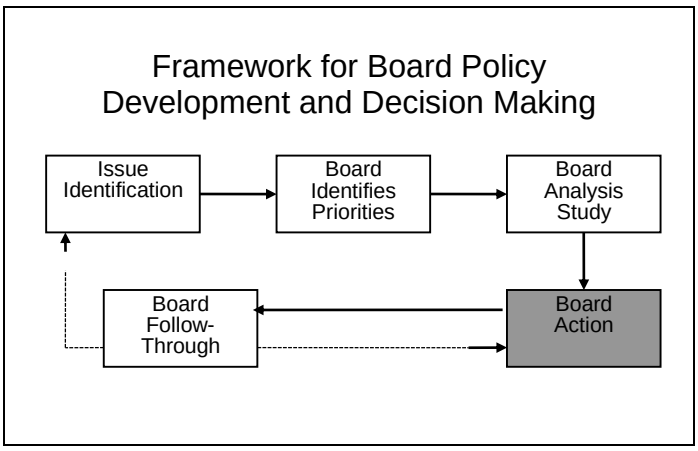
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

March 31, 2016



Agenda Item: Southeastern Community College (SCC) Interim Accreditation Report—Fiscal Year 2016

Iowa Goal: Individuals will pursue postsecondary education in order to drive economic success

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code, Section 260C.47(3), grants authority to the State Board of Education to determine whether the programs of a community college shall remain accredited.

Presenters: Jeremy Varner, Administrator
Division of Community Colleges

Barbara Burrows, Chief
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Attachments: 1

Recommendation: The Department of Education recommends continued accreditation for SCC. A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation will be conducted in fiscal year 2021.

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of SCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The department conducted the on-site portion of the evaluation on November 19-20, 2015. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team's interim review of SCC.

SCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a commission of the North Central Association. The state accreditation process reviews state requirements but does not duplicate the HLC process. HLC documentation is reviewed during the visit to identify any follow up that may be required. State standards are reviewed through a structured process by department staff and community college peer reviewers.

Accreditation Report
Interim State Evaluation

Southeastern Community College

November 19-20, 2015

FY 2016

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

www.educateiowa.edu

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Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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Accreditation Team
Southeastern Community College
Interim Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2016

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Southeastern Community College
State Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2016 - Conducted November 19-20, 2015

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled interim accreditation evaluation of Southeastern Community College (SCC) by the Iowa Department of Education (DE) as mandated by Iowa Code, Section 260C.47. The accreditation evaluation was conducted on Thursday, November 19, and Friday, November 20, 2015, at the main campus of Southeastern Community College in West Burlington, Iowa.

Assurance Summary State Standards

Compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria

The state accreditation team reviewed the most recent report and information from the HLC available at the time of the evaluation. SCC's letter of accreditation by the HLC was reviewed and SCC has continuing accreditation. SCC has demonstrated that it meets HLC criteria.

Compliance with Additional State Standards

Faculty Qualifications

All community college-employed instructors who are under contract as of July 1, 2011, who teach in career and technical education (CTE) or arts and sciences (including adjuncts) are required to meet minimum faculty standards (Iowa Code, Section 260C.48). The DE accreditation team reviewed a random sample of faculty personnel files provided by the human resources office to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE provided a random list of 30 faculty members for whom SCC provided personnel files regarding their faculty qualifications, with supporting documentation such as college transcripts, employment applications to illustrate related work experience, and third-party licensure/certification, if applicable. The DE review team then perused the files to determine whether each faculty member complied with current Iowa Code faculty standards for the courses he or she taught during FY 2015.

Finding: Based on the DE team's initial review of randomly selected faculty member's qualifications, it was determined that a few instructors did not meet state minimum faculty standards for some of the courses they taught in FY 2015. Since college administrators had conducted a thorough audit of their faculty's qualifications prior to the DE's visit, they were aware of the lack of adequate evidence in the majority of these cases. The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) had already taken action on two of the cases, in which the instructors were adjuncts, by informing them that they would no longer be allowed to teach the courses in question.

