizing and offering regular training and educational opportunities for East Central College and the community pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Advocating for the creation and implementation of policies and procedures that ensure students have equitable access to all components of the higher education experience that East Central College offers.

As part of the Committee's initial recommendation, college employees were required to participate in micro-aggressions training. In addition, the committee seeks additional professional development opportunities for the college and is vetting other trainings related to support for LGBTQ+ students and safe zones. ECC recently collaborated with other Missouri colleges to share best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. College faculty shared their work in this presentation and continue to bring attention to this topic.

During AY20-21, faculty and staff recognized the need for a process that would identify individuals by their chosen names. A Name Change Task Force worked to articulate and coordinate internal processes and technology, so both employees and students could identify a chosen name for use in systems like Canvas and email. This process was piloted in Fall 2021, and the Shared Governance Council is currently reviewing a formal addition to ECC policy.

The Annual Film and Lecture Series provides events that promote thoughtful discourse among students, faculty, staff, and the community. Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 programing featured historical Black figures from Missouri and discussions of the films "13th" and "I am Not Your Negro." The Fall 2021 offerings featured "Crip Camp" and "Tulsa: The Fire and the Forgotten." Integrated with the Film and Lecture Series and new in Fall 2021 was an all-campus read of the book *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. Participants participated in bi-weekly Zoom discussions. The topics of racism and gender issues flowed organically through the conversations.

International Education Week: In November each year, ECC celebrates International Education Week with Soup and Stories featuring international students, an Online International Film Festival, and an international virtual escape room.

From an academic standpoint, ECC disaggregates course success rates according to multiple groups. The most recent course success report indicates veteran students have higher average success rates. The college provides support to veterans through a dedicated financial aid advisor and success coach. Veterans have access to a dedicated study room on campus. Unfortunately, Black students are demonstrably less successful. The Learning Center staff are investigating additional ways to support students of color.

1C3 The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff, and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.

Board policy and the student and faculty handbooks clearly articulate expectations of respect for all. Stakeholders follow these expectations, fostering a climate of respect. This message is evident both internally and externally in multiple ways:

- The college took a public stand against racism in the weeks following the George Floyd

murder. When a local newspaper published an editorial cartoon with racist overtones, ECC led area businesses in boycotting the paper. The college president wrote an open letter explaining the college position and calling for community support and engagement for racial justice. Employees may share their support publicly with signage for personal office space, as well as graphics for use in email signatures.

- The Campus Life and Leadership office established an LGBTQ+ resource webpage and an "I am an Ally" campaign to show support for these students. The campus celebrated National Coming Out Day on social media and in person and formed an active Gender and Sexualities Alliance club. The all campus read for Fall 2021 (*The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennet) gave students and employees an opportunity to explore transgender issues in a non-threatening way and included culminating lectures from college professors of Transgender Studies and Women's Issues.
- The campus Art Gallery schedule upholds the value of diversity. Gallery exhibits demonstrate diversity in media, style, content, and subject matter. Exhibit scheduling is intentional in selecting artists from diverse backgrounds, including gender, race, socio-economic status, and so on. Most Visiting Artists interact with students through Artist Talk lectures or workshops.
- To further foster a climate of respect, all college employees are required to complete online training on micro-aggressions. The Learning Center staff, as part of the certification through the College Reading and Learning Association, completes additional training to recognize implicit bias and treat students of all backgrounds with respect.
- Current data from the 2021 Great Colleges to Work for Survey showed an average of 74% positive responses to questions in the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging theme.

ECC is concerned with socio-economic issues and financial access for students. Through the College and Foundation Offices, ECC offers scholarships, financial aid packages, emergency funds, a student food pantry, and a culture of helping each other succeed. For example, the College offers free dual credit tuition to area high school students who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC's mission is clear, broadly communicated to the public, and serves as the foundation for its decisions and operations.

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 establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1 The institution develops, and the governing board adopts the mission.

The College mission statement, "Empowering students and enriching communities through education," was developed by the institution, through solicitation of input from faculty, staff, administration, and students. The process included an initial workshop to engage the Board of Trustees in mission development, followed by two additional workshops in March and June, during which the board considered input from campus stakeholders. This thorough attention to collaborative mission and vision enabled meaningful connections with stakeholder priorities. The Board of Trustees adopted the current mission statement in August 2019 (p.5, Strategic Plan adoption).

Criterion 1.A.1 provides a detailed discussion of mission development and adoption.

2.A.2 The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

The College's core value of integrity drives decisions concerning financial, academic, and personnel functions through continuous pursuit of transparency and ethical practices in all operations. The College complies with federal and state laws that protect the privacy of certain personal financial records, educational records, and personal customer information.

East Central College's board, administration, faculty, and staff follow formal policy and procedures to ensure fair and ethical behavior. Board policy and procedures are organized into five chapters. The board holds the authority to establish and change policy, but it delegates authority to establish procedures to administration. The Board of Trustees operates by a Code of Ethics.

Cross-divisional work groups are engaged in a thorough review of policy and procedures. The committee tasked with the review of "Chapter 1: Organization of the College" completed its work on March 8, 2021. On June 14, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved revisions to "Chapter 2: Instruction Policies and Procedures." Later, another cross-divisional workgroup completed revisions of "Chapter 3: Student Services," and the Board of Trustees adopted them on December 6, 2021. Currently, a workgroup is reviewing "Chapter 4: Finance and Administration." Another workgroup

completed a revision of "Chapter 5: Personnel," which is currently under review by legal counsel. The Board Recording Secretary facilitates the workgroups, which include strategic representation from all areas of the college to 1) update policies to match current practice; 2) clarify language; 3) update policy as necessary to reflect changes in laws, accreditation guidelines, etc.; and 4) recommend new policies concerning issues that are not covered by policy but should be as a best practice.

Financial Policies (Section 4, p.119-168): There are 49 board policies that guide the College's actions concerning administrative and financial matters. Examples include purchasing guidelines, investment of funds policy, auditing policy, and financial reports policy. College finances are audited annually, with results shared publicly on the college website. Financial statements are reviewed at each Board of Trustees meeting (sample agenda, p.19-24).

Academic Policies (Section 2, p.38-51): Fifteen policies govern academic work, including guidance related to degree and course offerings, transcription of credit, and the work of academic committees. In addition, the College requires employees to receive training regarding FERPA and student rights. The student handbook (p.9) addresses academic dishonesty and student grievances.

Human Resources Policies (Section 5 p.169-292): These policies are outlined in chapter five of Board Policy. These policies include provisions for employee grievances, employee evaluations, fair hiring practices, and collective bargaining with faculty. In addition to board policy, ECC operates with integrity toward its employees through shared governance led by the Shared Governance Council (Policy 1.35, p.35), which includes representatives from all Employee Governance Associations (Policy 1.34, p.35).

ECC Financial Aid Office (FAO) staff administers financial aid equitably with integrity and consistency while adhering to state and federal regulations and Board Policy (3.7; 3.8, p. 64). To fully adhere to these guidelines, financial aid operations are audited annually by a third-party accounting firm to ensure compliance and integrity. See the 2021 audit(p. 65) for a review of federal financial aid awards.

The ECC website provides a crucial point of communication, so all stakeholders, both internal and external, can benefit and stay informed. Financial Aid plays a significant role in a student's success, yet can be very confusing. The financial aid section of the website includes the cost of attendance, a net price calculator, financial aid resources, and other pertinent information. A financial aid office representative is available to present during each Falcon Seminar course.

Auxiliary college units include the campus bookstore and the cafeteria. The annual audit includes a review of these units, including levels and costs of inventory (p.24). In addition, the College has increased the use of Open and Low-Cost Educational Resources for courses, even though this decreases book sales. Student interests related to cost savings take priority over revenue generation. There has been some discussion about outsourcing cafeteria services. The Budget Advisory Committee conversations (highlighted section) are transparent and involve multiple stakeholders. These evaluations take many factors into account and give primacy to student needs.

During the onboarding process and annually thereafter, all ECC employees complete FERPA training. Students are provided information at the beginning of each semester about their rights, and the Registrar maintains information related to FERPA on the website.

The ECC Admissions Office ensures fair and ethical practices through adherence to guidelines

established by the National Association for College Admission Counseling [(NACAC)](#) and National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships ([NACEP](#)). While the College is an open admissions institution, there are admission requirements for specific programs, such as [Nursing](#), which are approved by the dean and faculty of those programs. The College clearly communicates admission requirements on program websites and ensures admissions staff is knowledgeable of academic requirements for incoming students. These admission requirements are designed to promote success for students who persist and complete their programs. Deans and program faculty annually review admission requirements through data analysis and, when necessary, modify program curriculum or admission requirements to align with any new standards.

The Athletic department ensures adherence to fair and ethical practices as established by a multitude of governing bodies including the National Junior College Athletic Association ([NJCAA](#)) and The Missouri Community College Athletic Conference ([MCCAC](#)). This is in addition to the internal best practices set up through the [ECC Falcons Student-Athlete Handbook](#) (p. 17-24).

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2.B.1 The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

ECC presents itself clearly and completely to students and the public. The accuracy of program information is crucial for serving these ECC constituencies. The College website enables stakeholders to review the 30+ academic programs and their associated admission requirements, program costs, career areas, personnel contacts, and scholarship opportunities. The faculty meet credentialing requirements by their level of instruction and possess all required certifications. Students or the public can connect with faculty and staff through program pages or the faculty and staff directory. The website also provides program and course costs; students review these during mandatory orientation, during which students have the opportunity to ask questions about programs, get clarification concerning additional costs, and receive assistance in purchasing required textbooks.

The commitment to accreditation is demonstrated through academic and institutional department comprehensive review (discussed in Criterion 4A and 5B), Higher Learning Commission Institutional Updates, Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development five-year program reviews, and annual submissions of student, course, financial, and human resource data. The College's accreditation liaison officer (ALO) closely monitors compliance guidelines from these entities and provides updates to the respective departments, deans, and college community. The ALO works closely with the Public Relations department to ensure updates of accreditation and curriculum changes are accurately reflected on ECC's website and in publication materials.

ECC publishes a course catalog that includes admission procedures, course offerings, degree requirements, academic policies, etc. The registrar reviews and updates this catalog annually, following approvals made in monthly Academic Council meetings. This flow chart outlines what happens after approval of a course or program change by Academic Council. Following the steps in this chart ensures consistent, accurate, and up-to-date information is presented. During the academic year, the registrar serves on the Academic Council and ensures consistency between program requirements published in the course catalog, website, and promotional materials. The Financial Aid office annually updates tuition and fees and a net price calculator. ECC publishes institutional and programmatic accreditation on a dedicated website page.

The Public Relations Department is responsible for maintaining the College website. *Eastcentral.edu* is the largest representation the college has, and the Web Services Department manages it. As a result of this department's comprehensive review, department members developed a comprehensive internal Excel spreadsheet that explicitly links a person/position to each webpage on the website. This explicit responsibility list ensures website content is accurate, current, and communicated in a timely manner to the webmaster. Publicizing academic opportunities at ECC is the responsibility of the Public Relations department, which uses and references information from reputable sources.

ECC further communicates its transparency to stakeholders through the Student Consumer Information webpage. This webpage covers Institutional Information, Student Right-to-Know, Transfer of Credit, Health and Safety, Financial Aid Assistance, Student Outcomes, and Contact Information for Assistance.

Information about the governance of the college is maintained online and updated following each election based on certified results from election authorities.

The commitment to accreditation is demonstrated through academic and institutional department comprehensive review (discussed in Criterion 4A and 5B), Higher Learning Commission Institutional Updates, Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development five-year program reviews, and annual submissions of student, course, financial, and human resource data. The College's accreditation liaison officer (ALO) closely monitors compliance guidelines from these entities and provides updates to the respective departments, deans, and college community. The ALO works closely with the Public Relations department to ensure timely updates of accreditation and curriculum changes are accurately reflected on ECC's website and in publication materials.

2.B.2 The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

ECC's claims regarding the educational experience are best described by the Student Experience Statement. As part of the 2018 Strategic Planning process, a Student Experience Statement was created through collaborative conversations with employees and students.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE STATEMENT

East Central College aims to provide a quality education exemplified by a transformative and empowering student experience. That student experience is characterized by:

- An engaging education that is academically challenging and personally meaningful.
- Innovative programs and services that equip students to become critical thinkers and leaders prepared for the future.
- A supportive community designed to motivate and inspire students toward life-long learning.
- Memorable relationships with faculty and staff mentors that help shape students into productive and socially responsible citizens.
- Clearly defined pathways to completion and post-graduation success.

East Central College faculty, staff, and administration support this experience with:

- A responsive and data-informed educational community that is committed to providing the best possible experience for its students.

- The use of current technology and teaching practices is leveraged to deliver rewarding and relevant learning experiences.
- Accessible, streamlined services that empower students to be independent while promoting growth and accountability.
- A commitment to inclusion, diversity, and a caring approach built on mutual respect.

This Student Experience Statement exemplifies East Central College's commitment to exceeding student expectations. However, it is equally important that the College provides evidence in support of this claim.

Students receive an academically challenging and meaningful educational experience at East Central College. According to data provided by the state's flagship institution, the University of Missouri-Columbia (MU), in 2017 ECC transfer students had an average grade point average of 3.59 after a full academic year, and in fall 2018 the GPA for ECC transfer students was 3.62 after a full year. In addition, 13 of the 17 ECC transfers to MU in the fall 2019 semester had a GPA above 3.00. ECC's Nursing program Union graduates had a 95% first-time pass rate (p.17), and Rolla graduates had a 92% pass rate (p.16) on their registered nursing licensing examination in 2020. The Nursing program continues to exceed state and national test averages (p.5). The Radiological Technology graduates had a 100% pass rate on their licensure exam in 2020 and Occupational Therapy Assistant graduates had an 84% pass rate on their licensure exam in 2020.

Embedded in ECC programs are connections between the classroom and the working world, such as capstone projects in accounting (ACC 290, p.2), teacher education (EDU 190, p.2), and Computer Information Systems (CIS 290 p.5), which add meaning and context to the educational experience. Creative pathways to degree completion, such as ECC's nursing extern/Earn While You Learn program, offer students an engaging and innovative approach to meeting their educational goals.

Critical thinking and leadership skills are developed across disciplines and through cocurricular activities, such as ECC's student newspaper, *CUSP* literary and art review, Student Government Association, peer tutor and supplemental instruction leader opportunities, and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Faculty and staff share responsibility for supporting students through the creation of meaningful relationships. Informal activities include sponsoring student clubs (Faculty Handbook, p. 49) and organizing faculty-led study groups. A faculty mentoring program enables faculty to support current students and begin life-long mentoring relationships. The Learning Center and Rolla Success Center offer formalized support (Faculty Handbook p.36).

Clear pathways for degree completion are articulated and implemented throughout Student Development, including faculty advising. Articulation agreements for smooth transfer to four-year institutions continue to grow in quantity and quality. For example, most recently, an articulation agreement for the Computer Information Systems AAS program between MU and ECC was approved. This agreement provides the opportunity for students who have earned an Associate in Applied Science in Computer Information Systems (AAS-CIS) with an emphasis in Database Administration and Security at ECC to complete a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems (BS-IT) at MU. Any ECC student who has earned an AAS-CIS is guaranteed MU BS-IT will accept all 60 designated ECC AAS-CIS credits and apply those credits to the Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems degree.

East Central College and its Music Department recently received full, 10-year accreditation with the

National Association of Schools of Music ([NASM](#)), a rare distinction bestowed by the NASM Commission on Community Colleges. NASM is an organization of approximately 637 accredited institutional members, including colleges and universities. The association establishes standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees in music-related disciplines. The standards articulate curriculum requirements and ensure the level of rigor expected of students. ECC has been accredited by NASM since 2014. This distinction and ECC's outstanding faculty ensure the highest quality educational experience. The department attracts regional, national, and international [guest performances](#) that culturally enrich the community.

To support the claim that ECC is an affordable option for higher education, the tuition subcommittee annually develops a comparison table of Missouri Community College tuition rates. In addition, the subcommittee compares four-year tuition rates with ECC tuition. Based on these comparisons, ECC tuition and fees [(p. 50-51)](#) are consistently in the median of Missouri community colleges and well below those of four-year institutions. The annual cost for in-district students taking 30 credit hours is $3,960, compared to the average cost of $10,440 for four-year institutions, or $36,880 for four-year private institutions.

Learning experiences are not limited to credit-bearing courses. ECC offers Community Education for adults and children anually, and these programs are well-attended. Our recent [Summer Learning Academy](#), offered in both Union and Rolla, served over 300 participants. [Community Education](#) for adults offers programming year-round. [Apprenticeship programs](#) offered through the Center for Workforce Development provide valuable learning experiences and support for area businesses by improving a skilled workforce.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C The governing Board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with Board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

The ECC Board of Trustees is an elected Board that follows governance procedures outlined in Board policy. As stated in Board Policy 1.3.1, the statutory responsibilities of the Board of Trustees include, but are not limited to, the following:

Approve the appointment, retention, and dismissal of College employees; define and assign their powers and duties; and fix their compensation.

Levy such taxes as are required for the College operations.

Establish fees for students in the amount necessary to maintain College courses.

Provide instructional programs and services and physical facilities.

Approve all contracts unless delegated to the College President for approval.

Adopt and oversee disciplinary policy regarding students.

Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local mandates.

The Board of Trustees is appropriately engaged in the governance of the college, employing effective practices and procedures to receive information concerning its legal and fiduciary responsibilities and the overall operations of the college. Board meeting agendas follow a general outline, which includes a consent agenda for most personnel matters; review and approval of the minutes and treasurer's report; specific business items; informational items; and reports from the Board President, College President, employee associations, and student government. The Board follows a detailed Conflict of Interest policy (1.28 p.28-31) and annually submits Personal Financial Disclosure Statements (1.29 p.31-32). Inquiries from the Board of Trustees indicate independent decision-making. In August

2021, the administration brought a request to the Board to replace a pedestrian bridge between (p.4) two campus buildings. The Board declined to decide at the first presentation over concerns a fully enclosed, climate-controlled structure was too expensive. Only after additional information from the architects did the Board agree to a proposal for a covered, but not climate-controlled, pedestrian bridge. Similarly, when presented with the opportunity to assume the Radiologic Technology Program from a regional partner, the Board asked numerous questions (p.2) about cost and program viability and independently examined the evidence before deciding.

2.C.1 The governing Board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the Board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

- Newly appointed Trustees are welcomed by the President of the College and scheduled to participate in orientation. The orientation session covers a general overview of the College, organizational charts, budget overview, Missouri Code requirements, Shared Governance Policy, Board Policies, meeting dates, and a tour of the ECC campus and off-site locations. (Printed materials available onsite.)
- The orientation session positions trustees to be knowledgeable and make informed decisions regarding financial matters. Prior to each meeting, each Board of Trustees member receives Monthly financial statements (p. 18), which are reviewed during the meeting. The President validates his commitment to fiscal responsibility at each monthly Board meeting. The Vice President of Administration and Finance provides supporting evidence of compliance with the monthly financial statement.
- Trustees are active members of the Missouri Community College Association and attend both the leadership conference held each year in the spring and the general conference in the fall. Two trustees serve on the MCCA Board of Directors (p. 4-5, highlighted). Engagement with this organization provides trustees with training and information regarding current legal and legislative issues, as well as best practices from Missouri community colleges.
- The Board of Trustees receives complete and thorough information monthly, prior to each meeting. This information includes current financial information (p. 16), which is presented during the meeting by the Chief Financial Officer with opportunities for questions and discussion..
- Annually, an independent firm audits ECC, including the college's financial statements and those of its component unit, the East Central Foundation. A representative from the auditing firm presents the audit directly to the Board of Trustees each December (p.19) during the public meeting, and the audit is published online.
- The Chief Academic Officer presents updates related to the Academic Affairs division periodically to the Board of Trustees. New academic programs are brought to the Board of Trustees for approval following the recommendation of the Academic Council. For example, the Applied Technology AAS program was approved by Academic Council on April 16, 2021 and brought to the Board for their review and approval on May 3, 2021 (p.2).
- Prior to voting on changes to existing policy or adoption of new policy, the Board receives the opportunity for an initial reading of recommended changes. For example, the Board was presented with a full revision of Chapter One at its February 1, 2021 (p.47-73) meeting. The Board discussed this chapter at that meeting and suggested changes. Their suggestions were incorporated into the chapter revision, and then the Board formally adopted the policy on March 8, 2021. Policies presented to the Board are first reviewed by the Shared Governance Council and shared with legal counsel, if necessary. The Board may elect to waive the second reading if immediate adoption is needed.

