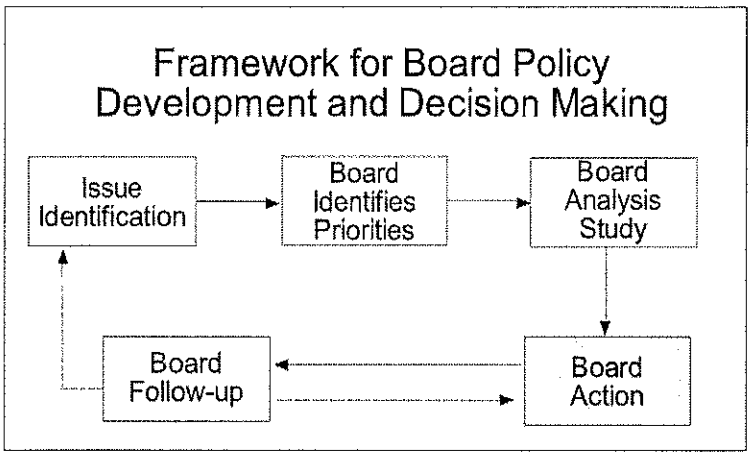
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

January 25, 2018



Agenda Item: Indian Hills Community College Interim Accreditation Report—Fiscal Year 2018

State Board Priority: Increasing Accessibility of Career and Technical Education, Work-Based Learning, and Community College and Preparing Productive Citizens for Rewarding Careers

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.

Presenter(s): Barbara Burrows, Chief
Bureau of Community Colleges

Attachment(s): One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board grant continued accreditation for IHCC. A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation will be conducted in fiscal year 2023.

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of IHCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The Department of Education conducted the on-site portion of the evaluation on November 7-8, 2017. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team during the interim review of IHCC.

IHCC is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that conducts college reviews every five years. In an effort not to duplicate the HLC accreditation process, the state process reviews the most recent HLC report to see if any follow-up is needed and then focuses on the college's compliance with state criteria/standards. State standards are reviewed through a structured process by Department staff and community college peer reviewers. Because this was an interim review, the two peer reviewers did not join the Department accreditation team on the site visit.

Accreditation Report

Interim State Evaluation

Indian Hills Community College

November 7-8, 2017

FY 2018

COMMUNITY COLLEGES &
WORKFORCE PREPARATION
PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION

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

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Indian Hills Community College
Interim Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2018 (Academic Year 2016-2017)

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Indian Hills Community College (IHCC)
Interim State Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2018 – Conducted November 7-8, 2017

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled accreditation evaluation of Indian Hills Community College by the Iowa Department of Education as mandated by Iowa Code Section 260C.47.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

College History[1]

Indian Hills Community College (IHCC) was established as Merged Area XV by the Iowa Board of Public Instruction on June 3, 1966. The college began operations on July 1, 1966, at the Ottumwa Regional Airport under the governance of a nine-member board of trustees. Then known as Iowa Tech-Area XV Community College, the college offered technical programs that included those formerly operated by the Ottumwa Community School District. The newly-renovated North Campus (formerly known as the "Airport Campus") is where the college's Aviation Maintenance Technology, Aviation Pilot Training, Welding Technology, Commercial Driver Training, and Automotive Collision Technology programs are currently taught. This campus covers 215 acres and is located seven miles northwest of Ottumwa.

On July 1, 1968, the Merged Area XV board assumed responsibilities for operations of Centerville Junior College, which had been established by the Centerville Community School Board in 1930. The Indian Hills Centerville Campus was completed in 1970 on a 72-acre site in the northwest part of the community. Current programs offered at the Centerville Campus include arts and sciences courses, Practical Nursing, Associate Degree Nursing, Sustainable Agriculture and Entrepreneurship, and Construction Technology.

The boards of Indian Hills Community College and Ottumwa Heights College merged operations on July 1, 1979. Ottumwa Heights was a private college operated by the Sisters of Humility of Mary. Its roots can be traced back to the 1860s, when the Visitation Academy was established in Ottumwa. The St. Joseph Academy was founded in 1925, and its name was changed to Ottumwa Heights College five years later. The Ottumwa Heights College campus was situated on 126 acres and was purchased by the Indian Hills Community College Board of Trustees in 1981, becoming the IHCC Ottumwa Campus.

Since 1981, the IHCC Ottumwa (main) Campus has experienced many facility renovations and the new construction of facilities to house academic programs and improve the overall student experience. The Advanced Technology Center was completed in the fall of 1990. This 125,000-square-foot building houses the college's many technical programs. The Rural Health Education Center opened in May of 2007 to serve as a classroom and laboratory building for the college's health programs, as well as a conference and meeting facility for area health care organizations. Indian Hills completed renovations in 2013 of the Tom Arnold Net Center, home to year-round recreation for students and residents of Ottumwa and the surrounding area. The college opened the Regional Entrepreneurship Center, a 10,000 square foot facility dedicated to small business development and incubation services during 2014, where they are currently incubating numerous small businesses. Through this facility, IHCC provides small business development and outreach across its ten-county service region.