With the remaining cases, the college acted promptly to notify each instructor of his or her qualification issue via the following message sent by the VPAA:

> *Approval must be acquired from the VPAA to be scheduled in the future to teach in the area in question. To initiate the approval process, faculty need to submit either the transcript review matrix, or the professional experience table (or both) to their dean for review and consideration. If an analysis finds that the existing coursework or experience is insufficient, then faculty will work with their deans to determine a plan for either (1) discontinuing teaching in that area, or (2) completing appropriate professional development or graduate course work to have the approvals reinstated at some yet to be determined future time.*

This statement and the documentation the DE team was presented during the visit illustrate that SCC's new processes for verifying and documenting faculty qualifications are outstanding. Within the three months since the visit, SCC has submitted evidence that each of these non-compliance findings is being addressed. In January, 2017, we will formally conduct another review of the faculty members involved to ensure the college is in compliance with Iowa Code.

Faculty Teaching Load

The teaching loads of full-time instructors must not exceed the faculty load limits set forth in Iowa law. This is the case for CTE instructors, as well as for college parallel (arts and sciences) instructors (Iowa Code, Section 260C.48). The DE accreditation team reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of faculty to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE provided a random list of 30 faculty members for whom SCC provided documentation of their FY 2015 teaching loads. SCC provided clear documentation of the teaching loads of the faculty members under review for compliance with the maximum teaching loads established in Iowa Code, Section 260C.48.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Special Needs

Community colleges are required to maintain equal access in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities must be given access to the full range of course offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations. The DE accreditation team reviewed SCC's nondiscrimination statement in marketing and recruitment publications, the college catalog and website, and information on the college's Americans' with Disabilities Act policies and reports. They also conducted interviews with staff associated with disabilities services to ensure compliance with the standard.

Findings: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

CTE Program Evaluations and Timelines

There are a variety of state standards related to the offering of career and technical education (CTE) programs included in Iowa Code, Chapter 258, 281—IAC 46.7(4), and 281—IAC 24.5(4). Standards for CTE programs include numerous requirements related to program and award length, program content, labor market demand, articulation, advisory committees, and more. All CTE programs (including new programs and changes to existing programs) must be approved by the DE. Standards for CTE programs are included in the *Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges* located on the DE website.

The DE utilizes a web-based platform for its CTE program approval process and maintains a database of approved programs and courses. This platform also performs a compliance check on each CTE program offered by each college. The DE accreditation team reviewed this compliance check for SCC's CTE programs to ensure compliance with the program standards. For the standards regarding program advisory committees' composition, roles and responsibilities, the DE accreditation team reviewed a random sample of CTE advisory committee membership lists and meeting minutes to ensure compliance with these standards.

Additionally, community colleges are required to review at least 20 percent of their CTE programs annually. Standards for CTE program review are also included in the program approval guidelines located on the DE website. The DE accreditation team reviewed SCC's CTE program review process, schedule, and a random sample of recent CTE program reviews to ensure compliance with the program review standards.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Strategic Planning

Community colleges are required to update their strategic plans at least every five years as a guide for the community and its decision-making (Iowa Code Section 256.31(4) (a)). The DE accreditation team reviewed SCC's most recent strategic plan and interviews selected staff to ensure compliance with the standard.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Physical Plant and Facilities

Each community college must present evidence of adequate planning, including a board-approved facilities plan. The community college's facilities must meet state and federal requirements as outlined in the state accreditation guide. The DE accreditation team reviewed SCC's facilities plan and met with the facility director and staff to discuss the college's planning process and decision-making structure to ensure compliance with this standard.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Quality Faculty Plan

Iowa law establishes the process for community colleges to plan for the hiring and professional development of faculty. Institutional quality faculty plans (QFP) are required to meet the standards of 281—IAC 24.5(5). The DE accreditation team reviewed SCC's QFP to ensure compliance with these standards.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Senior Year Plus Programs

There are a variety of requirements for Senior Year Plus programs offered to high school students jointly enrolled in a community college. These requirements are included in Iowa Code, Chapter 261E. Currently, the DE utilizes the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership's (NACEP) accreditation process to ensure compliance with many statutory requirements (legislated Postsecondary Course Audit Committee). The DE accreditation team reviewed SCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed selected staff, and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with the standard.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Compliance with Non-Accreditation State or Federal Requirements

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Evaluation Team Recommendations

The state accreditation team recommends continued accreditation for Southeastern Community College (SCC).

As mentioned in the "Faculty Qualification" section of this report (page 5), the accreditation team was impressed with the quality of SCC's thorough internal audit and resulting documentation, and the academic leadership's responsiveness to our findings. Although we have seen that most of the compliance issues are resolved, we will conduct a follow-up review to ensure that the college is in compliance regarding faculty qualifications.

A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation is scheduled for FY 2021 (i.e., academic year 2020-2021).