2.C.2 The governing Board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Agenda items and motions reflect the results of the deliberations and decisions being made by the Board of Trustees. All members are elected and come to the Board with distinct perspectives grounded in the needs of their respective districts. The Board of Trustees' deliberations regularly reflect strategic priorities of the college (see section 1.A.3 above), as evidenced by the following examples:

- The Board receives an update on the Strategic Plan at least annually (August 2020, p.4 and August 2021, p.5).
- The Board reviews course success rates (p. 2) at the conclusion of the fall and spring semesters. This not only informs Board members about students' academic success, but also allows them an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback (Pathways Strategy).
- Standing agenda items (p.3, 88-90, #16-18) include verbal reports from officers of all college employee groups: Classified Staff Association (CSA), Professional Staff Association (PSA), Faculty Association (FA), ECC National Education Association (ECC-NEA), Student Government Association (SGA), and the college and Board Presidents. This recurring communication serves not only to inform the Board but also to build relationships (Employees Strategy).
- The trustees approve new degree programs. The most recent example is from the October 4, 2021 (p. 1-2) meeting, during which trustees approved degrees in Surgical Technology and Licensed Practical Nursing. These programs will operate at the Rolla location, advancing both the Pathways Strategy and the Rolla Strategy. As part of this approval process, trustees asked questions to ensure the programs are financially viable.
- Budget adoption for FY22 (p. 3) included significant compensation increases for employees in recognition of their value to the institution. This action represented the first raise for employees in three years and supported the Employees Strategy.

2.C.3 The governing Board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

In accordance with the Missouri Open Meeting Law, the Board provides opportunities during meetings for constituents to address the Board. Additionally, Board members are named on ECC's website on the Board of Trustees page. Each month the Board contributes to the College governance, providing a big-picture, long-term view, and reviews and approves pertinent college information. This management style also protects and upholds the federal privacy laws for students and ensures that all trustees receive the same information and responses to stay fully informed on College issues. Board members have access to information necessary for such decision-making through monthly Board agenda packets, which include financial information with fund balances, College investments, and receipt of revenue from multiple sources.

As elected officials, members of the Board of Trustees hold themselves accountable for making wise decisions on behalf of taxpayers while also considering students' interests. Required approvals are made in the best interest of the service area, institution, and students. For example, deliberations in July 2021 (p.1-2) and August 2021 (p.4) reflected fiscal restraint when considering options for replacing a campus pedestrian bridge. Ultimately, the Board decided (p.1-2) that even though the pedestrian bridge was costly to replace, it served students and the campus community much better than an extensive series of sidewalks; moreover, they decided against a fully enclosed pedestrian

bridge due to higher costs. Opportunities for public comment are available at meetings through defined procedures established in Board policy 1.21 (p. 25).

2. **C.4 The governing Board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties.**

Governance does not limit human interaction or stifle collective or individual thinking. As elected officials, Board members are committed to being available and open to listening to their constituents. The Board believes it is essential to the proper operation of the College that its members remain impartial and independent of personal interest as they address policy issues and other agenda items. The Board reviews the conflict of interest policy every two years, per Board policy 1.28, (p.28-31). When appropriate, trustees abstain from voting on matters that reflect a conflict of interest. For example, one trustee is a medical provider and another is a college retiree who participates in the college health insurance program. These trustees abstained from voting to approve a health insurance provider at the November 2021 (p.3) Board meeting.

2.C.5 The governing Board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

The Board of Trustees governs according to the duties outlined in Board policy 1.32. (p.34). The College President is the only employee to whom the Board delegates daily operational responsibilities. The Board delegates authority to the college President as outlined in 1.30: "Responsibilities of the President," (p.33) and 1.32: "Role and Relationship Between the Board of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer." Oversight of academics is entrusted to faculty, as outlined in Board policies 2.12 and 2.13.(p.48-49). The Board provides the President with an annual evaluation and establishes mutually agreed upon goals and objectives. The President provides monthly reports to the Board in the form of updates on pertinent operational and strategic initiatives. In addition, the President sends pertinent college information to the Board President as needed.

Collaborative bargaining with the College's faculty organization, East Central College National Education Association (ECC NEA), helps to strengthen and support academic matters and the professional interests of the College's faculty. The President of the ECC NEA group receives the monthly Board packet, is notified of all Board meetings, and can provide a monthly report to the Board. The collective bargaining process used at ECC is Interest Based Bargaining (IBB), which has been utilized annually between the College and ECC NEA

The ECC NEA leadership team meets at least twice each month with the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) and once per month with the President to collaborate and share interests and issues. Information from these meetings that is deemed relevant for the President and his Cabinet is shared by the VPAA during cabinet meetings or one-on-one meetings with the President. The President also convenes a meeting annually with the ECC NEA leadership team to meet any new leadership members and welcome them back for a new academic year.

In addition to IBB leadership and collaboration, faculty chair the academic standing committees (FH p. 48-49) and serve in faculty leadership roles. Appointing and engaging faculty in these roles proves that faculty are vetting academic standards and driving academic offerings. Both the President of the Faculty Association and the President of ECC NEA have the opportunity to report to the Board each month. This provides faculty the opportunity to inform the Board of programs, services, initiatives, and faculty accolades. These presentations (p.4-5) provide an interactive dialog for Trustees to be informed on various topics impacting the College and/or the students.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

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

East Central College (ECC) champions the ideal of academic freedom for its instructors, students, administrators, staff, and all members of the community it serves.

The ECC Student Handbook (p.14) provides the following language as guidance on Academic Freedom and Expressive Activity:

East Central College is committed to providing an environment that embraces the principle of freedom of expression for all persons. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that an academic environment is created and maintained that allows for open communication, discussion, and exploration of ideas, while also ensuring that there is no unreasonable disruption of the College function, nor any danger to community members, damage to personal or College property, or unconstitutional interference with the rights of others.

ECC's Board policy 5.6 (p. 184) reads:

East Central College, as an academic community, promotes learning characterized by free inquiry, open discussion, and thoughtful communication. Academic freedom is a tenet of such instruction and essential to the purpose of higher education. Faculty and students must be free to examine ideas in an environment without institutional censorship.

Additionally, the Collective Bargaining Agreement Article VII (p.6) reinforces this policy:

1. Faculty are members of a learned profession, representatives of the institution, and citizens of the larger community. As a member of a learned profession and a representative of the institution, a faculty member, in exercising "free inquiry, open discussion, and thoughtful communication" should at all times be accurate, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they do not speak for the institution.
2. The principles of academic freedom and their inherent responsibilities are applicable to all full-time faculty, to all adjunct faculty, and to all students.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1 Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

ECC supports basic and applied research when it relates to seeking educational advancement. Board policy 4.35 (p.152) addresses research conducted on campus. The process involves oversight from the Institutional Research Office and campus leadership. This review of research requests ensures all research will be conducted in an ethical manner and comply with all Board policies.

"Following review by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning, the research request form will be sent to the appropriate Vice President(s). Approval by the appropriate Vice President(s) will be based on a review of the nature and purpose of the survey/research, the proposed research instrument and the likely benefit for the College." An example of this process is research conducted by a faculty member with Falcon Seminar students (COL 101) in fall 2020.

2.E.2 The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

ECC Library staff includes two master-degreed librarians who serve as liaisons for faculty and staff. Discipline-focused Librarians assist faculty and staff with discovering credible research sources and sources about conducting research. ECC Librarians support students individually in their research and scholarly practice with research assistance and library guides (libguides). Research appointments are available by drop-in or scheduled with a librarian. Libguides can also be created for continued research. Phi Theta Kappa Research Project guide is one example that was created after an initial research appointment with a student.

All Learning Center tutoring staff are required to complete College Reading Learning Association International Tutor Training Program Certification. The Learning Center is currently Level 3 certified. As part of the certification process, The Learning Center must meet standards of Ethics and Equity at all three levels, including Professional Ethics (Academic Integrity and Academic Honesty). Included in CRLA certification are also elective courses in contemporary education research.

ECC expects students to conduct themselves honestly in all academic endeavors and supports

students by clearly defining the meaning of this through our Academic Honor Code, linked in all syllabi and included in the Student Handbook(p.4).

2.E.3 The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

ECC Librarians conduct Library Research Instruction at the request of the faculty. A typical instruction session is 40 minutes and can cover a general library introduction or a more specific research focus, depending on class needs. According to a six-year average, 735 students receive Library Research Instruction (LRI) in their classroom each year. New in fall 2021 is the Research Basics libguide, which is reviewed at most LRI sessions. Pre- and post-assessments are completed for each in-person class. ECC Library staff are also available to assist students, faculty, and staff with research inquiries on an individual basis. Assistance is available by drop-in, email, appointment, or phone at the Union campus Monday – Friday. Chat and text assistance are provided with 24/7 access, answered either by ECC Library staff or the third-party service Chat Staff. The library's five-year goal is to provide a class visit to each Falcon Seminar (Freshman Experience) class, including those offered in Rolla.

Library Research Instruction directs students to use credible databases and citation tools in their research. Entire libguides or linked guide tabs are available to any student from the Library libguide page. Additional libguide resources cover topics of citing sources: plagiarism, copyright, website evaluation, and scholarly or sensational publications.

The Learning Center offers faculty in-class workshops for basics of APA and MLA formatting. The Learning Center Online Writing Center enables students to have draft writings reviewed by Learning Center staff with feedback provided before final submission to faculty. Regular communication to faculty provides up-to-date information about services.

2.E.4 The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Instructors are the first point of enforcement for the policy on academic dishonesty (SH p. 9-10). Instructors may report instances of academic dishonesty through the Maxient reporting system. Reports include instances of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or forgery, and facilitations of academic dishonesty. These infractions are addressed by the Chief Student Affairs officer and tracked by 1st, 2nd, or 3rd offense. In 2019-2020 there were 27 students with a first offense documented. In 2020-21 there were 10 such cases.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

The evidence demonstrates ECC acts with integrity, one of its institutional values, conducting college business ethically and responsibly.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its 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. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

Several mechanisms are in place to ensure that ECC's courses and programs are current and require the appropriate level of student performance. These mechanisms include the internal curriculum review and approval process, annual and comprehensive review, review and approval of our CORE 42 General Education block, external accreditations, and Program Advisory Boards.

ECC offers certificates and Associates degrees. The process for adding new courses and programs of study begins with Curriculum Council and then flows through Academic Council for approval. New program proposals must be developed utilizing the comprehensive New Program Template, which includes numerous criteria, including the program's fit to institutional mission, learning outcomes to be met by the program, value to participants, curriculum, and an advisory board's role, if applicable. Courses are reviewed for currency, accessibility, sustainability, and appropriateness for the educational needs of the students.

The Board of Trustees approves new program proposals and closure of programs. In both cases, the Board relies on the review, evaluation, and recommendation by Curriculum Council and Academic Council to make such determinations. Guiding such decisions is the stated objective in the SOAR to 2024 Strategic Plan: "Develop effective and efficient credit and non-credit programs that support students' attainment of academic and career goals."

Recent examples include:

- Welding Certificate: ECC added a 22-credit hour certificate which can be accomplished in a single 16-week semester and stacks towards additional welding credentials including a Welding, AAS.

- Agriculture Pathway, AA degree: ECC created a pathway with selected courses to prepare students for transfer into Agriculture degrees. This was designed to respond to current demands in the local agriculture economy.
- Radiologic Technology: ECC acquired this program to support the community's growing need for healthcare professionals.
- Fire Technology program, (p. 2): This program was deleted when it was not needed by local fire departments.
- Applied Technology, AAS: These new certificate and degree programs allow students to combine a wider variety of courses, such as welding and building construction, to broaden their scope of skills within a manufacturing setting. The program provides a flexible approach to customized credit-hour training or apprenticeship programs for employers.
- Surgical Technology AAS: This one-plus-one-degree program prepares students to practice as surgical technologists. Upon graduation, students receive their Associate of Applied Science Degree in Surgical Technology and are eligible to take the national certification examination administered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA).

ECC's programs and certificates, as well as the courses within them, are reviewed regularly through the Annual Assessment Report & Plan (AARP) as well as the Comprehensive Review Process to ensure relevancy and rigor.

The AA core general education curriculum is known as CORE 42. (see 3B for detailed information). Content area expert faculty from across Missouri, including several from ECC, select courses for inclusion in this 42-credit hour block and write the CORE 42 course descriptions. Every two- and four-year Missouri public institution participates by submitting syllabi to the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (MDHEWD). The syllabi are evaluated by the content area faculty experts for comparability and consistency to the CORE 42 course description, ensuring rigor and currency.

ECC maintains multiple articulation agreements with public and private colleges and universities in Missouri. These four-year universities evaluate ECC courses for relevancy and rigor as part of the articulation process.

In addition, many programs at ECC maintain independent external accreditations, which further ensure rigor. Some of these programs maintain required accreditation such as the Paramedic program accredited by Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP). Several programs hold voluntary accreditation, which demonstrates ECC's ongoing commitment to quality and rigorous academic programming. For example, the ECC Music Program's Associate of Fine Arts - Music degree is fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. The Culinary Program is voluntarily accredited by the American Culinary Federation.

Career Technical and Health Science programs have active academic program advisory boards that meet at least once per semester. These academic program advisory boards contribute to the currency and quality of the academic program, facilitate the placement of graduates, and enhance the reputation of the program. Academic program advisory boards assist programs in many ways, such as curriculum planning and development; developing funding sources to support both the academic program and students; generating gifts of equipment and materials of value to the program; creating student/faculty internships/exchanges; ensuring career placement opportunities for program graduates; providing current experiences for faculty in their area of expertise; and developing plans for increasing the program's public visibility.

3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

Learning goals (outcomes) for students are articulated at the course, program, and institutional level. East Central College offers associate degrees and certificates. The learning outcomes and objectives for certificates and applied science degrees focus on preparing students for work, while associate of arts degrees are designed primarily for students transferring to complete bachelor's degree programs. The course catalog contains detailed information about degree requirements, and program website pages outline and differentiate program level outcomes.

For example, the Associate of Arts degree (AA) has four program level learning outcomes, which are the same as the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs). They include general skills, knowledge, or applications that students are expected to demonstrate after completing a program of study.

- Critical Thinking – Students will be able to integrate knowledge for creating solutions to novel challenges.
- Communication – Students will be able to effectively express ideas and exchange knowledge in multiple ways.
- Social Responsibility – Students will demonstrate an understanding of social responsibility.
- Personal and Professional Development – Students will take responsibility for their personal and professional development.

Other transfer programs of study include:

- Associate of Science (AS) engineering transfer,
- Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) teacher education transfer,
- Art Associate of Fine Arts (AFA) degree,
- Music Associate of Fine Arts (AFA) degree,

ECC offers multiple Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, Certificates of Specialization, and Certificates of Achievement in the Health Science and Career and Technical Education Divisions.

Examples of Associate of Applied Science and Certificate learning outcomes include:

Health Information Management, AAS:

- Preparation to sit for the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) exam.
- Learning advanced skills and developing the ability to apply entry-level HIM competencies achieved.
- Utilization of different strategies to make decisions and solve complex problems through the application of HIM skills.
- Understanding the implications of legal, ethical, and regulatory frameworks related to health care industry.

Radiological Technology, AAS:

- Apply concepts of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Create an appreciation for the importance of professionalism and professional growth in a radiography career.
- Attain knowledge and skills appropriate for an entry-level radiographer.

- Communicate effectively.

[Welding, Certificate of Specialization:](#)

- Demonstrate effective communication skills, critical thinking, and team approach mentality.
- Demonstrate safety protocols in the field of industrial welding by consistently applying and adhering to current industry safety standards.
- Demonstrate foundational decision-making.
- Perform multiple basic welding processes and techniques required of those entering the welding industry.

3.A.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 consortia arrangements, or any other modality).

Consistency of program quality at the College is primarily achieved by assessment of program outcomes (see 4.A.1) and maintaining course consistency across instructional modalities and locations. Faculty work to create a climate of consistency with course goals and outcomes college wide. This approach still leaves room for academic choice and freedom for teaching methods for instructors. ECC delivers courses in multiple locations, online, and at area high schools. Instructors teaching these courses are all credentialed to teach through the [same process,](#) which was revised and updated in 2018-19. A recent HLC [multi-site visit (p. 4-5)](#) noted consistency and appropriate rigor in courses at Four Rivers Career Center and the Building and Industry Center. In addition, [course success rates (p.115-119)](#) between the main campus and the Rolla location are similar.

Each year, adjunct instructors (including dual credit) are provided [specialized training](#) delivered by college faculty and are offered opportunities for support at the departmental level throughout the academic year. The department chairs and deans collaborate with the Director of Admissions and Early College to provide support to dual credit faculty. Dual credit adjuncts are evaluated by department chairs and/or deans on a rotating basis.

Departments/Disciplines have regular meetings to evaluate [signature assignments](#) and assessment results, review and adjust curriculum if necessary, and establish consistent outcomes. Adjuncts are either included in these meetings or have communication with Department Chairs and/or Deans regarding departmental results. For example, the English Department, including adjunct faculty, meet each summer for their [annual curriculum meeting.](#) Nursing program faculty at both locations meet throughout the year and again each May for an [annual review.](#) This allows the opportunity to assess consistency of student performance, manage curriculum, and update learning goals, if necessary.

Distance learning instructors are expected to complete training in online instruction, including using Canvas (LMS), and are provided with an [Online Teaching and Learning Handbook.](#) Faculty utilize consistent learning goals from course curricula for [online (p.2)](#) and [face-to-face (p.3)](#) courses. Course success [comparisons between online and on ground courses](#) are reviewed annually, with this information impacting instructional support for online instructors. Academic department chairs supervise instructors in both online and on-ground courses, which promotes opportunities to evaluate consistency across modalities.

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- Welding Program outcomes

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. 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. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

According to its mission, the College seeks to empower students and enrich communities through education. ECC's expert faculty who teach general education courses work to provide a broad and inclusive curriculum that enriches students' lives personally, academically, and professionally. ECC general education faculty are qualified to teach a diverse array of courses in humanities, fine and performing arts, social sciences, English literature, communications, sciences, and mathematics.

In addition to the CORE 42 framework for general education, East Central College articulates the value, purpose, and definition of general education on the ECC Website.

Missouri Senate Bill 997 established the Higher Education Core Transfer Curriculum Act (Sections 178.785-789 RSMo), directing the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to develop a standard core transfer curriculum and common course numbering equivalency matrix for lower-division general education courses. This state-wide initiative, known as CORE 42, is managed by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development in collaboration with faculty and administrators from around the state. The 42-credit block transfer curriculum is a general education framework that all Missouri public two- and four-year institutions (and several self-selected private four-year institutions) adopted, effective AY2018-2019. This is ECC's framework or model for general education.

ECC's general education framework is designed to teach students the basic CORE 42 competencies of valuing, managing information, communicating, and higher-order thinking through the completion of at least 42-semester hours distributed across the broad knowledge areas of

communications, humanities & fine arts, natural & mathematical Sciences, and social & behavioral sciences. Students obtain these competencies upon completion of CORE 42 in its entirety. These courses and competencies align with ECC's mission. The learning outcomes for ECC's general education model are ECC's Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) of communication, critical thinking, social responsibility, and personal and professional development, which align directly to the CORE 42 competencies through the curriculum mapping process.

3.B.2. 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.

As described in 3.A.1, Missouri's Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development has established a framework for seamless transfer of general education courses among Missouri colleges. These CORE 42 Framework and Knowledge Competencies are the basis for the general education transfer curriculum at ECC. Students obtain these competencies by completing the CORE 42 curriculum.

ECC has articulated Institutional Student Learning Outcomes, the broad knowledge and intellectual concepts it believes every college-educated person should possess. Broad collaborative conversations across the institution helped articulate Institutional Student Learning Outcome (ISLO) Statements and Performance Indicators.

The Instructional Assessment Committee is charged with helping faculty map both the general education learning outcomes (ISLOs) and the CORE 42 competencies to individual courses. This process of alignment, in addition to the work done through the CORE 42 development process, ensures the balance of the general education program; engages students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; encourages creative work and mastery of modes of intellectual; and assists in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

3.B.3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multi-cultural world.

There are multiple opportunities to learn about human and cultural diversity offered to students in the curriculum and cocurriculum. Two of ECC's ISLOs, Social Responsibility and Personal and Professional Development, are operationalized through performance indicators that demonstrate the importance of human and cultural diversity and development of lifelong skills for living and working in a multi-cultural world.

As the faculty have mapped all the ISLOs to courses, 27 specific courses (Lines 211-238) have been linked to Social Responsibility performance indicators. The curriculum mapping work continues, and it appears likely that many more direct links will be identified. When faculty were informally asked, multiple examples readily emerged:

- In World Fiction, students read stories from international writers and write a research paper focusing on a country other than the U.S., delving into cultures other than their own.
- Music and Art Appreciation courses intentionally provide information and experiences about music and art in other cultures.
- Psychology and Sociology courses examine stereotypes related to race and gender and their

impact on individuals and society as a whole.

- Allied Health students are given examples of cultural and religious differences in patient care, and how to be respectful of difference.
- Some courses are all-encompassing with respect to human and cultural diversity, i.e. Women's Literature, Diversity in the Media, African American Literature, World Literature I and II, and Islamic Civilization.
- Students in International Cooking discuss four areas of the world and explore their culture and cuisine. Areas studied fall in "new world" and non-western civilizations. Students prepare cuisine of the non-western cultures.