Additionally, in 2017, IHCC renovated 11,000 square feet of career and technical lab space in the Advanced Technology Center to better serve students in the Robotics and Automation program, Computer Networks and Security program, and Electronic Engineering Technician program. During 2015, IHCC renovated the Centerville Campus Multipurpose facility, and in 2017 completed a Centerville Campus housing expansion project that increased housing capacity by 22 beds and created study space for on-campus students. They also completed renovation of the main campus library to create a more learning-focused, modern facility to meet the needs of student, faculty, and community members. Indian Hills is currently identifying funding sources for a proposed Welding Technology and Diesel Technology facility expansion to meet business and industry workforce needs.

Institutional Profile[1]

Indian Hills Community College changes lives by inspiring learning, diversity, social enrichment, and regional economic advancement. IHCC is a comprehensive two-year degree-granting institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. They offer over 70 academic programs at three campus locations: Ottumwa Main Campus, Ottumwa North Campus, and Centerville Campus. The college extends educational opportunities and services within its region through the operation of five county service centers, four regional career academies, and additional concurrent enrollment and academy programs in partnership with area high schools.

Indian Hills enrolls 6,425 students annually in degrees leading to university transfer and preparation for the direct employment. They focus efforts to better prepare students for success in college and to assist students in degree completion. To this end, the college has adopted mandatory orientation, academic and career advising, the development of early alert processes, and career and academic pathways. These efforts have led IHCC to a 9.2% increase in college completion among credential-seeking students (Voluntary Framework of Accountability data).

Indian Hills ranks 2nd among the Iowa Community Colleges in Credit Student Awards (College Profile, 2016). In addition, IHCC offers non-credit business and industry training through contracted training and continuing education. According to the Iowa Department of Education *2016 Profile*, 14,595 individuals received non-credit training through Indian Hills Community College.

Whether it be credit or non-credit award completion, Indian Hills Community College is dedicated to helping students achieve their goals and improve their lives.

[1] Information reported in this section was acquired from IHCC staff or the college website at: http://www.indianhills.edu/about/mission.php

ASSURANCE SUMMARY STATE STANDARDS

Compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria

The Iowa Department of Education's state accreditation team (DE team) reviewed the most recent report and information from the HLC available at the time of this evaluation. Indian Hills Community College's HLC accreditation letter provided adequate evidence that IHCC has continuing regional accreditation with no issues, concerns, or findings documented.

During an opening interview with Indian Hill Community College's president and executive council, the DE team discussed a few issues raised in the college's HLC 2010 feedback report, particularly regarding student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment and their use of data. This HLC concern resulted in a focused visit in 2013. By reviewing HLC's "Commission-Mandated Focused Visit" follow-up report (May 6, 2013) and discussing the documented issues and subsequent actions, the DE team learned that IHCC has made good strides to improve their use of data and establishing/assessing SLOs. They have done so, in part, by working with faculty in each department and conducting quarterly forums regarding their use of assessment tools and resulting data. These assessment forums are effective because they hold the staff accountable to each other, provide a platform for faculty to discuss teaching and learning, and encourage the creation of effective professional development opportunities to address identified needs.

Interviewees also discussed adding a co-curricular component within assessment, whereby they have established learning outcomes for extracurricular activities. This extension beyond the classroom is commendable and aligns with IHCC's holistic approach to student learning and development. The HLC's follow-up report indicated no "further attention required" on this topic, and their HLC accreditation is in good standing.

Compliance with Additional State Standards

Faculty Qualifications

All community college-employed instructors, 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 Human Resources (HR) to ensure compliance with this standard.

The DE provided a random list of 20 faculty members who taught credit courses during FY 2016 for whom the HR director provided personnel files regarding 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 the qualifications of each faculty member complied with current Iowa Code faculty standards for the courses he or she taught during FY 2016 (i.e., fall term 2015 and spring 2016).

The DE review team appreciated the organization, consistency, and clarity of the personnel files, which each contained a cover sheet that summarized the qualifications pertinent to the courses taught by each instructor, as well as the name and signature of the administrator(s) who conducted the review. It was apparent that IHCC has improved their qualification process since the last state accreditation review in which a few compliance issues were noted. Furthermore, academic administrators have recently conducted a thorough audit of instructors' qualifications in preparation for the HLC and state increased

criteria for arts and science faculty that was enforced September 1, 2017 (i.e., requiring six additional graduate semester hours in the instructional field).

