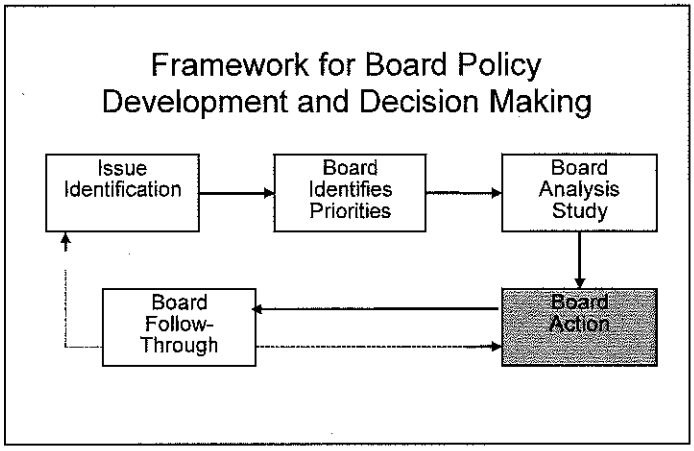
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

March 26, 2015



Agenda Item: Kirkwood Community College (KCC) Interim Accreditation Report—Fiscal Year 2015

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

Kent Farver, Chief
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Attachments: 1

Recommendation: The State Board of Education recommends continued accreditation for KCC. A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation will be conducted in fiscal year 2020.

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of KCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The department conducted the on-site portion of the evaluation on November 3-4, 2014. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team's interim review of KCC.

KCC 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.

Final Accreditation Report
Interim State Evaluation

Kirkwood Community College

November 3-4, 2014

FY 2015

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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Accreditation Team
Kirkwood Community College
Interim Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2015

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Kirkwood Community College (KCC)
State Accreditation Evaluation—FY 2015
Conducted on November 3-4, 2014

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the review was a scheduled interim accreditation evaluation of Kirkwood Community College (KCC) by the Iowa Department of Education (DE) as mandated by Iowa Code, Section 260C.47, on November 3-4, 2014.

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. KCC's letter of accreditation by the HLC was reviewed and KCC has continuing accreditation. KCC 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). A DE accreditation team member reviewed a random sample of faculty personnel files provided by the human resources office to ensure compliance with the standard.

> **Finding:** There was one instructor in the sample whose credentials did not meet state minimum faculty standards. The college has pledged to address its process for verifying faculty qualifications. In the spring of 2016, the DE will follow-up with the college to ensure compliance.

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). A DE accreditation team member reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of full-time faculty to ensure compliance with the standard.

> **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. Accreditation team members reviewed marketing/recruitment publications and information on the college's ADA (Americans' with Disabilities Act) policies and reports. Team members also conducted interviews with staff associated with disabilities services.

> **Finding:** The ADA/non-discrimination statement was missing in some college publications/flyers reviewed. The college pledged to address this issue and make the appropriate corrections. In the spring of 2016, the DE will follow-up with the college to ensure compliance.

CTE Program Evaluations and Timelines

There are a variety of state requirements related to the offering of CTE programs. The standards are 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 both new programs and changes to existing programs) must be approved by the DE.

The DE maintains a database of approved programs for this purpose. Standards for CTE programs are included in the *Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges* on the DE website. Additionally, community colleges are required to review at least 20 percent of the institution's CTE programs annually.

The DE reviews and approves institutional CTE program review processes through the state accreditation process. Standards for CTE program review are included in the guidelines for program approval on the department website. The accreditation team members reviewed information on CTE program evaluations.

> **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)). Team members reviewed the college's most recent strategic plan and interviewed selected staff.

> **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 team reviewed the facilities plan and met with the facility director to discuss the college's planning process and decision-making structure.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Quality Faculty Plan (QFP)

Iowa law establishes the process for community colleges to plan for the hiring and professional development of faculty. Institutional quality faculty plans are required to meet the standards of 281—IAC 24.5(5). The accreditation team reviewed the plan and verified that it met state requirements.

Finding: The college's quality faculty plan contained a waiver provision for faculty who had not met the minimum faculty standards. Iowa law does not contain language allowing a waiver of this requirement, and since fiscal year 2012, all instructors must meet minimum faculty standards. The college will correct the QFP document and submit the revised version to the DE for approval.

Senior Year Plus (SYP) Programs

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

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 Kirkwood Community College (KCC). A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation is scheduled for the 2020 fiscal year.