ECC has an active Civic and Community Engagement (CCE) Coalition, which is a coalition of campus committees, including the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee; the Green Committee; Service Learning; Global Education; and the Rolla Engagement Council. The Coalition is also responsible for ECC's involvement in Campus Compact, including working on a Civic Action Plan. These committees create rich and meaningful cocurricular activities that support instruction in the areas of human and cultural diversity, as well as providing opportunities to live and thrive in a multicultural world. Examples of their work include:

- International Education Week: Annually, ECC celebrates International Education Week with Soup and Stories featuring international students, an Online International Film Festival, and an international virtual escape room. The library staff develop Library Guides for the event with resources, virtual experiences, films, etc.
- Film and Lecture Series: The Annual Film and Lecture Series provides events designed to promote thoughtful discourse among students, faculty, staff, and the community. Fall 2020 and spring 2021 programming featured discussions and presentations about the films "13th," "I am Not Your Negro," and "American Factory" (in coordination with International Education Week). In conjunction with the Missouri Humanities Speakers' Bureau, presentations about historic Black Missourians and the suffrage movement in Missouri were streamed to students, staff, and community members. The fall 2021 offerings featured the documentaries "Crip Camp" and "Tulsa: The Fire and the Forgotten," with guest speakers before the film screenings. In fall 2021, ECC Campus Life and the Film and Lecture Series sponsored an all-campus read of the book *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. Participants engaged in bi-weekly Zoom discussions, and the topics of racism and gender issues flowed organically through the conversations.
- Most recently, the library staff created a Libguide on the Ukraine and Russia conflict. The purpose of this Libguide is to provide reliable resources for finding information concerning the history of Ukrainian-Russian relations and current events in their historical context. These resources provide accurate and timely information to assist faculty with instruction about our global community and to support students in their search for reliable information.
- Each spring semester, the Service Learning Committee hosts a Month of Service, offering opportunities to volunteer on and off campus, and the Green Committee hosts Earth Day activities, which attract students, their families, and the community.

3.B.4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Faculty and students contribute to scholarly and creative work as appropriate to the ECC mission. Faculty are provided an honorarium through the Faculty Professional Development process for scholarly work. Published works of faculty, staff and students are compiled and showcased by the

library. Faculty who submit an honorarium request have their presentations and other scholarly works documented on the Faculty Honorarium Worksheet. In addition, Board policy 5.26 (p.226) ensures that sabbatical and educational leave may be granted to faculty and staff so they can advance education or research pertaining to their position.

Faculty also serve on professional boards and hold offices in their professional organizations. For example, an Accounting and Business Instructor has recently served on the Board of Directors of the Missouri Association of Accounting Educators. A history professor has been a long-standing member of the Committee on Community Colleges within the Organization of American Historians, the largest and most well-respected professional society dedicated to the teaching and study of U.S. history. He has been a board member for the Missouri Council for History Education (MOCHE) since 2015. In 2021, he co-facilitated a four-day residential workshop for K-12 social studies teachers from Missouri and Illinois sponsored by the MOCHE and the Library of Congress regarding the New Deal and environmental history. An English and multi-media professor recently acted as a final juror in the Kansas City Film Fest International, judged scripts for the Missouri Stories Scriptwriting Fellowship competition, and served as a board member/programmer for the local Riverside Short Film Festival.

ECC Nursing has developed an alternative delivery of nursing clinical education in partnership with two of our healthcare partners. It is titled Earn While You Learn to be a registered nurse. This program has served as a blueprint for other schools and healthcare entities across the state and nation to offer a paid partnership model for nursing students. Program leadership has presented to the Missouri Hospital Association (MHA), Missouri State Board of Nursing (MSBN), Missouri Associate Degree Nursing (MoADN), Missouri Community College Association (MCCA), and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN).

Full-time and adjunct music faculty are accomplished professionals, performing at ECC, with the St. Louis symphony, and elsewhere in the region. Music students showcase their performing talents locally as well.

ECC Phi Theta Kappa international (PTK) Honor Society Chapters (Union and Rolla location) are very active with a high-level of accomplishment. Each year, students are selected for the All-Missouri Academic Team by the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. Typically, ECC chapters have students that reach this milestone annually. In 2021, the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) international honor society chapters in Union and Rolla were recognized for membership rates.

Each spring, ECC art and design students exhibit at the ECC Art Gallery. The ECC faculty exhibit at the ECC gallery biannually. Students are regularly selected to exhibit at local galleries, including the "Varsity Art" exhibit at the Art St. Louis.

Journalism students publish a student newspaper, *The Cornerstone,* as well as *CUSP Arts and Culture Magazine* and the *ECC Art and Literary Review* on a biannual basis; a corresponding website is updated consistently. In 2020, an ECC student won the Scott Wright Student Essay Contest from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development.

Each year, the second-year nursing students develop and present a community teaching project, a windshield survey of the college and surrounding communities. Past poster presentations have identified gaps in education regarding seat belt and helmet safety, STD's, obesity and diet, and mental health. The students present their findings and provide education during the annual Falcon Fest days to students, staff, and faculty college-wide.

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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 strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Statement of Nondiscrimination Policy and Prohibition on Sexual Harassment:

East Central College is committed to maintaining an environment that is free of discrimination on the basis of sex within its educational programs and activities. The College cannot and will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of any individual or group based upon race, sex, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, genetic information, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran's status, or any factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law. The prohibition on sex discrimination also prohibits Sexual Harassment, as defined in this policy.

The Nondiscrimination Policy applies to registered or enrolled students, College employees, contractors, vendors, visitors, guests, or other third parties.

This commitment to diversity is also reflected in the current SOAR to 2024 strategic plan, which identifies diversity as a key value and includes an "Employees" strategy, which states the college is striving to "Create a culture of collaboration and learning to attract, retain, and develop diverse and talented employees."

 Fall 2020 Demographics (source: ECC Institutional Research)

Race/Ethnicity*	Student	% Student	Faculty & Staff	% Faculty & Staff
American Indian/Alaska Native	12	0.5%	2	0.6%
Asian	26	1.0%	2	0.6%
Black or African American	21	0.8%	1	0.3%
Hispanic	76	2.9%	1	0.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6	0.2%	0	0.0%
Nonresident Alien	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	23	0.9%	26	7.6%
Two or more races	79	3.0%	2	0.6%
White	2350	90.6%	307	90.0%
Total	2593	100.0%	341	100.0%
*All full time and part time students included as of census.				
**All full time and part time staff included.				
***Dual credit students and instructors included.				

As the table indicates, ECC's employees are representative of the student population. As a college located in rural Missouri which values diversity, ECC strives to prepare its students for a broader range of diversity than many have previously experienced. This includes fostering a culture which respects diversity in many forms. Please see 1.C.3 for additional information.

3.C.2. 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, assessment of student learning; and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.

ECC currently has a student to faculty ratio of 16:1 (NCCBP 2021, p. 27), providing faculty with opportunities to focus on students and teaching. The retirement rate of 2.56% and departures rate of

8.72% (p. 30) represent a high degree of continuity. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (p. 23) includes multiple provisions ensuring faculty have ample time to teach and engage in other significant responsibilities. These include reassigned time for faculty who chair significant academic committees (Instructional Assessment, Portfolio and Credentialing, Academic Council, Curriculum Council) (p.30, #2) and those who serve as NEA President and President of the Faculty Association (p. 27). Faculty who serve as department chairs receive extended contract time as well as credit load reassigned time (p. 25-26).

Many faculty serve on dual committees to ensure continuity between these aspects of oversight. For example, the chair of the Instructional Assessment Committee serves on the Curriculum council. In addition, committees submit reports to the Faculty Association, so there is communication between and among faculty to make more efficient use of faculty time and reduce duplication efforts.

The Portfolio and Credentialing committee co-chairs receive reassigned time to provide ample time for work on mentoring new faculty and coordinating the establishment and review of the credentialing process.

3.C.3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.

Board Policy 5.9.1 (p.188) outlines procedures for Faculty Qualifications and Classifications. All faculty, including full-time, adjunct, and dual credit, are credentialed under the same process. This credentialing process was reviewed and strengthened in 2019-20. The Office of Academic Affairs reviews credentials of all faculty annually. Faculty content area experts have a leading role in developing job qualifications for open positions and take important roles in the hiring process for instructors. In areas that maintain external accreditation, appropriately qualified instructors are required. The Faculty Portfolio and Credentialing Committee reviews processes of credentialing, portfolio development, and faculty evaluations annually.

3.C.4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Board Policy 5.21.2 (p.221) outlines the process for faculty evaluation. These evaluations are maintained as part of employee records by the HR department. A schedule of faculty evaluations is maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs, with evaluations conducted by division deans. Faculty evaluations provide opportunity for faculty to get feedback in many areas, including classroom observation (p.3-4) and the performance of duties evaluation (p.5-9) tool. Faculty complete a professional development plan annually to review strengths and address opportunities for professional growth. In order to advance in rank, faculty submit recent evaluations as part of their portfolios. Department chairs and Program Coordinators are responsible for evaluating adjunct faculty.

3.C.5 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.

ECC has several mechanisms to support instructors' professional development:

- The college has consistently budgeted $25,000 annually for faculty professional development. These funds are administered by the Faculty Professional Development Committee. Faculty apply for these funds, typically for content-specific professional development.

- Faculty are able to accrue funds in individual faculty development accounts. They may use these funds for professional organization dues, journal subscriptions, and other professional development purposes.
- Faculty may apply for sabbatical leave as stated in Collective Bargaining Agreement (p.31)
- Any programmatic professional development required to maintain accreditation is generally supported through departmental budgets.
- ECC maintains an institutional membership in the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development. In 2020 and 2021, the college registered for the virtual conference on at the institutional level.
- The Office of Online Learning & Educational Technology provides training and support for instructors in the use of Canvas, as well as remote course delivery during the pandemic. The college also provides workshop offerings through the Online Learning Consortium.
- Professional development offerings for faculty are facilitated by the Faculty Professional Development Committee.
- New Faculty Workshop is a monthly seminar with new faculty and the VP of Academic Affairs. Regular topics are covered, as well as general support for new faculty.
- The Instructional Assessment Committee (IAC) provides regular development sessions during both fall and spring in-service and occasionally on additional days during the term.
- Several Committee chairs are invited to present at the New Faculty Workshops each year.
- The Learning Center and Library provide a wide range of supports to enable instructors to provide high quality instruction.
- The faculty evaluation includes a classroom observation (p.3-4) regarding classroom engagement and teaching strategies. In addition, faculty complete a faculty development plan based on evaluation results, self-assessment, student evaluations, retention results, and other indicators.

3.C.6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

"Faculty members are required to maintain a minimum of seven (7) office hours per week, arranged according to their teaching assignments and students' academic benefit. Office hours are dedicated to student interaction, course preparation, or other campus-related responsibilities." Collective Bargaining Agreement (p.20)

The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory indicates "Faculty are usually available to students outside of class (during office hours, by phone, or by email)." (p.2) This is a consistent strength for ECC over the past five survey administrations.

3.C.7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and cocurricular activities are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

ECC maintains current job descriptions for all positions, which include required education, work experience, certifications, and essential skills. The job descriptions are reviewed by area managers to ensure the correct qualifications are highlighted. This is an integral part of hiring appropriately qualified candidates. The Human Resources department provides leadership for job searches, as well as differentiated job postings targeted to attract the most qualified candidates. HR also provides mandated employee training on topics such as Title IX and FERPA. In addition, the college continuously supports professional development and training for staff on an ongoing basis with financial resources and reassigned time. Included here is a sampling of organizational memberships

and professional development resources attended by student support staff.

In addition, full-time employees are eligible for the tuition waiver (Policy 5.27, p.229) for East Central College courses. This benefit is also available to part-time employees and adjunct instructors. Also, full-time employees may receive certain waivers of tuition and/or fees for classes taken at Central Methodist University on the ECC campus in Union, Missouri. Tuition reimbursement benefits are also available to full-time employees (Policy 5.27.4, p. 231).

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for 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 offerings 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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

3.D.1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

As a community college serving students with diverse needs, ECC has systems in place to address the emotional, physical, and social well-being of its student population. The college supports student needs through their preferred modality via a range of campus-wide services at all locations.

The Learning Center provides many support services to specialized populations of students both virtually and in-person, including

- An Adaptive Technology Lab designed to help students with disabilities. The lab and Access Services assist students with alternate format services for textbooks, assistive technology, and specialized tutoring
- Synchronous tutoring via Zoom and in-person in all courses
- Chat services.
- The Online Writing Center for asynchronous writing tutoring
- Learning Center specialists directly linked to online courses as embedded tutors, so students can access academic support within their Canvas courses
- Net Tutor for synchronous and asynchronous tutoring after hours
- Peer tutoring and mentoring
- Focused student success coaching by population, such as students on academic probation, veterans, and student athletes

The Student Development Office provides support services both virtually and in-person:

- Financial Aid coordinates veterans' services, including advising and referrals
- The Advising and Counseling department provides personal/academic/career counseling through licensed professional counselors. The Falcon Career Center staff focus on student social well-being and career advising.
- Access/Disability Services provide supports, such as accommodations and counseling, for students with disabilities.

- The Campus Life and Leadership department manages the student food pantry and facilitates resources and activities for a diverse population of students.

The Rolla Student Success Center provides tutoring services, academic workshops, course reserves, and success coaching on-ground and online for students in the Rolla area.

The Student Services Center and the Rolla site provide in-person and remote services. In addition to advising, counseling, financial aid, and testing services, students have access to support services such as a food pantry, adaptive technology, and hot spot or laptop checkout for full access to technology resources.

The ECC Foundation provides scholarship opportunities and emergency financial and food assistance for students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties.

Library services support students virtually and in-person across all locations. The Donald R. and Barbara D. Means Library is located at the main campus in Union, but also provides services to both Rolla locations. Rolla North staff check out laptops and hotspots, and Rolla Main staff process MOBIUS check-outs, and student self check out of 500 print titles housed on site.

- Physical resources are sent to Union and Rolla in 3-5 days from any of the 78 MOBIUS consortium libraries.
- Online database resources are available to any student on or off campus.
- Chat and text reference services are available (almost) 24/7. Students may also e-mail or call Library staff.
- Library Guides (Libguides) concerning specific services, courses, and events are accessible to students .
- Short how-to ECC Library tutorials are available on YouTube.
- Laptops, hotspots, webcams, and graphing calculators are available for student check out.
- An Instructor's Course Reserve collection includes supplemental resources or short term check outs.
- Library Research Instruction for the classroom is provided upon instructor's request.

One way ECC measures the effectiveness of support services to students is through the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, last administered in fall 2021. The survey utilizes a two-pronged approach, asking students not only how satisfied they are with a service, but also how important that service is to them. Overall results (p. 4) indicate ECC is above the national mean in every institutional area, with continued increases in scores over the past three survey administrations.

3.D.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.

East Central is an open access institution; therefore, the student body is diverse in terms of preparation. Falcon Seminar, the introductory course for first-time students, was redesigned in fall 2020 to allow for a maximum enrollment of 15 students per section, as well as homogenous grouping of students by academic pathway. This connection of Falcon Seminars to pathways allows students to gain a sense of belonging and meet students with similar interests, which can be challenging in a commuter college context. The smaller class size allows for greater attention to mentoring new students.

To maximize student success, staff evaluate student transcripts and standardized test scores for course placement. Spring 2020 revisions to placement practices demonstrate East Central College's commitment to continuous improvement of its process for ensuring that entering students are directed to courses and programs for which they are adequately prepared. These placement guidelines will continue to be reviewed each semester, particularly given the impact of the pandemic on students' high school learning.

When staff identify incoming students with less than college-ready placement in reading, writing, or math readiness, they highly encourage these students' voluntary enrollment in a "bridge" course. Bridge courses are free, non-credit, arranged courses that provide additional preparation for college-level classes and prepare students to retake placement tests in hopes they will increase their placement scores. Ideally, students who complete these courses will move more quickly into college-level classes and use less financial aid. The following are bridge courses that are regularly offered at the Rolla and Union locations: ENG*030 (Reading I), ENG*040 (Reading II), ENG*050 (Writing), MTH*030 (Pre-Algebra), MTH*040 (Intro to Algebra/Fundamental Concepts), MTH*050 (Intermediate Algebra).

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.

Advising is differentiated in multiple ways, based on program offerings and student needs. All degree and transfer areas have academic program maps, as developed through Guided Pathways work, that are used by academic advisors to guide students; all program maps are updated each catalog year by faculty/chairs/deans as changes occur within their programs. These program maps are also used by ECC's Early College Advisor to assist high school students and counselors. Advisors use academic program maps to help students with educational planning and transfer information. The maps include milestone notes, which allow advisors to engage in conversation about courses in which success is essential for the student to progress as planned in their program of study.

As students apply for admission to ECC, they are asked to designate where and how they primarily intend to take classes. This includes online students who are asked to select a primary campu8s or site for support services. Services are offered in-person and online. Within the student services division in Union, advisors specialize in several degree pathways, including Education, Liberal Studies, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and CTE. Students enrolled in Allied Health and STEM pathways are assigned advisors based in these program areas. The approach to advising Rolla students is more holistic, given the smaller population.

To supplement advising, the College adopted Aviso, a student success and retention platform, that functions primarily as an early alert system. Collaboration and communication between advisors, faculty, and success coaches about student progress is enhanced through this system.

Overall, data from the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (p.15) indicate Academic Advising Effectiveness is greater than the national cohort and has increased since 2018.

3.D.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, and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

As documented in 5.B, the College routinely identified and allocates resources to maintain

infrastructure necessary to support effective teaching and learning. These needs are assessed during comprehensive review processes, annual budget planning, facilities usage, and other assessment measures.

Nearly all classroom spaces include an instructor computer station, integrated projector, document camera, and a DVD/Blu-Ray player. An Educational Technology workgroup has developed a [comprehensive plan](#) for classroom and meeting space upgrades utilizing Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). These upgrades include audiovisual equipment that allow improved synchronous classroom meetings between locations and recording possibilities. The Learning Management System (Canvas) has been enhanced with 24-hour technical support.

Investment in technology strengthens the technological infrastructure and provides an up-to-date system to meet increased technology needs and demands. The College utilized a significant amount of its HEERF funds to invest in the [technology infrastructure](#), specifically in fiber optic cabling between the ECC Union campus buildings, as well as replacing the switches and servers. The comprehensive upgrade in the Wi-Fi technology allows a user to access Wi-Fi at any place on the ECC Union campus, including parking lots, walking trail, athletic facilities, and inside or outside a campus building. The ECC Rolla North and Main sites also received WiFi replacements to provide internet access in any space at either location.

The college also utilizes grant funds to enhance specialized CTE equipment and spaces such as [clinical simulation equipment](#), [water jet cutter](#), and welding camera.

The [physical spaces](#) designed to support clinical practice, the arts, research, etc., are best viewed remotely through the College's [virtual campus tour](#). Specifics include:

- Culinary Arts: ECTC
- Welding, Precision Machinery, HVAC: BIC
- Theatre, Music, Art Gallery and Studios: Hansen Hall
- Science Laboratories: Health Science and Rolla Main
- Library/Learning Center: Buescher Hall, Rolla Main
- Allied Health Clinics: Health Science and Rolla North

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

The College demonstrates its commitment to high-quality education through a variety of ongoing processes. The College maintains sufficient faculty and staff members to ensure the quality of operations. Faculty and students engage in scholarship and creative work; faculty are involved in institutional service on committees, external boards, and as advisors to student clubs and organizations. Faculty and staff are qualified with appropriate credentials and engage in professional development.

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 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

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

East Central College has developed a consistent and comprehensive review process for its academic programs, disciplines, and administrative and student support departments with a process called Comprehensive Review (see also Criterion 5.C.2). ECC maintains an ongoing schedule (columns 1-3) of regular academic discipline/program/departmental reviews across the Arts and Sciences, Health Science, and Career and Technical Education divisions. Reviews are scheduled on a five-year rotation, except where programs are required to be assessed more often for specific accreditors.

ECC's Comprehensive Review is a rigorous process that was improved by a subcommittee of the Instructional Assessment Committee during 2020-21. Using a specialized Student Learning and Development Comprehensive Review template, instructional programs and disciplines are required to review all aspects of its program, including goals, outcomes, and enrollment. The review process is supported by an annual introductory workshop and an assigned liaison from the Instructional Assessment Committee. The process is collaborative and conducted by a core review team that assembles information about departmental operations, identifies learning goals and support outcomes

with appropriate data, examines student success and retention data provided by Institutional Research, outlines information from co-curricular offerings as appropriate, and completes a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis. Once complete, the work of the review team is sent to a larger review committee comprised of others in the department, and colleagues from other departments, students, and at least one colleague from another college. This review committee convenes at a concluding meeting and provides input for the department. Ultimately, the department finalizes an action plan, which provides guidance throughout the next cycle.

Deans, directors, and the VP of Academic Affairs review final documents and departmental recommendations during academic leadership meetings (p. 3). When necessary, the President's Cabinet also reviews these items, for example, when recommendations have strategic planning or budgetary implications.

In order to meet internal assessment and improvement needs and address external accreditation and/or approval requirements, all accredited programs complete their accreditation process and a modified version of the ECC CR process.