Following a thorough review of the 20 faculty personnel files, the DE team discussed a few concerns with the chief academic officer (CAO), the executive deans of both Arts and Sciences and Career and Workforce Education, and the HR director. In each case, the IHCC staff explained their rationale for approving the instructors in question and provided additional supporting/evidential documentation. The DE reviewers were satisfied with the rationale and documentation provided and offered a few minor suggestions for improving their documentation.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Faculty Teaching Load

The teaching loads of full-time instructors must not exceed the faculty load limits set forth in Iowa Code. This is the case for CTE instructors, as well as for college parallel (arts and science) instructors (Iowa Code section 260C.48). To check compliance with this standard, the DE accreditation team reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of 20 faculty members for whom IHCC provided documentation of their FY 2016 (fall 2015 and spring 2016 terms) teaching loads.

IHCC provided adequate documentation of the FY 2016 teaching loads of the faculty under review. Although some of the contact-hour calculations had to be explained to the DE reviewers (because IHCC is the only community college in Iowa on the quarter system), the documentation provided demonstrated that IHCC instructional assignment practices are sound and compliant.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Special Needs

Community colleges shall provide equal access to the full range of program offerings and services including, but not limited to, recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with special education needs or protected by state or federal civil rights regulation. Students with disabilities shall be given access to the full range of program offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations (Iowa Administrative Code 24.5(3)), with information regarding how to access such accommodations provided in a disability statement. In addition, community colleges shall have nondiscrimination statements ensuring access to educational programs and employment for state and federally protected classes. This nondiscrimination statement must list all state and federally protected classes; provide the name/title and contact information of the person(s) designated to coordinate equity, Title IX, and Section 504 compliance; and provide contact information for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in Chicago, Illinois. The nondiscrimination and disability statements may be separate or the college may choose to combine them.

The DE accreditation team conducted a desk review prior to the onsite visit in which they reviewed IHCC's Americans' with Disabilities Act (ADA) and nondiscrimination statements, policies, and practices in marketing and recruitment publications, handbooks, the college catalog, the college's website, and sampled course syllabi. During the onsite visit, the team reviewed additional documentation and conducted interviews with faculty, students, and staff associated with disabilities services to ensure compliance with this state standard.

In both the desk review and the onsite visit, the DE team learned of numerous collegewide efforts to create a welcoming environment for all students, provide accommodations for students with special needs, and provide opportunities for special populations of underrepresented students in particular programs of study. Some of these observed efforts include:

- Use of *Google Translate* on each webpage that translates the narrative to any language selected.
- Fully staffed Student Success Center, English Language Learner (ELL) Center, and International Student Office.
- *Girls Exploring Math and Science* (GEMS) summer program offered to 3rd to 5th grade students in IHCC's service region.
- *Midwest Photonics Camp* focused on recruiting Latinos into the field.
- *Raise Individual Student's Expectation* (RISE) program focused on high school students with Individual Education Programs (IEP) transitioning into the college environment.
- *Parenting Grant* (one year, $360,000) focused on providing services and financial assistance to pregnant and parenting students.
- *Summer Boot Camp* offering intensive ELL instruction to international students who arrive on campus before the beginning of fall term.
- *Diversity Scholarship* - All students are eligible for this $500 scholarship that is awarded based on a written submission on diversity.

Regarding equal access to the full range of offerings and services to students with disabilities, IHCC utilizes a centralized process housed on the main campus, sending accommodation letters directly to the student's instructors on all campuses/centers. Sending the letters eliminates the need for the student to initiate often intimidating conversations with their instructors. Students interviewed reported that they have never had, nor heard of any student having, a problem with an instructor regarding necessary accommodations. Additionally, the administrator overseeing facilities stated that they act promptly to fix ADA issues reported on campus or in student housing.

A few examples of instructional accommodations include:

- providing an amplifier for a Radiologic Technology hearing-impaired student;
- providing equipment for an Aviation student in a wheelchair and a physically handicapped Diesel student; and
- equipping a helmet with special eyewear for a Welding student.

In terms of efforts to assist students with learning, some additional examples were cited in the Automotive program review, including creating several lab display stations to teach and test students, eliminating the need to manipulate oneself in and around an automobile; putting exercises online so that the students can access them at their convenience; and changing some final exam questions from narrative to hands-on demonstrations of procedures. Additionally, many CTE programs work closely with Student Services to help students in need of extra assistance, both academically and personally; and the Student Success Center and library have accommodating hours and seem to provide adequate staffing.

Lastly, the nondiscrimination statement appears to be consistent in all college and academic program publications, both printed and electronic, as well as in student recruiting material. It contains all the state and federally protected classes, regulation citations, and college and OCR contact information.