Examples of ECC's Comprehensive Reviews from each Academic Division and actions taken from review findings are below. An analysis of all reviews from the past two years is located in the 2019-20 through 2020-21 Assessment Report.

Arts and Science Division

Philosophy/Religion: These courses (Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics, World Religion, Old Testament 1 & 2, and New Testament) are taught by one full-time faculty member in online and on-ground modalities at both locations. The department offers Ethics every semester, with other courses offered in rotation. For the period covered by this review, the department did not offer dual credit courses. In addition to Institutional Research student success data, the department assessed course level learner outcomes and linked these learner outcomes to ISLOs. The committee convened on June 16, 2021.

Recommendations/Action Items p. 51-53: The review committee recommended changes to the question type for the end-of-course assessments and combining two Old Testament courses into one for recognition in the CORE 42 transferability system. It also suggested promoting awareness around the campus, sites, and local high schools concerning the applicability of philosophy courses for diverse career paths. The committee also identified several action items to increase course retention as well as improve student performance on signature assignments, communication with students, and the "success tracking" system. These action items are in process. For example, the curriculum work to combine courses for transferability is complete and waiting for CORE 42 Missouri Department of Higher Education approval.

Literature and Journalism/Mass Media: This combined review addressed literature courses in the English department and Mass Media/Communications courses, which are taught by English and communications faculty. The team completed the self-study through the SOAR analysis in early spring 2021 and convened with the full committee in May 2021.

Recommendations/Action Items (p. 24-25): The committee suggested continuing and expanding departmental cocurricular opportunities, strengthening departmental advising efforts, tracking transfer students, and developing more transfer agreements, particularly for Mass Media courses. The department created a list of short-term action items to address over the next two academic semesters,

which include reviewing and updating all course descriptions and creating common outcomes; reserving and developing a new leadership structure for advising/overseeing student publications; creating a discipline advisory committee; and formalizing a means to track and celebrate discipline graduates. One example of current progress is the work done with the Faculty/Student Mentoring group. This group has piloted the efforts with a faculty member and students in the humanities pathway. Also, faculty are finalizing revisions and updates to course descriptions and reviewing and changing pre-/co-requisites to ensure that select courses are accessible.

Health Science Division

Medical Assisting (MAERB): This review covered the full Medical Assistant Program curriculum, which prepares graduates to pass the CMA exam and work as CMA professionals. This internal review coincided with program approval from CAAHEP in spring 2020.

Recommendations/Action Items: The committee suggested identifying additional externships within the college's geographic region, increasing established exit exam scores, and increasing MDA certification exam pass rates. The plan includes specific steps and timelines to achieve these goals. Based on the recommendations of the review committee, the department has implemented several actions. For example, students are required to complete weekly practice quizzes and three practice exit exams. Remediation is embedded within their Evolve/HESI course, and the quizzes/exams are part of the MDA 222 capstone course and grade. Also, in January 2021, the MDA program developed a partnership agreement with ESSE Health to establish an additional externship site in the Union service region.

Radiological Technology (JCERT): The Radiological Technology review was conducted when the program existed as a partner program with Rolla Technical Institute and coincided with JCERT recertification, awarded in June 2021.

Recommendations/Action Items (p. 12): The program meets or exceeds JCERT's requirements, so no major recommendations were made for changes to structure or leadership. The advisory committee intends to create a mission statement that aligns with ECC's mission and strategic plan.

Career and Technical Education

Industrial Engineering Technology (ATMAE): This review was conducted in spring, 2020. The program relies on advisory board support and input. The team indicates the board has a history of active provision of industry guidance. In addition, board members, in conjunction with East Central College's Center for Workforce Development group, are demonstratively involved with apprenticeship development and the IET program. The review process provided the team with time to review current IET program outcomes and begin to identify sources for student learning assessment data and include industry stakeholders reviewing the assessment outcome results.

Recommendations/Action Items (p 83): A comprehensive departmental final that has questions or competencies (depending on type of assessment in the course) linked to course outcomes will be given in each first semester course. The data will be used to revise course materials if deficits are observed in students with respect to attaining course competencies. Courses to be reviewed as part of this plan are Intro to Manufacturing, Industrial Electricity, Process and Control Systems, and Maintenance Practices. The first course in which the final was revised to better link test questions to outcomes was Industrial Electricity in fall 2021. The remaining courses are slated to have the revised final exams completed for fall 2022.

Accounting and Business: As part of the review process conducted in fall 2020, both Business and Accounting completed detailed curriculum maps outlining every course, including each one's specific goals, assessment measures, and the interrelationship to other courses. Also, maps clearly defined the purpose of each course within the strategic layout of the program and highlighted the need for changes to the program and individual courses.

Recommendations/Action Items: These items for Business (p. 27-28) parallel those made for Accounting (p. 32) as the two programs are closely aligned in terms of organization and structure. Faculty recommended hiring a program coordinator, strengthening communication, improving student success outcomes, and collaborating with Advising to ensure students are enrolling at the proper time. For some courses, there is also a need stipulate the requirement in the prerequisites section of the course, which would require approval by Curriculum and Academic Councils. One of these recommendations is underway in the approval process. The faculty presented this curriculum change for approval of a new hybrid course delivery method to the Curriculum Council in February, 2022. It is expected to be approved by Academic Council by the end of April, 2022.

Academic Support

Learning Center: This comprehensive review addresses all Learning Center services, which comprise a wide array of academic student support and address much of HLC Criteria 3.B. and 4.C.3. The Learning Center provides workshops, such as Summer Bridge and test preparation, and tutoring services in online and on-ground modalities. TLC staff are also highly involved in the work of institutional committees that support the college's mission. The committee concluded its very thorough review in Summer 2021.

Recommendations/Action Items (p. 40-44): The committee suggested updating the Learning Center mission statement, creating new rubrics for assessing student learning, incorporating specialists to be more engaged in a success coach model, and better evaluation of student progress throughout the semester to provide more timely interventions and increase retention and persistence rates. The Learning Center also plans to assess its current cocurricular activities to gather more response data on effectiveness and align cocurricular activities to ISLOs. They will also update the TLC Department Manual for relevancy and effectiveness based on CR recommendations. Based on the Review Team and Review Committee recommendations, The Learning Center has developed collaboration opportunities with our High School and Dual Credit partners, as well as our Admissions Team and Career Navigator. The department is currently creating Insider's Guides for each of our Guided Pathways. These Guides outline courses students need to take in high school to prepare for their majors, along with relevant salary data and career opportunities. Professional Development opportunities include recent attendance and participation in the Dream 2022 Conference hosted by Achieving the Dream. This was paid for with departmental funds and attended by Executive Director, Retention Coordinator, and Learning Center Specialist. Assessing the effectiveness of Bridges for fall enrollment led to the implementation of the winter bridge pilot for spring enrollment.

Student Life and Leadership: This review examined activities, events, and support provided by this one-person department, including cocurricular activities, online resources for students, including resources for underrepresented students, and student orientation. The cocurricular activities offered this year have been mapped to the ISLOs (p.12), with each ISLO assessed at least once (p.16).

Recommendations/Action Items(p.31-34): The SOAR Analysis and Committee recommendations focused on increasing relevance and interaction in the student orientation, utilizing a student worker,

and establishing clear goals for the department.

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.

ECC policy and procedures for transfer credit are found in Board Policy 2.7 (p.45-47). The ECC Registrar's Office applies consistent and rigorous standards in certifying the authenticity of academic transcripts to be evaluated for credit. All transcripts are reviewed upon receipt to determine their status (official/unofficial), which is recorded before they are routed to the Registrar for credit evaluation. The Registrar is responsible for evaluating courses from Missouri public institutions, regionally accredited institutions, and those with articulation agreements with ECC. The Office regularly transcripts these Missouri courses through published course equivalencies. For other institutions, the Registrar's Office distributes transcripts, catalog descriptions, course syllabi, faculty credentials, etc. to the appropriate program/academic department official for recommendation to the Chief Academic Officer. Appropriate program/academic departmental officials review credit for experiential learning. ACE credit recommendations guide review of military credit. These procedures are outlined in an internal manual.

Students finishing the High School Completion program by successfully passing all five subtests of the HiSET exam earn their High School Equivalency Diploma issued by the State of Missouri, and ECC's Registrar ensures compliance. All courses are aligned with state-mandated College and Career Readiness Standards, 21st Century Employability Skills, and English Language Proficiency Standards, as appropriate.

3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

The Registrar's Office follows best practices established by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers in their Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit to ensure the quality of credit ECC accepts in transfer. The joint statement establishes that an institution's accreditation indicates a certain level of academic rigor; the Joint Statement further stipulates that comparability is a major consideration. ECC's Transfer Credit Policy (Board policy 2.7, p. 45-47) establishes both points as key to the College accepting transfer credit. Courses considered for transfer must have a comparable course offered at ECC.

The College uses a third-party evaluator, World Education Services (WES) for international transcripts, which ensures the quality of credit accepted in transfer. WES is well-known, not for profit, and serves as a gold standard for international transcript evaluation since 1974.

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.

The College is committed to having high standards for student learning and rigorous coursework in all course offerings. As ECC implements Guided Pathways, one of the main goals or pillars is to "help students choose/enter a pathway" for a career or a path of study. In the spirit of transparency, ECC has worked diligently to show that course sequencing shows all prerequisites for classes clearly on its website and on planning pages for students. This is one way expectations are visible early on

during a student's inquiry.

While Academic Council exercises authority over any changes to course descriptions or outcomes, including prerequisites (see Academic Council bylaws and example meeting minutes), faculty are directly responsible for establishing and maintaining course rigor through use of departmental course learning outcomes and Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) throughout all sections of a course. Department Chairs work directly with Early College staff and dual credit faculty to align course outcomes through common textbook requirements, signature assignments, and assessment of student learning. Department chairs and faculty meet with dual credit faculty in an annual orientation session during the Adjunct Orientation each August to review course rigor and consistency standards. The College maintains an adjunct faculty handbook that is applicable to dual credit instructors, as well as a procedure for approving use of an alternate textbook. Dual credit course core learning outcomes are consistent with courses offered at ECC. Adjunct faculty are provided support from department chairs or the Career and Technical Education Dean, as well as the Director of Admissions and Early College. In addition, rigor and expectations for student learning are assessed through the Comprehensive Review process, which is supported by the parallel Annual Assessment Report and Plan process.

Authority for academic requirements resides with the Academic Council, with recommendations from the Curriculum Committee. These committees meet monthly throughout the academic year and involve faculty, professional staff, and administration according to each committee's operational procedures. The Curriculum Council meets to consider changes to curriculum requested by faculty. This chart communicates the process flow between the two committees. In this example, the Accounting and Business programs presented changes and updates to courses and degree pathways. Following thorough examination by the Curriculum Council, changes are presented to Academic Council for approval. The Curriculum Council recently reviewed and updated all the forms and processes for curriculum request to assure they are current, reflect changes in the institutional assessment process, and align with new MDHEWD requirements.

A systematic and well-defined process for credentialing all faculty is reviewed annually by the Portfolio and Credentialing faculty committee. All faculty (full-time, adjunct, dual credit) are credentialed through the same process. The Office of Academic Affairs maintains a roster of current faculty with credentials (select Faculty, Adjunct Faculty).

The College maintains access to learning resources for all students, including dual credit students, through the Learning Center, NetTutor, and the Donald R. and Barbara D. Means Library, regardless of the modality of instruction. The Learning Center is open for walk-in and online tutoring, as well as makeup and online testing, including testing with approved accommodations. Overall, the online tutoring service covers 31 subject areas offered by the College. Students have direct access to NetTutor through the Learning Center Website and Canvas, our campus LMS. The staff in The Learning Center will also make visits to area high school and off-site locations to assist students. Library staff provide students with online access to library research guides, which give students discipline-specific resources to complete projects and research papers. The library staff also offer customized instructional sessions for classes that incorporate research projects; these include tutorials designed to help students focus their research, navigate the College's database system, and cite source material properly. The library's database and eBook usage have substantially increased over the past three years, and students' use of "virtual reference" chats has remained consistent.

In preparation for the multi-location site visit conducted by HLC on May 3, 2021, the college gathered evidence across all its locations, which included course success comparisons (p. 107). The

HLC Response indicated evidence of high standards, consistency, and rigor for off-campus locations and noted "faculty teaching at off-campus locations are held to the same standards as full-time faculty, including credentialing. The college utilizes master syllabi for courses, which are available to teaching faculty through Canvas. Academic Leadership evaluates faculty on a regular cycle, and the evaluation includes the creation and assessment of professional goals. All faculty complete an orientation program to learn College procedures and expectations" (p. 4). Furthermore, the site reviewer noted "many student support services provided on campus are also provided face-to-face at all off-campus locations, some only after a student requests the service. These services include advising and registration, test proctoring, orientation sessions, financial aid assistance, and career services. ECC offers other services remotely through the ECC web portal, email, telephone, and/or virtual meetings with staff. These services offered remotely include library access, webmail, the learning management system, tutoring services, learning resources, and student financial and academic records. The remote student complaint process and other processes for addressing student concerns follow the same procedures as on-campus" (p. 5). The findings show the pattern of ECC's operations at its additional sites appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary (p. 7).

5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

ECC maintains required accreditations for several programs. The College values the importance of adding value to degrees with optional accreditation for certain programs. While not required, these accreditations open doors for students when transferring and applying for scholarships at selective four-year universities. ECC maintains program accreditation as follows:

American Culinary Federation (ACF)	Accredited through 2026	Optional
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)	Accredited through spring 2023, site visit 2024	Required
Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE)	Accredited April 2020	Optional
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)	Umbrella accreditation for multiple Allied Health Programs: March 2020	Required
Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Health Information Management Education (CAHIIM)	Accredited 2021	Required
Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP)	Accredited spring 2021	Required

Joint Review Commission for Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT)	Accredited in Summer 2021	Required
Accrediting Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)	Accredited Summer 2020	Required
Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB)	Accredited with next cycle 2023	Required
Missouri State Board of Nursing (MSBN)	Full Approval with next cycle 2023	Required
National Accrediting Agency for Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)	Accredited with next cycle 2023	Required
National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)	Review underway with site visit scheduled for spring 2022	Optional: Accredited since 2015
National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)	Accredited through 2031	Optional: Accredited since 2014
National Institution for Metalworking Skills (NIMS)	Accredited through 2024	Optional
Missouri Department of Secondary Education	Educator Preparation Approval	Required by the State of Missouri
Missouri Bureau of Emergency Medical Services EMS (BEMS)	Full Approval with next cycle 2024	Required by the State of Missouri

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.

The mission and strategic plan define the College's aspirations for graduate success in the following ways:

- ECC engages students in learning experiences that lead to enhanced employability and successful transfer to other educational institutions.

- ECC partners with the communities we serve to support economic vitality and stability through

the development of a skilled local workforce.

ECC utilizes this [Student Outcomes webpage](#) to report student achievement. The overall graduation rate has increased by 18% over the past five years, with the inverse measure of transfer to four-year institutions decreasing by 8%. The Job Placement Rate for 180-day career and tech program completers is currently at 92%. Combined licensure and pass rates for Allied Health programs are currently above 93%. Data from the University of Missouri Columbia indicate [ECC transfer students record higher GPAs](#) when compared to other community colleges.

Advisory Boards for [Career & Technical Education](#) and [Health Science programs](#) provide valuable input to the college regarding graduate success and impact on local economic vitality. The College's partnerships with communities served is essential to measure graduate success. For example, the [Earn While You Learn](#) program was created, in part, by local demand for quality registered nurse graduates. The program started with one area hospital and now includes all major hospitals in the service area. The welding program has created [partnerships with local businesses,](#) which include scholarship and apprentice opportunities due to the demand for our quality graduates.

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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

4B Embedded Monitoring Report

An **embedded monitoring report** is submitted as evidence of the College's progress related to assessment of student learning.

1. **The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.**

ECC has multiple processes for assessment of student learning and achievement. These processes are coordinated by the Instructional Assessment Committee (IAC). The Committee is comprised mainly of faculty, with representatives from each academic division and from departments that contribute to student learning and success. The committee has defined bylaws, procedures and responsibilities. It is organized into five subcommittees, (full description in 4.B.3), each with clearly defined responsibilities.

The IAC reviews subcommittee activity feedback, such as the 2020 Assessment Training Participant Survey Responses and SP21 Assessment In-Service Session Feedback, and makes recommendations for improvements (p.2). The committee also conducts an end-of-year review (p.1-2) using the Office of Academic Affairs' committee assessment process. This review shapes plans for the next academic year.

The majority of the processes outlined below have been improved and made sustainable as a direct result of the college's committed involvement in the HLC Assessment Academy.

Process 1: Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)

Beginning in fall 2018, faculty and staff, with guidance from the HLC Assessment Academy, began implementation of an improved fully integrated, faculty-led, systematic approach to assessment of student learning and learning goal achievement. The goal was to revise the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) and develop a sustainable assessment process. Faculty and staff who attended the initial meeting of the Academy in fall 2018 established a three-year assessment improvement plan (known as the Student Outcomes Assessment Revitalization or SOAR Project), which was approved by the Instructional Assessment Committee (IAC). The SOAR Project has

provided training opportunities for faculty in developing outcomes, identifying student learning evidence for assessment, and broadly thinking about how classroom teaching intersects with other courses, disciplines, and the full curriculum. Since then, the IAC has led faculty and staff members in collaborative activities to develop four ISLO statements and their associated performance indicators, refine rubrics to collect data, and pilot assessment processes to test the system. Faculty have also mapped curriculum to the ISLOs and program-level learning outcomes, as applicable, and mapped cocurricular learning opportunities. Faculty are collecting data on all four ISLOs and analyzing and acting upon the Critical Thinking ISLO in accordance with the ISLO assessment rotation. During this same period, the IAC rolled out new processes for comprehensive review and annual assessment reporting and planning. These activities strengthened faculty engagement in and ownership of assessment for student learning.

Utilizing the college mission, vision, values, and student experience statement, goals from the SOAR Project have been accomplished according to the plan and timeline:

- Design concise, measurable, and relevant Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) and common performance indicators for each institutional outcome.
- Present ISLOs to the Academic Council for adoption.
- Map ISLOs across all three academic divisions.
- Map ISLOs to cocurricular learning opportunities.
- Map ISLOs to Missouri CORE 42 competencies (General Education Model).
- Pilot assessment of learning outcome rubrics and data collection process (SU 2019 with the Communication ISLO; SU 2020 with all ISLOs)
- Define a process for assessing ISLOs that is flexible and sustainable.
- Schedule ISLO Assessment on a five-year rotation: one ISLO per year with a fifth year for overall evaluation (see far left column)
- Provide regular and ongoing assessment training and support for faculty and staff, including in-service time slots, New Faculty Workshop, and Adjunct Orientation
- Provide resources and support for assessment activities and management (through reassigned time for IAC Chair and HLC Academy Lead), as well as additional financial and resource support for our Assessment Showcase and development activities.

The SOAR Team Lead provides status updates to the HLC Assessment Academy on the SOAR Project. Those reports and supporting documents are housed in Falcon Nest for all campus to view.

Two pilots reviewed the efficacy of the ISLO rubrics and tested the data collection process. The pilots were not only intended to assess student learning; the Summer 2020 pilot provided rubric scores and samples of student learning evidence for future training use.

Summer 2019: A pilot of the Communication Rubric led to changes in performance indicators and rubric descriptors. A review of the ISLO assessment data collection process via LMS was not done because of the shift from Moodle to Canvas in summer 2020.

Summer 2020: This pilot tested rubrics for performance indicators related to all four outcomes. The goal was to test applicability of the rubrics and solicit revisions to descriptors. Participants also tested use of Canvas to score student evidence and collect assessment results.

The two pilots led to the following actions:

- revising some performance indicators and rubric descriptors,

- determining steps in the full assessment process,
- identifying signature assignments in many courses,
- setting preliminary standards and targets for Critical Thinking, and
- establishing an ISLO assessment rotation.

Fall 2020: A [presentation to the Board of Trustees](#) provided an update on assessment processes including the ISLOs and development process.

ISLO Assessment Process and Rotation

Spring 2021: The revitalized ISLO Assessment process officially began in January 2021 with a [SP21 In-Service ISLO Assessment Kickoff](#). [ISLO draft rubrics were approved and finalized.](#) ISLOs went through a focused review and analysis on a five-year ISLO assessment cycle:

- Year A: Critical Thinking (FA 21)
- Year B: Social Responsibility (FA 22)
- Year C: Communication (FA 23)
- Year D: Personal and Professional Development (FA 24)
- Year E: Overall ISLO assessment and review (FA 25)

Fall 2021: ISLO assessment data were collected through Canvas every time a course is taught. The outcome was monitored and reviewed departmentally in the Annual Assessment Report and Plan and the Comprehensive Review process, and institutionally in a Colloquy addressing the ISLO in rotation. The [first ISLO Colloquy was in fall 2021 with the focus of Critical Thinking](#). Mid-point checks for actions/recommendations arising from ISLO assessment will be monitored and reported in Annual Assessment Reports.

During Colloquies, which will be conducted annually, faculty and staff who teach courses or sponsor cocurricular learning opportunities related to the outcome

- review collected ISLO data;
- analyze sample direct and indirect evidence of student learning;
- consider course/program/pathway/institutional outcomes alignment;
- discuss results and implications;
- recommend modifications to the outcome, performance indicators, rubric, standards, or targets; and
- set assessment goals for upcoming cycle.

Faculty are provided training on applying the rubrics to enhance consistency and reliability, and on utilizing Canvas for assessing evidence and reporting scores.

Process 2: Comprehensive Review (Also described in 4.A)

ECC utilizes a [five-year schedule](#) of department/discipline assessment across the institution. The Comprehensive Review subcommittee of the IAC develops and coordinates the process for academic programs/departments. The term Comprehensive Review, replacing Program Review, was adopted for academic and institutional reviews to better reflect the structure in divisions across the college. The new term, creation of two templates, and provision of a liaison for reviews are concrete steps for improving this process.

Parallel Comprehensive Review Templates and Guides are utilized for Student Learning and

Development and Administration/Support for a consistent cross-divisional, cross-departmental review process. Student Learning and Development Process Guidance and Administrative and Support Process Guidance resources support the comprehensive review process. Template and process revisions and Covid-19-related interruptions delayed some reviews.

The Comprehensive Review process is collaborative, conducted by a core departmental review team. The review team assembles information about departmental operations; identifies learning outcomes and assessment data, support outcomes, and assessment methods; examines student success and retention data from Institutional Research; outlines relevant information from cocurricular offerings, and creates a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis.

Once complete, the review team sends its work to a review committee made up of others in the department, colleagues from other departments, students, and at least one colleague from another college. This review committee convenes at a concluding meeting and provides feedback. Then, the department develops and finalizes an action plan for the following cycle. Academic leadership reviews final documents and departmental recommendations. The President's Cabinet also reviews recommendations that have strategic planning or budgetary implications.

The Comprehensive Review process is well supported. During the initial Comprehensive Review Kickoff, Instructional Assessment Committee (IAC) liaisons introduce the process, and review teams receive access to Comprehensive Review Resources concerning best practices, developing outcomes, and conducting a SOAR analysis.

Comprehensive Review Liaisons support review teams throughout the process and assist during the campus visit. For academic areas, liaisons are faculty members of the Instructional Assessment Committee trained in the Comprehensive Review process. Liaisons are assigned during the IAC meeting prior to the Comprehensive Review Informational session for reviews the following academic year. The Vice President of Academic Affairs serves as the liaison for Instructional and Student Development areas. The Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness is the liaison for administrative and support areas.

Liaisons provide support and feedback throughout the comprehensive review process, which ranges from six months to a year. Their primary responsibilities are to

- review process requirements and timeline with team lead;
- help align ECC comprehensive review requirements with concurrent external accreditation process, if applicable;
- consult with the team lead as timeline benchmarks near;
- offer feedback or assistance in identifying Comprehensive Review Committee members;
- provide feedback on CR Self-study or other documents as requested; and
- keep the CR information table updated.

If needed, liaisons can also

- attend/be available for Team meetings,
- assist with initial data evaluation,
- assist with campus visit coordination,
- facilitate campus visit, and
- assist with finalizing report.

Process 3: Annual Instructional Assessment Reporting and Planning (AARP)

Academic programs and/or disciplines conduct smaller scale reviews on an annual basis, focusing on particular course and/or program outcomes. Faculty report assessment for student learning at course and/or program levels through the Annual Assessment Reporting and Planning (AARP) process. Those results form the basis of the program and/or discipline's action plan for student learning, student success, and operational improvement (p. 3 & 4). Programs and/or disciplines not currently involved in the Comprehensive Review process produce an AARP. As part of this process, the IAC offers support, and committee members provide feedback (Health Information Management AY20-21, English AY20-21, Nursing AY20-21) on draft reports and plans using a rubric aligned with the template. Institutional Research supports the AARP work by providing reports that enable analysis of student success and retention to augment analysis of student learning outcomes (Health Information Management SP20, English SP20, Nursing SP20). AARP completion is tracked by the AARP subcommittee using an AARP Submission Tracker (housed in Falcon Nest), which also records which AARPs have received IAC feedback. Faculty can access the template, rubric, and instructions for completing the AARP in Canvas and Falcon Nest. AARP reports and supporting documents are found in Falcon Nest and are organized by Department/Division. Institutional Research staff are in the process of developing training modules to assist faculty with analyzing provided data.

Annually since fall 2019, the IAC AARP subcommittee reviews and revises the AARP process, template, and related items. Feedback from those who completed the process indicated that the report section was in need of clarification.

In AY 2021-22, to address these concerns, the subcommittee revised the AARP template from one document to three parts: an Academic Discipline Information Template, an instructional guide, and the AARP template. In spring 2022, the committee is focused on making the AARP user-friendly, manageable, and sustainable. Because feedback generated meaningful conversations and deeper understanding of the AARP documents and process, the feedback tools will be implemented annually.

Process 4: Cocurricular Assessment

Cocurricular assessment at ECC has undergone tremendous transformation and growth over the past few years. Changes resulted in part due to a developing and maturing understanding of cocurricular assessment in the context of student learning. The Cocurricular subcommittee of the IAC has developed a standardized process for formally assessing student learning in cocurricular opportunities.

ECC developed this definition of Cocurricular in 2018, based on recommendations from the 2017 HLC Review:

"East Central College's Cocurricular activities are structured learning activities that complement and augment formal curriculum and include non-credit and credit-bearing experiences. Cocurricular opportunities can be embedded within existing academic programs or adjacent to academic and extra-curricular programs. Cocurriculum at East Central College aims to be experiential, transformative, and accessible, while being collaboratively interwoven with the college's academic, cultural, and extra-curricular opportunities."

During AY2018-2019, a small group of faculty/staff piloted cocurricular assessment reporting.

Reporting was intended to be tied to the institution's vision, mission/values, and institutional learning outcomes. However, these elements were in transition, preventing the creation of final drafts of documents or the process at that time. This reporting included assessment of an institutional student learning outcome (at that time, CLO: Communication, Critical Thinking, or Ethics and Social Responsibility). Most importantly, club sponsors provided a reflective narrative of what they learned from assessment of the activity and how that might inform changes in the future. The most powerful elements of cocurricular assessment in these reports were the rich, qualitative data found in the reflections from both students and faculty advisors. These reflections formed the basis for future development and assessment of cocurricular activities.

In fall 2019, the Cocurricular subcommittee met to create a consistent submission process for reports and consider a process to provide feedback on reports. The subcommittee developed a Survey Question Bank to assist activity sponsors with surveys and gathering usable assessment data. The Cocurricular Assessment Subcommittee broadened the pilot that had been implemented in 2018-2019. A targeted group of faculty and staff who oversee cocurricular activities were asked to assess, report, and reflect.

In February 2020, the subcommittee met with cocurricular activity sponsors to discuss what constitutes a cocurricular learning opportunity, determine if genuine assessment of student learning was happening, and provide resources. Members also reviewed the new ISLOs with respect to cocurricular activities and direct and indirect measures of student learning. Shortly after this meeting, the campus moved to virtual protocols due to Covid-19 restrictions, resulting in cancellation of many cocurricular events. From March-May, 2020, remote operations prevented conducting and assessing many activities. The East Central College Cocurricular Assessment Report for 2019-2020 includes reflections from activity sponsors and students.

While many cocurricular activities were cancelled or put on hold between spring 2020 and spring 2021 due to Covid-19, the cocurricular subcommittee continued the momentum of cocurricular assessment work. They reached out to a variety of cocurricular sponsors to develop a broad assessment plan that connected cocurricular activities to ISLOs, and mapping of assessed activities to ISLOs continued, resulting in the 2021-2022 Cocurricular Learning Opportunity Map. The map catalogues each learning opportunity, the ISLO performance indicator assessed, the assessment measure for the activity, and a description of the assessment data collection process. Currently, twenty-seven opportunities are included on the map. While not all activities took place during Covid-19 restriction, sponsors prepare to restart those events. The map serves as the basis for a revised reporting template and guide that better aligns with other reporting templates and reinforces the interconnectedness between these components of institutional assessment. This template was recently piloted by sponsors of Soup and Stories (International Education Week) and the Fall Campus Read. Pilot assessment continues this semester. It is noteworthy that current templates for AARP and Comprehensive Review include sections for Cocurricular Assessment. Members of the campus community continue to grow in understanding of cocurricular assessment and have found it helpful to remember that it is event/activity based, rather than program based.

Process 5: General Education Assessment

General Education is essential to a liberal arts education and integrated into career and technical applied science degrees. General Education is core curriculum. The learning outcomes for the ECC General Education Model are the ISLOs, assessed throughout the processes of annual review and comprehensive review. Essentially, 42 credit hours (general education) of the liberal arts AA degree seamlessly transfer to publicly funded and self-selected private four-year institutions. These 42 credit

hours come from a large repository of Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (MDHEWD) approved general education course options and are organized by knowledge categories (Social and Behavioral Sciences, Written and Oral Communication, Natural Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, and Humanities and Fine Arts). East Central College's General Education program aligns with CORE 42 and knowledge areas.

ECC assesses General Education through ISLOs and aligns General Education through the CORE 42 Competency Framework. The CORE 42 and ISLO Alignment process is currently underway and will be completed by the end of spring 2022. Course level outcomes will also be reviewed within the CORE 42 Knowledge Area Competencies during the next stage of curriculum mapping.

Through curriculum mapping, the College connects general education courses to ISLOs based on alignment of ECC CORE 42 Courses to ISLOs, as described above. When the CORE 42 alignment is completed, the full map will include competencies relating to ISLO performance indicators, clearly showing the basis for General Education student learning assessment. A comprehensive review of General Education is underway, with completion scheduled for fall 2022. To support this work, a team attended the General Education Workshop series from HLC in spring 2021. The first phase of the comprehensive review is to complete the mapping of CORE 42 competencies to ECC ISLOs and performance indicators, which will be completed by the end of spring 2022.

Process 6: Institutional Research Support

As demonstrated above, Comprehensive Review and Annual Assessment Report and Plan (AARP) processes are grounded in consistent review of student learning and the assumption that a true picture of student learning must be derived from more than course outcome data. Therefore, instructional assessment relies heavily on Institutional Student Learning Outcome (ISLO) data. For the short term, Institutional Research (IR) is working to create a Power BI Dashboard that will allow faculty to analyze ISLO data from courses. The IR department also supports these processes with standardized reports for Comprehensive Reviews and AARPs. IR staff actively participate on the Instructional Assessment Committee and routinely provide faculty and staff with data related to course success rates and program outcomes. In addition to standardized reports, faculty utilize an IR request system for specialized data requests. In 2021, 80 requests were completed for faculty and staff, and many of those included follow-up requests for additional information.

2. **The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

Continuous improvement of student learning at ECC is primarily driven through a semester-by-semester cycle of instructors' review of their individual course assessment data, aggregated disciplinary assessment data, and institutional-level assessment through the ISLOs. These actions stem from the Annual Assessment Reporting and Planning (AARP) process and/or the Comprehensive Review process. The intentional design of the assessment templates discussed above provides a focus on student learning. Analysis of data and improvement of student learning is discussed at the department level during regularly scheduled meetings. Some departments choose to present findings and improvement action items at the Annual Assessment Showcase. Improving student learning and success outcomes is the primary purpose of instructional assessment.

Examples of assessment-driven changes which impacted student learning include:

- Culinary: Implementation of a daily assessment for continuous feedback regarding where students are in the learning process and what they need to learn. (p. 8)

- Nursing: Review of data from proficiency checklists indicated a need to weight steps differently, thereby reducing subjectivity in student analysis. (p. 9)
- Math: Faculty determined reading comprehension is a barrier to success in Math. In addition, two prerequisite courses have been redesigned to reduce potential confusion about which course to take, allowing for fluidity across Stem Pathways. This single course is focused on remediating the most critical skills for the classes it serves. (p. 8) In addition, placement in Math 150 will not be allowed based on High School GPA alone. Data indicate students placed in this manner do not have an acceptable success rate. (p. 11)
- Learning Center: Results from annual assessments indicate students who access tutoring three or more times have higher success rates than those who do not access tutoring or access it just one or two times. Based on this data, the Learning Center implemented changes in marketing, delivery, and access to increase participation in tutoring. (pp. 21-23)
- Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic: The EMS program implemented new testing software and attributed increased pass rates to this change. Additionally, the curriculum was adjusted to focus on leadership skills, based on employer survey data. (p.7)
- General Biology: A detailed analysis of pre- and post-test data (p.6-14) related to student learning outcomes indicated widespread improvement. Faculty reviewed specific questions for alignment to stated outcomes.
- Learning Center Math Final Review: The Math Department uses a common final and provides a comprehensive math study guide for each course. Learning Center personnel use this study guide to provide math final review study sessions. The success rates of these sessions compare students who attended vs. peers who did not attend the same course. Success rate data and qualitative feedback from student survey data supports continuing to offer sessions every fall/spring. This effectiveness outcome is assessed every five years and will be assessed again in 2023.
- Phi Theta Kappa Summer 2020 Cocurricular (p.19-22): Students were assessed following the Phi Theta Kappa New Officer Leadership Training. Assessing students with the Professional Development ISLO and rubric highlighted important areas of leadership that need further attention and development. Improving these areas will also benefit the local chapter. The next new officer leadership development session will focus on the elements of professionalism concerning meeting deadlines, working with personal strengths and weaknesses, and taking responsibility for own actions. A peer evaluation of officers is also recommended.
- ISLO Critical Thinking (CT) Colloquy: This faculty Colloquy explored results from assessment of the critical thinking student learning outcome, engaged in scholarly discussion centered around evidence and methods of improvement, and considered next steps. While the work in culling direct student learning assessment changes are in progress from the CT Colloquy, it did enhance faculty development. Discussion surrounding critical thinking evidence during the Colloquy led to a spring 2022 assessment workshop session on how to create critical thinking multiple choice exam questions.
- Affordable and Open Educational Resources (A&OER): Many students have expressed the challenges associated with course material cost. The Affordable and Open Educational Resource initiative has continued to grow in support of students. During winter 2021 through fall 2021, a total of four semesters, ECC served 4,409 students who took a credit course using an A&OER as a textbook. This resulted in a $315,155 savings for students. In 2021, nine new courses elected to use an A&OER, six English and literature, one CIS, one history, and one religion. In fall 2021, 19 courses used an A&OER, doubling the original fall 2019 pilot of nine courses.

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.

ECC has made assessment an institutional priority for the last five years. The overarching goal is one of the action steps in the Pathways strategy of the SOAR to 2024 Strategic Plan: "Build a culture of assessment around Institutional Student Learning Outcomes across the curriculum and in Cocurricular programs and activities by June 30, 2024." The college is well on its way to achieving this goal. Good practice and faculty and staff high levels of engagement are reflected in at least three specific ways:

1. The Elevation and Expansion of the Instructional Assessment Committee

In 2018 the Instructional Assessment Committee (IAC), in partnership with the newly appointed (interim) VP of Academic Affairs, began to examine its role in assessment at the college. Previously, much assessment work was owned by academic leadership, with assessment reporting largely a task to be accomplished, rather than a learning process. 2018-19 was a year of exploration, reflection, and planning. In 2019-20, the committee was expanded to include additional faculty representation, representatives from Student Support areas, and academic leadership (deans).

In fall 2020, the committee organized into subcommittees, each with clearly defined responsibilities. This framework allows for distributed leadership and effective implementation of assessment processes. The committee charges and responsibilities are as follows (p.5):

The Instructional Assessment Committee is dedicated to building a culture of assessment at ECC by engaging the college community in learner-centered assessment at the course, program/department, and institutional levels. The IAC consists of individuals who commit to

- working collaboratively to identify and develop assessment best practices,
- serving as assessment liaisons who provide expertise and encouragement to colleagues, and
- promoting the goals of assessment within and across departments.

The committee provides guidance and assistance in the implementation of the institutional assessment plan by

- coordinating assessment of the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes,
- developing and maintaining program review processes and schedules,
- providing faculty and staff development related to the various levels of assessment, and
- aligning assessment practices with the college's strategic plan.

The committee coordinates assessment processes for curricular and cocurricular learning outcomes, which involves

- establishing learning outcomes to be measured,
- selecting and/or creating measurement instruments,
- determining measurement criteria,
- using the data to generate changes for improvement,
- communicating to divisions on matters related to assessment, and
- continually assessing the effectiveness of the learning outcomes and our processes.

The work of the Instructional Assessment Committee is divided into the following subcommittees, each with specific responsibilities:

- Comprehensive Review
- Annual Assessment Reporting and Planning
- Cocurricular Assessment
- Institutional Student Learning Outcomes
- Professional/Faculty Development and Support

Comprehensive Review

The comprehensive review process is a periodic assessment of the overall performance and effectiveness of a program or discipline. This faculty-driven process seeks to improve student learning, through reflecting on longitudinal data and examining ISLO data. It is a systematic process that provides accountability for program quality to key stakeholders.

The subcommittee

- supports the programs/disciplines during their review process,
- provides follow up and feedback after the completed review,
- updates and modifies the review process as needed, and
- maintains the review timeline.

Annual Assessment Reporting and Planning

Annual planning and reporting are vital components of the ongoing assessment processes. These processes align course, program/discipline, and institutional level assessment practices to assure student learning is comprehensive and cohesive. Faculty lead assessment planning and reporting with support from the IAC, Department Chairs, Coordinators, Deans, and the offices of Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness.

Course level assessment is the foundation for program/discipline and institutional assessment. At the course level, assessment gives faculty insight into day-to-day teaching methods and learning processes, helps clarify learning outcomes and assessment activities, and allows for data collection about student learning, so improvements can be made for future learners. For students, course assessments provide regular feedback about their progress and a means of gauging their own learning and study strategies.

When learning outcomes are aligned at all levels--course, program/discipline, and institutional--resulting assessment data can be used to measure and improve student learning across the curriculum and co-curriculum. Such alignment and cohesion require thoughtful planning and consistent reporting to close the assessment loop and inform decision-making and budgeting.

The subcommittee

- supports departments in developing yearly assessment plans that include assessment activities for the year, descriptions of measurements, and suitable targets of achievement;
- supports faculty in creating course-level student learning outcomes and mapping those outcomes to program and institutional level outcomes;
- aids department faculty in reviewing and analyzing course level assessment data and creating action plans targeted at improving student performance on learning outcomes;
- provides written and oral feedback on draft assessment plans and reports;
- works with the development subcommittee to identify professional development support

activities; and

- works with Department Chairs, Coordinators, Deans, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Institutional Effectiveness to assure timely development and completion of assessment goals.

Cocurricular Assessment

East Central College's Cocurricular activities are structured learning activities that complement and augment curriculum and include non-credit and credit-bearing experiences. Cocurricular opportunities can be embedded within existing academic programs or be adjacent to academic and extra-curricular programs. Cocurriculum at East Central College aims to be experiential, transformative, accessible, and collaboratively interwoven with the college's academic, cultural, and extra-curricular opportunities.

The subcommittee

- updates and maintains cocurricular definition considering revised ISLOs;
- maps cocurricular activities, programs, experiences, and responsible departments;
- maintains a current list of cocurricular opportunities;
- develops a broad assessment plan that connects cocurricular activities to ISLOs;
- creates and maintains schedule of and template for assessment of Cocurricular activity;
- supports cocurricular reporting process: planning and reporting; training and feedback; and data collection and analysis.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) include general skills, knowledge, or applications that students are expected to demonstrate after completing a program of study. The goal of assessing ISLOs is to help improve our courses, curriculum, student success, instruction and/or services. The ongoing process of student outcomes assessment also serves as evidence for institutional planning, resource allocation, and staff and faculty development.

The subcommittee

- advances the Strategic Plan by supporting pertinent goals regarding ISLO assessment;
- oversees and recommends best practices regarding ISLOs and assessment for the college;
- creates and maintains process and schedule for ISLO assessment;
- provides guidance regarding institutional use of assessment results and identification of gaps in achievement of student learning outcomes;
- creates student awareness of and promotes student participation in student learning outcomes assessment;
- works with the Curriculum Committee and Academic Council to assure coherent ISLO assessment policies;
- coordinates ISLO assessments;
- assists in reporting on ISLO assessment as required by the institution.

Professional/Faculty Development and Support

Faculty and staff engaged in student learning assessment can benefit from initial and ongoing opportunities to strengthen their understanding of and approaches to assessment. Training improves

expertise in the selection, adaptation, and design of assessments, as well as the instructional decisions informed by their use. Building expertise in assessment leads to improved practices that support student learning at all levels.

The subcommittee:

- organizes and facilitates campus-wide workshops on a variety of assessment-related topics, such as creating assessment plans and reports; curriculum mapping; aligning course, program, and institutional learning outcomes; creating rubrics and designing assignments; and analyzing student data;
- conducts department-level training as requested;
- maintains a current list of local and national assessment development opportunities; and
- organizes the Assessment Showcase.

The structure of the Instructional Assessment Committee is a direct product of the assessment learning derived from the HLC Assessment Academy. ECC began the Assessment Academy in fall 2018 with a team of six faculty, staff, and the VP of Academic Affairs. This core group developed a timeline for the next four years in the fall of 2018. This plan has been carried out with only minor delays due to the pandemic, and its impact has been felt at all levels. Plan implementation has succeeded due to the investment of members of the Instructional Assessment Committee, the institutional commitment from the college, the dedicated leadership of the faculty assessment chair, and the support from Assessment Academy mentor and scholar. This work establishes sustainable assessment practices that are focused on embedding student learning into the ECC culture.

2. Reassigned time for faculty leadership of assessment processes

The faculty chair of the Instructional Assessment Committee is provided six hours of reassigned time (p. 24-25) each semester. Also, an additional six hours of reassigned time is allotted to guide the implementation of the HLC Assessment Academy plan. This reassigned time has allowed for focused facilitation of assessment conversations across department meetings, leadership of faculty professional development activities, educational activities surrounding assessment practices, and leadership of data collection efforts.

3. Full participation of faculty in key professional development activities

Professional learning is anchored by several key events throughout the year:

- Each August and January, time is invested during In-Service Week. Professional development topics are often big picture, setting the stage for deeper learning throughout the semester. During the semester, guided work occurs in department meetings and follow-up workshops. Throughout the semester, members of the Instructional Assessment Committee serve as mentors and facilitators to peers. For the past four semesters, this work has centered on the development of ISLOs.
- Spring 2020: Curriculum Mapping of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes began. Feedback from participants was gathered and used to inform continued work in department level meetings. Due to pandemic interruptions, this work was not completed until fall 2020.
- Fall 2020: The Assessment Workshop paved the way for larger-scale use of rubrics for ISLO performance indicators throughout this semester. Those responsible for leading assessment processes understand the value of learning about assessment and meaningful engagement in this complex topic.

- Each spring, the college comes together for the Annual Assessment Showcase. This event features assessment of instruction and administrative and support departments. The most recent event, held in a hybrid format, featured Roundtable Discussions, Micro (20-minute) presentations, and Poster Presentations. Recordings of poster presentations are archived on the Assessment Showcase webpage. Survey results will inform the spring 2022 event.
- Finally, this fall the college held what is planned to be an annual Colloquy event, with this one surrounding Critical Thinking. Held via Zoom, faculty led their peers in breakout groups of roughly ten people, utilizing student work samples and guiding questions. The feedback from this event was overwhelmingly positive, resulting in plans to replicate this event every fall, cycling through each of the ISLOs.

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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

4.C.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.

East Central College is an open-access institution and considers its mission, student population, and educational offerings when setting goals for retention, persistence, and completion. The Retention Committee was responsible for implementing the comprehensive retention plan beginning in Fall 2017 and continuing through Spring 2019. The committee's efforts were largely successful, from both a process and an outcome standpoint. This executive summary details the goals, results, and continued areas of focus.

At the conclusion of AY2018-19, it was determined that retention and completion should be considered from a broader perspective for greatest impact. Since then, retention efforts have been coordinated by the Strategic Enrollment Management and Retention Committee (SEM-R), whose charge is as follows:

- The Strategic Enrollment Management and Retention Committee (SEM-R) will improve access and student success by developing, monitoring, evaluating, and communicating on all aspects of the enrollment life cycle including recruitment, onboarding, retention, and completion for East Central College students. The committee's work aligns with the ECC Strategic Plan and its priorities.

The Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Development co-chair the committee, which is organized around two subcommittees: Recruitment/Onboarding and Retention/Completion. The committee includes 21 faculty and staff. These members are from offices in the student development division, institutional research, representative faculty, the college retention coordinator, and others in key student support roles. The committee began their work in September 2019 and established high-

level, long-term retention and completion goals with annual benchmarks that align with the SOAR to 2024 Strategic Plan.

In establishing these goals, the committee considered trend data related to each metric, benchmarks set by the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE), and current initiatives to improve student success, such as the Early Alert Warning System and Guided Pathways. Goals and progress related to retention, persistence, and completion are represented in chart form here.

During the annual evaluation of the Strategic Enrollment Management and Retention plan in AY21, a new measure of effectiveness was added to reflect a subset of onboarding. Committee members recognized early momentum metrics are predictors of persistence. Goal #6 states: "Increase the number of students (First-Time, Full-Time) who successfully complete 12 or more credit hours in their first semester at ECC to 61% (.06% each year) by 2024." This additional goal is supported by several strategies, including early alert actions, targeted success coaches, embedded tutoring, a guided pathway-specific first-year seminar course, and proactive advising.

ECC has historically maintained overall enrollment goals during each enrollment cycle, which have proven accurate for planning. In fall 2020, this process began to include weekly tracking of current students' enrollment for the next semester through the Rolling Retention Report. Current data is compared to a comparable week one year ago, allowing advisors, program coordinators, faculty, and others to analyze status and adjust efforts accordingly. Data is currently disaggregated by developmental education, first-time full-time students, and first-time part-time students. Current goals are to meet or exceed the previous year.

4.C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

East Central College collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs at many levels. Specific campus groups take responsibility for data in different ways, and members of groups are interconnected.

Institutional Research collects and reports data to IPEDS, National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), MDHE, and campus stakeholders. The office shares valuable information on its webpage, including an annually published Fact Book, Student Outcomes Data, and Enrollment Reports. Information regularly shared internally includes retention reports (updated weekly during enrollment cycles) and a daily enrollment report . Specific program and course-level data is provided to faculty as part of programmatic accreditation processes, comprehensive reviews, and annual assessment reporting and planning. Course success data is published internally and is routinely reported to the Board of Trustees and other stakeholders including faculty and the SEM-R committee.

The Retention Coordinator and success coach staff (Learning Center in Union and Success Center in Rolla) daily utilize information from faculty and advisors through the Aviso system. The college implemented Aviso in 2019 as a tool to improve coordination of faculty and staff support related to student success. Faculty and staff create and respond to alerts in the Aviso system according to defined procedures. Alerts may be for attendance, academic concerns, career services, counseling, and referrals to Access Services for accommodations. With the addition of a Wellness Navigator (new position Jan. 2022), faculty and staff are now able to refer students who may benefit from a social worker and additional community resources. Each student is assigned an academic success coach by either program, location, or specific groups, such as athletes and dual credit students. Success coaches send proactive communication to their caseload with timely college success tips.

Prior to the start of each semester, communication about enrollment is coordinated between the Business Analyst, Enrollment Services, and the Retention Coordinator. Success Coaches then act on staff-initiated and system-generated alerts, communicating with students through text, phone, and email regarding available services such as tutoring, study sessions, academic coaching, and technology resources, as well as referring the student to other campus resources when required. The retention coordinator monitors alerts and immediate outcomes on a weekly basis to communicate areas of concern on usage and documentation to coaches. Each semester, a report is run for the grades obtained by alerted students in their alerted class. Based on previous grade reports, tutoring and coaching visits, and surveys to faculty and students, several recommendations and changes were made to the Aviso Alerts. A work group consisting of Success Coaching, Advising, Admissions, Administration, and Faculty representatives meet to review the use of the communication and alert tools housed in Aviso and develop recommendations based on data and departmental usage.

The Cabinet meets biweekly and reviews student retention data during the enrollment cycle. The group analyzes this data for the purpose of coordination across divisions, as well as big picture and targeted communication efforts.

The SEM-R Committee examines data related to its stated goals, together with student outreach data and data from the Aviso alert system at its regular meetings. A subgroup is reviewing the data based on a significant decline in course success rates for historically underrepresented students. The group has started looking at placement practices and programs to provide recommendations to the SEM-R committee.

The Online Learning and Educational Technology Committee facilitates the examination of data related to online course success.

The AARP process, the Comprehensive Review process, and the Faculty Evaluation process all provide for structured examination of success data, including withdrawals, and program success data where appropriate.

Financial Aid and Financial Services staff analyze data related to student debt in order to minimize financial barriers to student success. Specific students who are in danger of being dropped from classes for non-payment are targeted. In January, this work resulted in the lowest student drop rate in recent history (p. 2-3).

4.C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

There are many factors that contribute to a student's successful journey through college. Linking one specific intervention or causal factor to student success is not feasible. ECC takes a multi-modal approach to supporting student success through the guided pathway pillars and provides multiple touch points throughout the student's journey. Detailed uses of information are discussed below, and each contribute to positive retention, persistence and completion trends. Recent results provide reason for celebration fall 21 to spring 22 retention is at 76.4%, surpassing retention prior to the pandemic. 2021 graduation rates are at 40%, the highest point in the past ten years.

In a broad approach to support student retention, the Aviso Engage system was purchased in 2019 (pp. 4-5) because the college recognized the need to target communications to students and improve collaboration across departments. This system enables faculty, advisors, counselors, success coaches, and others to understand what challenges students are facing and what has been done to alleviate

these challenges. For example, when a faculty member notes an attendance concern in one course, faculty in other classes see that as well. Students are able to view needed resources, schedule appointments with their advisor, success coach, and others across campus and view up-to-date grades imported from Canvas. Utilization by faculty has increased each semester. Process improvements include the refinement of auto-generated alerts for attendance and grades, based on input from faculty; improved communication between Canvas, SIS, and Aviso; refinement of alert definitions to streamline communication; clear definition of roles and responsibilities for success coaches; and professional development for faculty and staff related to how to use the system. Data are also available related to communication with students, enabling refinement of emails/texts to students, and determining what communication generates engagement on the students' side. The Retention Coordinator and the Business Analyst, Enrollment Services monitor data from the Aviso System.

The Learning Center and faculty have continued integrating embedded tutors for select courses as a best-practice tool to improve course success rates, persistence, retention, and completion. Prior to implementing embedded tutoring, the aggregated course success rate for all faculty who later implemented embedded tutoring was 37.1%. The aggregate course success rate for the same faculty in Fall 2020 with the embedded tutors was 50%. In Fall 2020, 124 students were enrolled in the embedded tutor-supported courses. Additionally, staff piloted a Peer Assisted Learning program. The Peer Assisted Learning pilot was implemented for two courses taught by one faculty member. The courses had an average success rate of 39.92% and 58.2% from Spring 2018 to Spring 2021. The courses had a success rate of 50% and 36% respectively for the pilot semester. The pilot program impacted 34 students.

Student Athletes have a specified success coach. All ECC Athletic Teams have mandatory study hall hours required every semester, supported by The Learning Center. Weekly hour and course attendance reports are provided to the Athletic Director and coaches. In addition, midterm and final grades are shared and targeted interventions are developed for athletes with D/F grades at midterm. Since the inception of Aviso, student athletes have been assigned an individual success coach through the Learning Center for more directed results as shown in athlete course success data.

In spring and fall 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic forced a move to remote instruction, ECC monitored student and instructor-initiated withdrawal rates closely. Data from comparable weeks in the previous semester was used to gauge how successful the college was at supporting students and keeping them enrolled during this time. The key program change in this effort was shifting the final date for students to withdraw from courses until nearly the end of the semester. In addition, the College began providing portable hot spots and laptops for check-out from the library and increased wi-fi strength to the parking lots. During the semester, student-initiated withdrawal rates were slightly higher, but instructor-initiated withdrawal rates were lower. The student support efforts appear to have made a difference.

SEM-R Committee members, along with other faculty, Learning Center and advising staff examined course success data and then evaluated course placement practices. To revise the current placement process, data related to overall high school GPA, specific course GPA, and ACT score were analyzed. Now, students are placed according to multiple measures. Data will be re-examined after 21-22 for evaluation of multiple placement measures.

In AY 20-21, curriculum was shifted for the first year of the Nursing Program (p. 10-12). Physical assessments of written and hands-on exams were completed during week four of the semester. It had previously been in the second semester. Previously, students were expected to answer physical assessment questions during clinical but did not have the in-depth knowledge to meet the clinical

objectives. Additionally, basic skills proficiency hands-on exams were moved to the end of the first semester and medication skills was moved to the beginning of the second semester. Both of these skills exams allow the student to begin using those skills in clinical on day one of semester two, whereas they were not allowed to perform these skills in the nursing homes during semester one. The curriculum changes have significantly improved semester-to-semester retention so that it is typically 90-100%

In the Emergency Medical Services Program, the EMT cognitive exam pass rate has been low for the last few years. The department is currently assessing all aspects of EMT classes to find what changes need to be made. The first change was adopting a new textbook with online resources that include an audio book, PowerPoints, lecture notes, and flashcards, which were lacking in the previous textbook. The department is also updating all exams and working with adjuncts to ensure they have adequate support. EMT exam rates factor into our overall program retention. If students cannot or do not become a licensed EMT, they cannot start the paramedic courses.

College administration revised the staffing plan in multiple ways to improve student retention, persistence, and success. The Admissions Department was restructured to provide more explicit, targeted support to early college students and outreach to area high schools. The Learning Center added staff to enable more effective and proactive success coaching to be aligned to specific pathways. Staffing for the Rolla Student Success Center increased. While these specific actions cannot be directly linked to the College's overall improvement in retention, persistence, and completion, they do align with best practices with the pillars of guided pathways.

ECC's Finish Your Investment (FYI) degree reclamation program is part of a nationwide initiative named Degrees When Due. The program is sponsored by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and supported by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD). There were 742 former students targeted; of those, 39 "auto graduated" due to the number of credit hours they already had obtained. Another 31 students applied for admission; 20 enrolled in courses, and five ultimately earned a degree. The processes established as part of this program will continue, ensuring more students graduate.

The college utilized federal funds to pay off the balances of 228 students from Spring 20-Summer 21. This one-time elimination of financial barriers for a targeted group will allow the college to examine the impact of debt on students' ability to persist.

To support students on academic probation or returning from academic suspension, Student Development and Academic Affairs offices have implemented targeted measures to address student needs. An Academic Suspension Coach is assigned to students with scheduled meetings through mid-semester. These meetings are tracked with a Task Guide and in Aviso. With more targeted and timely approaches, it is anticipated that persistence and retention rates will improve. These measures will be assessed using IR data on course success rates and persistence from semester to semester.

Once suspension students are approved to return, they are expected to complete an eight-week program that connects them with multiple campus resources and outlines steps for them to move towards becoming a more successful student.

4.C.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.)

East Central College aligns its definitions, processes, and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion with IPEDS and the NCCBP. The IR Office supports faculty and staff by providing data retrieved with consistent methodology to facilitate meaningful data analysis. A portion of this is done through standardized data reports distributed to faculty (see 4.B.1, Process 6). Additionally, the IR Office provides training to educate the campus on standardized definitions and reports to ensure knowledge and consistency when assessing student data.

ECC continuously assesses performance against other higher education institutions in the areas of retention and completion. ECC utilizes data from various sources, such as the NCCBP, IPEDS, and the SSI to gauge our student retention, completion, and satisfaction at the state and national level. To ensure accurate benchmark comparisons, the collection and reporting of this data is often validated by maintaining lines of communication with IPEDS and the Missouri Community College Institutional Research (MCCA IR) Council. The Council regularly requests feedback amongst members to ensure consistency in reporting. An example of this was a collaborative review of NCCBP metric definitions with MCCA IR members.

The college disaggregates data to track and review student success by specific demographic populations. The college consistently monitors course success, retention, and completion on the IPEDS student cohort. Additionally, data on student outcomes are reported by gender, race/ethnicity, pell status, student athletes, and degree/certificate on the college website.

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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

East Central College employs assessment processes that ensure high quality educational and cocurricular programs, learning environments, and support services.

As part of the College's implementation of an academic assessment plan through the HLC Assessment Academy beginning in 2018, faculty have been central in

- reviewing and updating (as necessary) course, program, and institutional level outcomes across the curriculum;
- revitalizing the Instructional Assessment Committee;
- developing program outcomes for all programs;
- mapping courses to institutional level outcomes;
- linking assessment results to course, program, and institutional level improvements; and
- engaging in targeted professional development.

Across the institution, routine assessment practices are becoming the norm; faculty and staff continue to move away from a "compliance" mindset towards a culture of curiosity and continuous improvement.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

The College effectively uses shared governance to engage its constituencies in decision making. Shared governance has been an area of focus for the college over the past three years. Significant changes include the formation of a Shared Governance Council, a commitment to college-wide communication between leadership and all employee groups, and a renewed commitment to broad-based decision making across the institution. Growth is evidenced in recent responses to the annual [Great Colleges to Work for Survey](#) results (p.5 highlighted), specifically this survey statement:

"We are making good progress in our efforts to strengthen our shared governance processes."

Employees' positive responses more than doubled in three years, increasing from 30% positive in 2018 to 81% in 2021 (p.5).

ECC formed the [Shared Governance Council](#) in 2018. The council includes representation from every employee group, meets monthly, and addresses policy and other matters of institutional concern. The Council addresses requests from employees or employee groups through a designated [system](#), which ensures a direct process and a complete feedback loop to the initial submission.

In addition to the Shared Governance Council, the college maintains a [comprehensive network of committees](#) to ensure broad communication and input and inform effective decision making. While all committees contribute to effective engagement, several committees are integral to collaboration

and shared governance:

- The Budget Advisory Committee (p.1), discussed in 5C, is a significant example of shared governance engagement of internal constituencies. The President formed the committee in 2018 to provide recommendations to the administration regarding expenses and revenue. Since its inception, the committee has sought input from stakeholders. Subcommittees address issues that are raised. For example, the cross-divisional tuition subcommittee is charged with developing initial recommendations concerning tuition and general fees. Similarly, the auxiliary subcommittee reviewed the campus bookstore and café with the goal of increasing revenue. This work was suspended due to the pandemic but has since been renewed.
- The Instructional Assessment Committee (IAC) (discussed in 4B) is led by a faculty chair and co-chair and includes members from each faculty division/department, administration, and academic and student development staff. Assessment of student learning is a strategic priority of the college. The committee chair has reassigned time from teaching and meets regularly with the Chief Academic Officer. Subcommittees of the IAC coordinate effective processes for student learning assessment. Each subcommittee has responsibilities outlined in the committee charter. The group has intentionally expanded to 28 members in recent years, allowing for broad coordination and involvement.
- Shared governance is embedded in Strategic Planning at ECC (discussed in 1A and 5C), and structures continue to evolve. A cross-divisional, cross-hierarchical committee facilitated the process by reviewing proposals and assisting with the selection of a consulting firm. During 2018-19, a committee of approximately 50 people met monthly to analyze information, determine strategies, and establish action steps to support strategic plan development. The committee sought student input at multiple intervals. Since then, key campus committees have implemented the strategic plans, with coordination from a group of Strategic Planning co-chairs.
- The HLC Steering Committee (p.2) provides overall guidance across the writing process for various parts of the assurance argument; however, internal constituencies are engaged throughout the process. For example, committee members review and provide feedback to select the most relevant core component evidence provided by the Criterion Teams, which are comprised of representatives of all employee groups. Committee members also serve as ambassadors to the college, gathering feedback and input from their departments. Review and feedback by the HLC Steering Committee lay the foundation for the assurance argument writing team.
- As part of its response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the college convened a cross-departmental advisory group in 2020. Originally organized to provide for a safe return to campus following two months of remote learning, the Instructional Task Force meets regularly to monitor Covid-related data, share input from faculty and staff regarding mitigation practices, and advise campus leadership about changes in protocols.
- A faculty committee collaborated with the President and Chief Academic Officer to provide feedback on their performance as administrators. Those involved collaboratively created Upward Feedback surveys. In a recent pilot, faculty members provided feedback to these leaders, with input to be used to inform their respective evaluations and to help develop goals for the coming year. The process will be evaluated for potential use at other levels.

Employees participate in shared governance through voluntary employee groups. To address relevant issues, the President meets monthly with the leaders of the Classified Staff Association and the Professional Staff Association, and jointly with the leadership of the Faculty Association and the ECC National Education Association (NEA). The Vice President of Academic Affairs also meets

regularly with leadership from Faculty Association and ECC NEA. Leadership from these groups ask questions of the President, share responses with membership, and maintain continued open dialogues. Short-term workgroups also examine issues more closely. The Work from Home Task Force is a recent example. The President charged this group with developing recommendations concerning post-pandemic work-from-home practices. This work is scheduled to be completed this semester. Each year ECC NEA faculty representatives and administration work to negotiate a Collective Bargaining Agreement, which is then approved by the Board of Trustees and ratified by faculty. ECC NEA faculty and administration jointly elected to use Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) rather than positional or adversarial approaches for more effective collaboration.

The Board of Trustees meets publicly and typically includes opportunities for public comment and reports from Student Government Association and employee organizations (p. 2, items 2 & 17). Communication of key issues regularly comes from campus administrators in the form of updates from each division. The college President sends regular updates to campus, including information from Shared Governance meetings, and hosts a live campus update following board meetings.

5.A.2 The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

ECC's administrative team includes the President and Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs (Chief Academic Officer), Student Development (Chief Student Affairs Officer), Finance and Administration (Chief Financial Officer), and External Relations. The President meets weekly with the administrative team. Bi-monthly meetings include the larger Cabinet, which includes the administrative team and others reporting directly to the President: Directors of Information Technology, Institutional Research, Institutional Effectiveness, Human Resources, Rolla site, and ECC Foundation. 2021 brought new leadership, including a new Vice President of Student Development and a new Vice President of Administration and Finance (2021). These new administrators create opportunities for discussion of current initiatives and provide fresh perspectives. Examples of data-informed actions include:

- Enrollment and Retention Data are reviewed by cabinet every two weeks and monthly in various committees. Enrollment data is disseminated daily to those associated with enrollment. Disaggregated retention data is available in Sharepoint and informs long- and short-term strategies for reaching out to students, public relations, advising, and course schedule changes. Systematic use of this data contributed to increased enrollment for fall 2021.
- Data from student and employee surveys are examined by Cabinet to determine potential topics for improvement.
- Each year the Board of Trustees reviews recommendations from the administration to set the local tax levy. This process includes a review of changes in the local tax base, debt service requirements, and revenue limitations established by the State of Missouri. The levy is established following a period of public comment. In 2021, the board adopted a recommendation (p.1-2) to maintain the combined levy (operations and debt service) but shift a portion from operations to debt service in order to generate additional bond retirement funds.
- The administrative team holds retreats as needed. The summer 2021 retreat provided an opportunity for senior staff to review and discuss national and state data, trends, and other strategic issues. An example is consideration of long-range facility needs in light of pending bond retirements by 2026. The college is currently determining the future need for long-term debt to finance capital improvements as compared to operational expenses like compensation. The fall 2021 Retreat/Planning meeting centered on big-picture considerations for FY23

budget development.

- To provide the safest possible campus environment, ECC administration regularly reviews Covid 19 data, including cases on campus and community transmission data. The data are reviewed daily by the Covid response team, weekly by senior leadership, and every two weeks by the Cabinet. The date is used to inform decisions on matters such as class capacity, mitigation protocols, supply purchases, and student/employee impact. Input is also gathered from the cross-divisional Instructional Task Force.
- Tuition rates are set each year by the Board of Trustees based on a recommendation (p.51-53) from the President. The recommendation originates with the tuition subcommittee of the Budget Advisory Committee. Data examined include revenue generation projections based on projected enrollment, comparison of tuition rates from other community colleges, and ratio of Pell and other scholarships. A representative group of employees is involved in developing the recommendation for the administration to consider.

3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective collaborative structures.

ECC administration follows well established collaborative structures for appropriate participation of stakeholders in academic requirements. The Curriculum Council has the following responsibilities:

- Review and vet all course and program proposals.
- Return revision recommendations to faculty for resubmission to Curriculum Council.
- Recommend proposals for approval and forward to Academic Council.
- Systematically review CORE 42 courses.
- Assist faculty with the CORE 42 approval process.
- Serve as liaison to the PR department for the promotion of CORE 42.
- Implement Guided Pathways as stated in the Strategic Plan.
- Annually review academic degree maps.
- Assist the PR department in promotion of Guided Pathways.
- Communicate with the Instructional Assessment Committee and other relevant parties regarding pending curriculum changes.

A faculty member chairs the Curriculum Council. Its membership includes faculty from all college divisions, the Dean of Allied Health, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Registrar, and the Academic Services Coordinator. These members have defined processes to ensure faculty have clear guidance for curricular changes.

The Academic Council is co-chaired by a faculty member and the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and acts as the College's curriculum/program oversight group. The council is charged with the review and approval of programs, curriculum, and course proposals; communication with the academic divisions and other parties on campus; review and approval of academic policies and procedures; approval and recommendation of course fees to the Board of Trustees; and approval and recommendation of the academic calendar. Group membership and meeting guidelines are clearly articulated.

The Instructional Assessment Committee defines academic assessment processes. The full scope of this work is described in Criterion 4B3.

Students and graduates have some involvement with academic processes through representation on

program advisory boards in the CTE division. Area employers and recent graduates provide valuable feedback and guidance to improve program quality and student outcomes.

ECC is conducting a thorough revision of the Board Policy Manual. The college is reviewing one of five policy chapters (Organization, Instruction, Student Services, Finance and Administration, Personnel) each semester. Upon conclusion, the review cycle will begin anew, ensuring all policies are evaluated every three years. For each chapter, a workgroup consisting of one administrator and representatives from each employee group and division conducts the review. The board recording secretary serves as a member and resource to each workgroup. Following revision, the committee sends the chapter to Shared Governance for review, gathers input from employee groups, and recommends changes to the President. The President then submits a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees. To date, Chapters One, Two, and Three (p. 2-6) have been adopted. Input from employees is embedded in the review process through the current Shared Governance Council structure.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered

Providing high-quality staff and infrastructure to support students across all locations and modalities of learning is a College priority. ECC's staff is appropriately trained and qualified because the College continuously reviews credentials, qualifications, and responsibilities. This specifically occurs as part of the annual employee evaluation and prior to filling any staff position. Job postings reflect these criteria. Selection committees include the hiring supervisor, faculty, and staff. Team members are trained and meet on a regular basis to screen candidates, conduct interviews, and select a candidate. The hiring process ensures the new employee has the qualifications and experience to be successful. ECC provides new employees with a thorough onboarding process.

The college recognizes the value of professional development for employees and has included a specific objective in the Employees strategy of the SOAR to 2024 Strategic Plan (p3). Training and professional development opportunities are available to enable staff to grow in knowledge and skills. Expenditures were $371 per employee in 2020, placing ECC above the 50th percentile in community colleges (NCCBP p. 31). Employee survey data indicated a need for training regarding technology tools, and the Covid-19 pandemic increased this need. In the past two years, the college has provided additional training in the use of Microsoft 365 Tools. The college provided all-institution access to NISOD, as well as campus-wide membership in the Missouri Community College Association. The College offers programming and training events related to safety, crisis planning, technology, compliance, and wellness.

The College ensures adequate staffing through the development of the annual staffing plan. Recent changes included restructuring the Learning Center staff to provide additional success coaches to improve retention, revising Rolla staffing to allow for a dedicated counselor and additional tutoring, and the addition of faculty positions for Physics and Chemistry to be split between Rolla and Union. Support to improve Online/Virtual/Hybrid education has come from the addition of an Emerging Technologies Librarian, as well as 24/7 support for Canvas through Instructional Technology. The President submits the staffing plan to the Board of Trustees when the annual budget is presented for approval. Faculty and staff are organized as illustrated in the organizational chart.

ECC maintains high-quality technological infrastructure throughout its facilities. Improvements to physical facilities are a continuous priority, with the master facilities plan serving as a guide. The most recent audit (p.8) outlines net assets, capital improvements, and depreciation. The college maintains a deferred maintenance list, which is reviewed annually. The college also utilizes facilities and technology fees to fund projects.

Covid-19 pandemic funds provided resources to improve campus technology and facilities. Among these improvements are better climate control and filtration through the Clean Air Project, upgraded furniture for social distancing and effective cleaning, and touchless/keyless remote entry. Earlier, the college made significant investments in laptops and hot spots to lend to students. The college is addressing the replacement of a pedestrian bridge on the Union campus, a project that was identified just prior to the pandemic and is being funded by the State of Missouri. The project is currently in design, with completion expected by December 2022. Many of the needs addressed with capital funds were identified through the college's facilities master plan, which identified HVAC as a critical need. Having the data at hand enabled ECC to quickly address the project once funds were available. Also, an Educational Technology workgroup developed a comprehensive plan for classroom and meeting space upgrades utilizing Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). These upgrades include audiovisual equipment that allow improved synchronous classroom meetings between locations and recording. The Learning Management System (Canvas) has been enhanced with a 24-hour technical support option.

2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

ECC's mission, "Empowering students and enriching communities through education," is the guiding focus for the college. The goals of the SOAR to 2024 Strategic Plan are fully discussed in section 5C and were developed within the college's specific context. ECC maintains the financial resources necessary to carry out these goals. Revenue per student has increased from $12,658 in 2018 to $14,087 in 2020. While this is below the national median, it reflects lower costs in the Midwest.

ECC is organized to meet the educational needs of its students, with a current student/faculty ratio of 15.76 (NCCBP p. 27), which is generally in line with the national median over the last four years. This commitment to quality instruction is further demonstrated by the ratio of courses that are taught by full-time faculty vs. adjuncts. Currently, 64.13% of courses are taught by full-time faculty, a higher proportion than the national community college median.

ECC's Composite Financial Indicator has increased from 1.23 in 2018 to 3.22 in 2020. This is largely due to a consistent reduction in long-term debt (primarily general obligation bonds approved by voters and retired through a local levy) and increases in capital assets. Beginning in FY21, the College and the East Central College Foundation (the Foundation) financials are presented as a combined statement. The Foundation is chartered solely to support the college. The Foundation provides scholarships to students and supports the institution through funding for a range of projects. Examples include annual "mini-grants" awarded to departments for pilot projects or other extraordinary expenses, facilitating and contributing to fundraising for the addition of baseball, and the purchase of an outdoor digital message board. The Foundation provides annual ongoing support for programs in the fine and performing arts.

While these indicators provide broad evidence of key resources, decisions made in the short term are realistic with respect to ECC's mission, resources, and opportunities. Some recent examples include:

- In developing recommendations for tuition and fee setting (p.50-55), Pell Grant allotments and Missouri A+ scholarship amounts were considered so that tuition rates were set below these amounts. Tuition rates at other Missouri community colleges were also examined.
- Full implementation of Guided Pathways would involve considerable expenditures. The college is pursuing a Title III grant. While not yet funded, the grant process led to state funding for the upcoming Falcon Career Center, a component of the Title III objectives.
- Rolla is recognized as a prime opportunity for enrollment growth, as evidenced by the Rolla strategy in SOAR to 2024 plan. Classes are taught at leased locations approximately three miles apart. The comprehensive plan for Rolla provides a measured approach for scaling up operations, recognizing the challenge of a single facility to house the current and future needs of Rolla students will require deliberate planning. The Governor's FY23 budget includes $6.5 million for a single facility in Rolla, funds which must be matched locally. The FY23 appropriations process is now underway.
- In the past 12 months, ECC has assumed sponsorship for three programs previously operated by Rolla Public Schools (Radiologic Technology, Licensed Practical Nursing, Surgical Technology). While these programs will generate additional credit hours for students, related costs for equipment and space were evaluated as part of the decision to assume responsibility for these programs. A review of projected costs led to a third-tier being added to the tuition structure.

3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

ECC utilizes a well-developed process for annual budgeting and continually monitors its finances. Budgeting is collaborative, responsive, and transparent. The administrative team has chief responsibility for shaping the budget, with input from budget managers and the campus Budget Advisory Committee. The final authority for budget approval rests with the Board of Trustees.

Budgeting is regularly reviewed and improved. For example, early in the current fiscal year administrators discussed the budget cycle, as did the Budget Advisory Committee. A key recommendation was a more explicit use of feedback regarding variances from budget requests. An additional step was added to the budget timeline in April, "Budget Advisory Committee and budget managers review proposed final budget." This timeline shows the typical annual process:

November/December

- Vice Presidents/President verify accuracy of listed division budget managers
- Verified budget manager listing due to Vice President of Finance and Administration (VPFA)
- Budget managers receive budget request forms, new initiative proposal forms, and two years of prior budget data to begin budget development process
- Budget requests for Institutional Scholarships and Fine Arts programming (Fund 40) are due to VPFA

January

- Tuition recommendation for FY23 finalized for Board approval at February 7 meeting
- Budget Advisory Committee recommendations due to VPFA; all budget request forms are due to the Vice Presidents/President; request sheets posted to Teams
- Preliminary revenue estimates developed

February

- Vice Presidents/President evaluate budget requests and make determinations on support of new initiatives; staffing plan finalized

March

- FY23 expense projections finalized; Budget Advisory Committee reviews expense projections at March meeting
- Tentative salary agreement reached with ECC NEA; FY23 enrollment projections finalized and revenue projections developed

April/May

- President/Vice Presidents make adjustments to balance budget; Budget Advisory Committee and budget managers review proposed final budget at April meeting
- Final budget sent to Finance Executive Administrative Assistant for formatting
- Digital copy of budget book reviewed by Vice Presidents, President, and Budget Managers; final draft proofed for printing

May/June

- Budget books are bound and sent to board for review/approval at June meeting.

Financial monitoring of current revenues and expenditures (sample p. 17) occurs at each Board of Trustees meeting, with a review of materials led by the CFO. A similar review of financial data occurs at the monthly Budget Advisory Committee meetings. The results of the annual audit are presented to the Board of Trustees each December. The budget is a fluid document, with adjustments made on a continuous basis. Internal budget accounts are maintained in a system that does not allow for negative spending, ensuring oversight of expenditures at multiple levels.

4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

As a public community college, ECC's educational purposes take priority in its work. ECC is committed to its taxing district and wider service region by providing affordable course and program offerings, community education, workforce development, and adult education offerings. No efforts or expenditures are directed toward external interests. Summary figures from the 2021 audit demonstrate the college spends 66% of its budget on Instruction, Academic Support, Student Services, and Institutional Support.

FY21		
Instruction	$8,013,310	29.5%
Academic Support	$3,640,723	13.4%
Student Services	$1,502,781	5.5%

Institutional Support	$4,823,835	17.7%
Operations and Maintenance	$2,364,010	8.7%
Scholarships and Fellowships	$1,410,919	5.2%
Payments to Students	$1,333,201	4.9%
Depreciation	$2,114,161	7.7%
Auxiliary Enterprise	$1,005,190	3.7%
Total	$27,208,031	

In addition to the practices discussed in 5.B.3, annual audits ensure appropriate handling and reporting of public funds.

The college appropriates resources effectively while capitalizing on alternative revenue streams. Some examples include the following:

- Utilizing USDA Rural Business Development grant funds and DESE Vocational Enhancement funds to purchase equipment for Career Technical and Health Sciences programs.
- Partnering with the ECC Foundation to expand Athletics, which in turn grows enrollment and opportunities for students.
- Securing funding to upgrade HVAC equipment with funds recouped via energy savings.
- Collaborating with the foundation to maximize scholarships for students, including a recent $5 million donation for allied health scholarships.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
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, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5C Embedded Monitoring Report

An **embedded monitoring report** is submitted as evidence of the College's progress related to planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes, and affiliated centers.

ECC allocates resources—funds, staff, facilities, technology—in alignment with its mission and priorities. As a comprehensive community college, ECC does not have a research arm, associated institutes, or affiliated centers unconnected with its core mission.

The leadership team is directly involved in planning and resource allocation, which ensures the alignment of mission and resources. The mission explicitly calls for the College to empower students and enrich communities. Examples of resource allocation to support the mission include:

Empowering Students—As described in 5.B.4, ECC empowers students in multiple ways, including student services, scholarships, grants, and other payments to students. In FY21, the institution allocated 15.6% of its resources ($4,246,901) for student support in these categories. Empowerment results from the attainment of quality degrees, certificates, and skills. In FY21, the institution allocated 42.9% of expenses toward instruction and academic support ($11,654,033).

Enriching Communities—The Center for Workforce Development (CWD) provides non-credit training to employers and individuals. CWD works with area companies to provide customized training that improves skills, effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability. ECC allocated $591,246.27 for CWD in FY22 and employs five full-time employees and one part-time employee to carry out this work.

The College operationalizes its mission through the strategic plan. Examples of resource allocation for each of the five strategic priorities follow:

Pathways—One of the goals identified in the Pathways strategy is to "build a culture of assessment around Institutional Student Learning Outcomes." A component of that plan is the institutional engagement with the HLC Assessment Academy. The College expended $30,000 to participate in the academy, provided reassigned time to the project chair, and assigned six faculty and staff to participate in the initiative.

Partnerships—A goal of the Partnership strategy is to increase participation in the Early College Academy. ECC has committed resources to the ECA, including the designation of a "homeroom" in the Donald D. Shook Student Center, assignment of staff to support and grow the initiative, and the financial commitment of discounting tuition for program participants. The ECA now involves four area high schools with others indicating interest in participation.

Employees—The Strategic Plan calls for competitive compensation on par with peer institutions. The College has begun a multi-year plan to increase compensation for faculty and staff. This plan includes improved starting salaries for new hires and significant increases for existing faculty and staff. In FY22, $217,689.80 was allocated for market adjustments and across-the-board employee increases. Total projected cost for professional and classified staff is $1,129,686.52 over four years. Faculty adjustments are expected to be in line with staff adjustments, subject to collective bargaining.

Financial Strength—The strategic priority of financial strength can be partially measured through the Composite Financial Indicator (CFI). The CFI has increased from 1.23 in FY18 to 3.22 in FY20. This is due in part to the commitment of resources to reduce long-term indebtedness. The College has reduced voter-approved, general-obligation debt by $7,692,981.45 since FY18.

Rolla—ECC is committed to expanding its presence and offerings in Rolla to better serve the region. Recently, the institution has committed resources to assume the sponsorship of three health care programs: Radiologic Technology, Licensed Practical Nursing, and Surgical Technology. Each of these programs involves employing qualified faculty; providing advisement and other services to students; and committing to assume, maintain and provide high-quality equipment and supplies for these programs. The Radiologic Technology program is now offered by ECC. The pro forma for the program projects $245,465 in revenue and $216,100.47 in expenses.

As shown above, ECC commits its resources in a manner that aligns with its mission and priorities.

5.C.2 The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

ECC's culture of assessment, data-informed decision-making, and institutional effectiveness have evolved over the past four years. Links between assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, and planning and budgeting are systematized through the strategic plan, budgeting process, and comprehensive review process. A "New Decision Item" form provides the opportunity to request resources for initiatives related to strategic planning, comprehensive review, or ongoing needs.

Comprehensive review is applied across departments every five years, including academic departments, departments that support student learning and development, and administrative and support departments. A consistent review process is utilized across the institution. Budgeting and

planning are embedded in this work, along with the assessment of student learning and the student experience. If a need is identified through the review process, this is given strong consideration during budget discussions. Recent examples include the following:

Technology for Instruction: As the campus returned to face-to-face classes in fall 2020, students were regularly absent from class due to quarantine. Instructors were willing to provide virtual instruction via Zoom to students, but audio/visual resources to make that experience meaningful were lacking. The College invested pandemic funds in enhancing physical classrooms spaces to improve virtual instruction. Specialized equipment for some courses was also purchased to maintain social distancing while still providing high-quality visuals. Welding, for example, now utilizes a camera feed to a large monitor to enable instructor modeling of skills.

Staff Support for Student Success: ECC improved a process through the strategic planning process assessment to intervene when students face challenges and also invested in software to support student retention (Aviso). As implementation of this process deepened, it became apparent that staffing resources to support students should be enhanced and restructured. The staffing plan for FY22 included increased support for student success at the Rolla site and additional staff at the Learning Center on the main campus. These additional staff members allowed for a more targeted model of success coaching for students. In addition, through the evaluation of the strategic enrollment plan, additional resources have been allocated to improving and expanding Placement Test Preparation and Bridge courses to better meet student needs. Bridge programs are free, non-credit, one- to two-weeklong courses offered to students whose placement test scores indicate they need additional preparation before taking college-level classes. The improved offerings include a tiered approach to help target specific learning needs and added domains, such as science bridges. This allows students to move more quickly into college-level classes and use less financial aid money in the process. Additional sites for the AEL program will be established in two additional communities based on a lack of AEL services in these communities.

Comprehensive Review: The Comprehensive Review process is aligned with HLC criteria and links to budget and planning through the recommendations made during the process. ECC has established a five-year rotation schedule for comprehensive reviews, including departments in all divisions of the College. Review processes vary only slightly for Academic, Student Development, and administrative departments. Administrative departments have utilized the process for several improvements. The Web Services review (p.30) yielded an understanding of a need to formalize departmental responsibilities for webpage content. Based on data from the IT review (p.17 #3), training software was purchased for use in the IT department.

Additional examples of linking the process of assessment and evaluation to budget and planning include:

Earn While You Learn: Based on assessment results and needs from healthcare partners, the nursing program began the innovative practice of facilitating student employment at local hospitals while students are completing their final semester of clinicals in the RN program. Following a successful pilot, the program was approved by the Missouri State Board of Nursing.

Graphic Design: The Graphic Design department was previously separated in proximity from the rest of the Art department. This diminished opportunities for faculty and student collaborations. In fall 2021, the College renovated a large classroom adjacent to the art studios and moved the program for spring 2022. This move paves the way for the Public Relations Department to move to that space. This room is already outfitted with much that the PR Department needs and allows this team to be

located together, enabling more effective collaboration.

Falcon Seminar: The first-year student experience course has undergone several improvements as one of the Guided Pathways action items. One of those improvements is the decision to provide reassigned time for a faculty member to manage the curriculum, support those teaching, and lead the course trajectory.

Distance Learning: A goal in the Online Learning and Educational Technology Comprehensive Review (p.12) is to improve academic rigor and integrity in online coursework. One action item designed to meet this goal is to increase workshops and training offerings for faculty teaching distance education. As a result of this recommendation and linking to budgeting and planning, a membership application is in progress to the Online Learning Consortium for intentional and targeted training.

Music Department: As part of the Music Department Comprehensive Review (p.36), one goal was to gain additional storage space for choral risers, performance garments, and other equipment in a safe and secure space. In addition, an improvement in the sound system in the music room was also identified as a goal. These improvements were made as scheduled and linked to planning through the Comprehensive Review Process.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

Planning includes all institutional constituents. In 2018 the College formally established a Strategic Planning Committee and began a thorough planning process. The College's Strategic Planning Committee was aided by an outside consulting firm (Campus Works); this expert assistance facilitated participation by all stakeholders in a systematic manner. Led by chairs representing all three employee groups, Classified Staff, Faculty, and Professional Staff, committee membership included nearly 50 people. The process timeline is as follows:

August/September 2018: Planning began with campus-wide engagement, including students, through an initial workshop, which resulted in the development of the Student Experience Statement. The Strategic Planning Committee invited the entire campus to participate in a SWOT analysis.

October/November 2018: The Institutional Research Office presented key data regarding enrollment, retention, and other key measures to the campus. Following this presentation, the Strategic Planning Committee analyzed data from the SWOT analysis and began to define areas of focus.

January/February 2019: Based on those areas of focus, on January 18, 2019, the committee held a Future Summit. Speakers presented "Ed Talks" on subjects selected by the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), based on stakeholder input. College personnel and community members broke into discussion groups facilitated by members of the SPC to create impact statements. Following the Future Summit, the SPC reviewed these impact statements in scan teams. Three student focus groups were conducted to capture their unique insights.

March 2019: Scan teams concluded research and shared findings, which provided the basis for the strategy development. Meanwhile, the entire campus created campus values (p.4). The Committee then used these discussions to organize and distribute a campus survey. The SPC refined draft value statements.

April/May 2019: The Committee presented strategies and values to the campus community via an online survey and utilized results to revise draft strategies.

May/June/July 2019: Budget managers and members of the Strategic Planning Committee crafted objectives and action steps to support strategy implementation.

August 2019: The committee shared the complete plan with the campus; administration presented it to the Board of Trustees for approval; and the College publicized the plan to the community.

Currently, strategic plan implementation is carried out in established committees and workgroups across campus. Each strategy is led by two co-chairs with implementation embedded in the work of multiple committees and offices. The Cabinet monitors Strategic Plan progress and summaries from comprehensive reviews regularly. External partners assist the College in an ongoing basis through participation in Career and Technical program advisory groups and Comprehensive Review teams. ECC engages with local chambers of commerce and businesses, establishes articulation agreements with 4-year institutions, and develops partnerships with K-12 institutions.

Strategy	Co-Chairs	Collaborative Groups
Pathways	Vice-President, Academic Affairs Vice-President, Student Development	Academic Council, Curriculum Committee, Instructional Assessment Committee, Strategic Enrollment Management Committee, Guided Pathways
Partnerships	Vice-President, External Relations Director, Admissions and Early College	Admissions and Advising, Center for Workforce Development, AEL , Academic Leadership Team
Employees	Director, Human Resources Exec. Director, Institutional Effectiveness	Employee Association Groups, Shared Governance, Staff and Faculty Professional Development Committees, Insurance Committee

Rolla	Director, Rolla Site Rolla faculty member	Rolla Strategy Implementation Team: academic deans, foundation, public relations
Financial Strength	Vice-President, Finance and Administration President	Budget Advisory Committee Leadership Team

5.C.4 The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

ECC plans according to its current and anticipated revenue, projections regarding enrollment, and a grounded understanding of other external factors that could impact capacity.

The institution benefits from mixed sources of general revenue—primarily state aid, tuition and fees, and local taxes. This mix helps mitigate significant fluctuations that would affect operations. The local tax base is stable with modest, steady growth. State aid has stabilized in recent years and often runs counter-cyclical to tuition revenue. Historically, in periods of economic growth and low unemployment, state revenue shows gains while enrollment may drop. Conversely, when unemployment goes up enrollment also grows. This growth occurs when state revenue—derived largely from income and sales tax—declines. The general revenue mix provides stable and predictable revenue.

General revenue for FY2022 is budgeted as follows:

Local Revenue (property tax) $7,511,756 37.9%

State Revenue $5,236,024 26.4%

Tuition and Fees $6,334,616 31.2%

Interest Income $75,000 <1%

Gifts and Grants $100,000 <1%

Miscellaneous Revenue $556,478 2.8%

Total General Revenues $19,813,874

ECC has multiple mechanisms to understand changes in revenue and enrollment. Revenue from tuition and fees are considered part of the annual tuition setting process discussed previously. The College receives local tax revenue throughout the fiscal year, predominantly in the third quarter. Changes in assessed valuation, tax abatements, new construction, inflation, and other factors affecting local revenue are monitored by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). State revenue is received monthly; the President serves as legislative chair for the Missouri Community College Association

and is directly engaged in the appropriations process with local legislators, House/Senate Budget committees, and the executive branch. Appropriations and disbursements are monitored regularly by the President in collaboration with other Missouri community College Presidents, as well as the CFO. The President is engaged throughout the state budget process, including advocacy with legislators on behalf of the College and at the state level with the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education, which tracks and originates budgets for colleges, universities, and state-funded student aid programs.

Tuition and fee revenue is a function of enrollment, which is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Cabinet. ECC projects enrollment as part of budgeting. Additionally, the institution sets goals for enrollment each semester. Multiple factors are considered, including high school graduating class sizes in the service area, recent retention and completion rates, and local unemployment rates. Cabinet-level conversations bring together all college divisions to consider diverse implications. For example, the daily enrollment report is a standing agenda item, with conversations including weekly enrollment goals, plans for publicity and outreach events, and recruitment by faculty.

The early months of the pandemic brought historic fluctuations in revenue. In May 2020, Missouri's governor announced a 10% withholding of state funds for FY19, and a likely withholding of an additional 10% in FY21. Based on this information, the President recommended, and the Board of Trustees approved (p.4), furloughs equivalent in savings to 5% of payroll. Funding ultimately was restored, resulting in a mid-year salary increase (p.25).

The Board of Trustees sets the annual property tax levy. The levy comprises portions of operating funds and debt service. In 2021, the board approved the President's recommendation to maintain the combined levy rate but transfer a portion from operating revenue to debt service. This transfer avoids a loss of revenue due to a mandatory rollback in the operating levy while building a debt service reserve. The decision reflects sound fiscal planning.

5.C.5 Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy, and state support.

During the initial strategic planning process, participants researched wide-ranging topics in scan teams that were designed to encourage creative thinking. Cross-sectional groups investigated topics from a national and statewide perspective. For example, one group examined "Using Data to Promote and Track Student Success" while another examined "Growing the Reach of the Community College." This research influenced strategies by identifying local, regional, national, and global trends. Later in the planning process, specific community data from the Rolla area was used to develop the Comprehensive Plan for Rolla.

Service area demographic trends are monitored through examination of high school enrollment. The overall trend in shrinking high school populations is one factor in the College's incremental approach to raising tuition. The College is intentionally focused on the Early College programs to reach current high school students earlier in the College enrollment process. This focus is evidenced by the growth in Early College Credit hours, which surpassed established goals. In addition the College has been intentional in reaching and supporting adult students, for example, through the Finish Your Investment (FYI) program. This program guides students who have completed some College credits at ECC to help them return and complete a degree.

ECC monitors evolving external factors through its involvement in multiple regional, state, and national organizations. The Missouri Community College Association provides networking and

legislative support at all levels. The networks of College Presidents, chief academic officers, chief financial officers, student development officers, and workforce development coordinators are particularly helpful in monitoring potential new requirements and additional funding sources. For example, ECC received nearly $900,000 in funding for its Falcon Career Center because its plans took into account current community needs, and a detailed funding proposal was ready.

The College President and Vice President of External Relations maintain memberships on local economic advisory boards, chambers of commerce, and hospital boards to gain insight into regional needs.

The administrative team takes time to examine emerging issues and trends. In July 2021, the team held its off-site retreat. Administrators discussed federal, state, and legal issues affecting community colleges. External participants included the Missouri Commissioner for Higher Education, the Senior Vice President for government relations and policy analysis for the American Association of Community Colleges, and the institution's general counsel. In October 2021, the team extended those discussions with local and operational issues to begin the annual budget and planning cycle.

The President is actively involved in the American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) as a member of the Commission on Small and Rural Colleges, serves on the advocacy advisory group for AACC, is legislative chair for the Missouri Community College Association, and serves as a board member for the Rural Community College Alliance. He works directly with federal and state legislators and staff to advance the institution's legislative priorities.

5.C.6 The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

The SOAR to 2024 Strategic Plan is the primary driver for systematic improvement. The five strategies and related objectives, action steps, and metrics advance the College over this five-year period and beyond. Implementation plans developed in 2019 have provided key implementation steps, and much of this planned implementation has occurred. However, these plans could not have predicted the impact of the pandemic on priorities and resources. Given all of these factors, much has been accomplished, and new areas of focus have emerged. In fall, 2022, the College will examine each strategy and related plans in-depth for continued relevancy of efforts, as well as an examination of future priorities.

The College regularly communicates progress on the plan to stakeholders. Information about the strategic plan is shared with the public via the webpage, which contains condensed information from annual presentations to campus and the Board of Trustees. This 2020 update was shared with the campus as the College prepared for the uncertainties of face-to-face instruction after concluding the spring 2020 semester virtually. The 2021 update further articulated progress toward the stated objectives. These completed actions are the work of many collaborative groups across campus.

Below is a brief summary of accomplishments:

Pathways: Develop clear academic and career pathways with personalized support to increase enrollment and promote student success.

Guided Pathways implementation is a key action step and has involved the entire college. The development of Guided Pathway to Success documents (three samples) has involved faculty and academic leadership and has been fully approved by curriculum and academic councils prior to use

on the website and in academic advising. Professional development for the College has helped develop a shared Guided Pathways model. To support students, the College implemented a master schedule template for consistent access to courses.

The Strategic Enrollment Management and Retention Committee **i**s charged with improving access and student success by developing, monitoring, evaluating, and communicating all aspects of the enrollment cycle. The committee's work on the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and its priorities support the College's Guided Pathways initiative.

Implementation of Canvas, a new Learning Management System (LMS), and the Aviso Student Engagement system (detailed in 4C) provided additional guidance for students and was instrumental in providing support for students as instruction was disrupted by the pandemic. Training and professional development for faculty in the use of these tools has been is ongoing.

Additional degrees and certificates available to students in the past four years provide further opportunities. These range across disciplines and locations: The Welding Certificate (newly offered in a condensed time frame), the Applied Technology AAS, Medical Assisting, Surgical Technology, Radiological Technology are among the new degrees offered.

Progress toward this strategy is measured in annual credit hour production and degrees and certificates awarded (p.13-14).

Partnerships: Strengthen partnerships with local high schools, higher education institutions, and employers to drive intellectual and economic development in the region.

This broad strategy challenges the College to fully consider relationships at all levels. Early College Programs have expanded in the numbers they serve, as well as the types of opportunities available to high school-age students. ECC now offers scholarships for low-income dual credit students, the opportunity to take a summer class free to high school juniors, and the opportunity to graduate with an Associate degree to students from four partner high schools. All of this is evidenced by the growth in Early College Credit hours, which surpassed established goals.

Transfer partnerships are also an objective. The College articulated the goal of improving transfer to four-year institutions. This element of the strategic plan will be an area of focus in the coming year, spurred by recent agreements such as CIS degrees transferring to the University of Missouri. Over the next year, the College aims to identify new agreements that streamline transfer processes. Current data indicate a graduation rate of 40%. As the graduation rate has increased, the transfer rate has decreased to 14%, a function of higher rates of completion.

The goal to improve industry partnerships is measured in part through the "Work Here, Train Here" program, with a goal of 10 new partnerships annually. However, the College has learned this narrow metric does not adequately convey the impact of the Center for Workforce Development's (CWD) relationships with area businesses. Instead, CWD staff develop and implement customized training programs and delivers training on campus or on-site.

Despite the crippling effect of the pandemic in 2020, this division has maintained and increased relationships with area businesses as articulated in their 2021 Year In Review. Data from this report and knowledge of the business landscape will be used to inform future goals for the division, as will the comprehensive review occurring this year.

Employees - Create a culture of collaboration and learning to attract, retain, and develop diverse and talented employees.

Employees and professional development are institutional priorities. The Employees strategy was informed by data from the "Great Colleges to Work For" survey, which marked 2018 as a low point in ECC's employee culture, exacerbated by the College's inability to provide raises in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Metrics for progress were selected from this employee survey related to Professional Development and Collaboration (65% positive responses for each survey theme).

ECC has enhanced professional development opportunities for employees. In addition to continued support for faculty professional development, the College has expanded its ties to organizations such as NISOD, the Online Learning Consortium, and the Missouri Community College Association. The pandemic impacted these efforts both positively and negatively, in terms of increased participation in virtual conferences and decreased participation in face-to-face opportunities, many of which were canceled. The College provided in-depth training opportunities in the use of Office 365 tools. Future plans include efforts to coordinate faculty and staff learning opportunities.

ECC committed to improved compensation for employees. The first step in this process was a mid-year salary adjustment in December 2021. Employees were given an across-the-board 4% increase in pay as a one-time payment. In June 2021, the Board of Trustees approved the administration's recommendation for compensation increases for all employees, including the implementation of a salary schedule for classified and professional staff. The four-year plan is designed to bring employees up to market.

The Human Resources department at the College targeted recruiting and onboarding processes for improvement, based on lackluster data from the employee survey. Key improvements to the adjunct recruitment process include an incentive to current employees for recruiting adjuncts and a detailed examination of adjunct onboarding and support. Overall employee recruitment has been enhanced through differentiated options provided to search committee chairs for advertising key positions.

The goals of 65% positive responses in Professional Development and Collaboration themes have been met, with some improvement noted in responses to the question: "I am paid fairly for my work." Data from the survey continues to indicate that Employee onboarding is an area that merits attention. The Human Resources Comprehensive review (Feb.-June, 2022) should provide further direction for improvements.

Rolla: Expand our presence and offerings in Rolla to enhance the College's impact throughout our region.

During SOAR plan development in 2019, the College identified the need to learn more about the Rolla portion of its service region. This lack of information was remedied in 2019-20, as a core group examined relevant data and prepared for a gathering of college and community stakeholders focused on Rolla. Originally scheduled for April 2020, the College postponed the event due to the pandemic. The event was adapted to a virtual environment, with input from the Rolla area sought in a broad community survey. College stakeholders gathered in September 2020, and the information and input were used to create the Rolla Comprehensive Plan.

In 2021, significant facility improvements were made at both Rolla sites. Network infrastructure, bandwidth and wireless access points were upgraded. New classroom, lab, and student study furniture were purchased to enhance the student experience. A part-time tutor position was increased to full-

time to provide student success coaching and increased tutoring hours. Student Activities at Rolla have expanded, and Student Government has been reactivated.

Knowledge of the Rolla site and community-informed goals poised the College to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. Rolla Public Schools is an established area partner, serving as a lessor for ECC-Rolla Main. In fall 2020, the district approached the College, asking ECC to take over three Allied Health programs. ECC was quickly able to assume sponsorship for the Radiologic Technology Program in 2021 because it was previously administered in partnership. Sponsorship transfer of the Licensed Practical Nursing and Surgical Technology programs followed in 2022. Taking full responsibility for these programs and adding additional Chemistry and Physics faculty are important steps toward the goal of increasing Rolla Credit Hours to 9,000 by 2024. In addition, implementation of the Rolla Onboarding, Advising, and Retention (ROAR) process drives a proactive, dynamic student services approach to increase Rolla enrollment. 20-21 enrollment at Rolla (p.26) does lag behind the goals established, but increases are anticipated for this year.

A single Rolla facility continues to be a focus of the Rolla Comprehensive Plan. This is challenging because Rolla is in our service region, but not our taxing district. In January 2022, Missouri's Governor recommended capital improvement funding of $6.5 million for a Rolla facility. If approved, the 50/50 match will come through grants, other external sources, or converting our existing lease payments to debt service payments. This is an exciting opportunity to consolidate and continue expanding our offerings and presence.

Financial Strength: Secure financial strength to sustain institutional viability.

The strategic plan identifies several goals to meet the objective of securing financial strength. There is progress on every front.

ECC's budget process is evaluated and enhanced each cycle. Budget information is communicated to employees throughout the year. Budget managers begin work on the budget in November each year, seven months prior to the start of the new fiscal year. Managers and administrators work in the Microsoft Teams environment, which facilitates interaction throughout the development of the budget. Senior leadership debriefs after the start of the fiscal year to evaluate the budget timeline and process and make changes as appropriate. The Budget Advisory Committee is also involved in the budgeting process. For example, the group assists in reviewing the timeline, giving feedback on the process, and relaying information to appropriate employee groups.

ECC's auxiliary departments include the college bookstore and Café Central (food service). The strategic plan calls for these departments to be self-sustaining by the end of fiscal year 2023. Actions have been made in each of these areas. For the bookstore, an online apparel store has been added to drive additional revenue. This initiative began in 2021 and will continue. While bookstores face increasing competition from Amazon and other vendors, the institution believes personal contact and service provide valuable support to students. Prior to the pandemic, the College released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for foodservice operators. Due largely to the impact of the pandemic, no proposals were received. Since then, Café Central added contactless ordering and delivery options. As part of the institution's vaccine incentive program, participants were provided with a key tag for beverages at the café. The goal was not only to incentivize vaccination but to drive business to Café Central for other purchases. The College is considering a plan to offer free breakfast and lunch to students for the remainder of the 2022 spring semester, both as a service to students and to increase awareness and volume in the café.

ECC continually explores federal, state, and private grants to provide alternatives to the primary sources of general revenue: state aid, tuition, and local taxes. Examples of funding sources utilized for this purpose include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, State of Missouri, National Endowment for the Arts, Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF), and East Central College's Foundation:

- The College regularly utilizes the USDA's Rural Business Development Grant program. The program provides a funding stream to purchase necessary equipment in the Career and Technical Education and Health Sciences programs that allow them to maintain their high standards of instruction in a lab setting. A total of $454,469 has been awarded in five separate awards from 2016-2021 for the Welding, HVAC, Culinary, Advanced Manufacturing and Health Sciences programs. The College also utilized the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan program for a $1,000,000, 10-year, 0% loan to finance the establishment of the Business and Industry Center. As of January 31, 2022, the USDA loan had a balance of $483,334.00.
- While the institution utilizes state funding for a range of expenses, a notable example is the award of $868,642 in funding through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief(GEER) grant program (p.10) (Facility initially described as a Center for Career Advancement and Student Wellness, later branded the Falcon Career Center). This grant, utilizing emergency relief funds made available to the Governor during the pandemic, is funding the renovation of space formerly utilized by the HVAC program. Once complete, the space will become the Falcon Career Center and house a career navigator, wellness navigator, Adult Education and Literacy, and the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. The funding enabled the College to use these funds in lieu of institutional dollars for space renovation.
- ECC received $10,000 in fiscal year 2019 and $10,000 in fiscal year 2020 from the National Endowment for the Arts. The funds supported visiting artists who performed on campus.
- To date, ECC has received $6,459,385.00 in HEERF institutional funding. These funds have provided alternatives to utilizing general revenue, facility fees, or other institutional funds for a wide range of projects. The largest expenditure funded the Clean Air Project, resulting in the replacement of outdated HVAC infrastructure and enhancement of the quality of air flow for students and employees.
- In addition to ongoing scholarship support, the Foundation provides funding for expenses that otherwise would commit institutional funds. Since 2018, the Foundation has provided $46,062 in mini-grants to fund pilot projects or special initiatives on campus. In commemoration of the College's 50th anniversary, the Foundation allocated $123,000 for the purchase of an outdoor digital sign that is utilized by the College to convey information and promote events. The Foundation also provided $327,000 and coordinated private fundraising for the addition of women's soccer and men's baseball.

The College has exceeded its goal of increasing the Composite Financial Index (CFI, excluding pension liability) to 2.0 by 2024. The CFI was 1.23 in fiscal year 2018, 2.35 in fiscal year 2019, and 3.22 in fiscal year 2020. The reduction of long-term debt (voter-approved general obligation bonds) is a significant factor in the CFI. Since fiscal year 2018, the institution has reduced long-term debt by $7,692,981.45. Bonds will be retired in fiscal year 2026, and the College is evaluating options for future capital improvements, transferring all or a portion of its debt service levy to operations, or a combination thereof.

The examples above provide evidence of strategic plan implementation. As Soar to 2024 approaches its final two years, the College is prepared for the next round of strategic planning. In the coming

year, ECC will initiate an assessment of the process and how it will structure the next phase of strategic planning.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

ECC provides evidence that its resources, structures, processes, and planning are sufficient to carry out its mission, improve educational quality, and respond to challenges and opportunities. The college has demonstrated its ability to be responsive, nimble, and proactive for the benefit of its students and other stakeholders.

Sources

There are no sources.