Finding: 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 chapters 258, 281-IAC 46.7(4), and 281-IAC 24.5(4). These standards 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 modifications to existing programs) must be approved by the DE. Standards for CTE programs are included in the *Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges* and in the *State Accreditation Guide* on the DE website.

The DE utilizes a web-based platform (CurricUNET) for its CTE program approval process and maintenance of a database of approved programs and courses. This platform includes the functionality to perform compliance checks on CTE program offered by each college. The DE accreditation team reviewed this compliance check for IHCC's CTE programs to ensure compliance with the program standards. For the standards regarding program advisory committees' composition, roles, and responsibilities, the DE 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 which are provided in the aforementioned guidelines on the DE website). The DE team reviewed IHCC's CTE program review process, schedule, and a random sample of recent CTE program reviews to ensure compliance with CTE program review standards.

The program review documents submitted for desk review from the past five years were not consistent in quality nor did they comprehensively inform the review team about the complete program review process. For example, the desk review team did not see evidence of how the previous program review recommendations were processed and documented. However, the team's onsite interviews with IHCC's Executive Council revealed that they may actually have a comprehensive program review process that could serve as a statewide model. We **request** that college staff document their process in its entirety, including all forms, templates, and presentations involved, in order to illustrate how they integrate the review into their strategic planning and budgeting processes, as well as how they close the loop for continuous improvement.

The DE team noted the following positive efforts associated with IHCC's program review process:

- The utilization of a three-year cycle for review instead of the required five-year cycle.
- Training sessions with faculty conducting each review to ensure high-quality, consistent reports.
- Each review involves a presentation to the Executive Council, which consists of staff from HR, finance, technology, marketing, the foundation, and academic administration. These leaders then collaborate to make any needed improvements to academic programs and services.
- Following each presentation, the program faculty and administrators meet to discuss student outcomes data, budget needs, and program improvement strategies.
- The annual capital equipment request process was rescheduled to follow the program review reporting process so to better accommodate program requests.
- Program faculty and administrators meet monthly to address issues generated by the review.
- Program review improvement plans are aligned with departments' "Plans for Excellence" (an annual goal-setting process), which in turn is aligned with the college's Strategic Plan.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Catalog/CurricUNET Review

The DE quality program consultant conducted a manual comparison of IHCC's approved CTE programs in CurricUNET's database with those described in their college catalog. This comparison revealed that 12 of the 101 CTE program options listed in IHCC's 2016-17 catalog did not match the approved Educational Program Reports (AS-28) stored in CurricUNET, including one diploma in the catalog that was not in the state database of approved programs. In addition, there were 37 approved program options that were not advertised in the catalog nor on the college website. All of these discrepancies were discussed with IHCC's academic and CurricUNET administrators during the visit and a remedy plan was activated.

Resolution: The CAO and administrators who oversee the CTE programs with discrepancies have already submitted curriculum changes to the DE to correct some of the noted issues. They have also worked with the DE quality program consultant to develop a plan to resolve any remaining issues during the 2017-18 academic year. The DE accreditation team will review IHCC's 2018-19 college catalog for consistency by **June 15, 2018.**

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 IHCC's most recent strategic plan and interviewed selected staff to ensure compliance with this standard.

The DE team reviewed IHCC's *2017-2019 Strategic Plan*, which includes six strategic priorities (learning, technology, enrollment, workforce, finances, and living spaces) supported by 21 goals. After receiving feedback from the HLC in 2010 regarding the need to improve environmental scanning and develop long-range planning documents, IHCC instituted some sound improvement processes. In preparing the current strategic plan, college leadership held a full-day session to gather external input, which included presentations from Drake University on trends in teaching and learning; Iowa Workforce Development on workforce trends; and the Iowa Economic Development Authority on community trends. They also presented *Bridges out of Poverty* to facilitate discussion on the diversity of student backgrounds and needs, and had a local entrepreneur discuss the latest interactions of technology with education.

Another workshop was conducted with all employees to review enrollment trends, student data, and other initiatives being conducted at the college. In addition, every employee and external advisory board member received an input sheet requesting ideas for college goals and focus areas, and every Executive Council member was responsible for gathering ideas from their departments. These new processes were developed to ensure employees would be more involved with planning and receive more frequent updates regarding the plan's development and implementation.

The DE team learned that a key to IHCC's strategic planning process is its alignment with other important processes at the college, particularly the budgeting and capital equipment request processes, which includes faculty participation. The strategic planning process is also aligned with goal-setting at the department level, in which staff create "Plans for Excellence" with strategies related to strategic goals. The overall impression of the DE team was that IHCC is intentional in their actions and decision-making.

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 plan must meet state and federal requirements as outlined in the state accreditation guide. The DE accreditation team reviewed IHCC's facilities plan and interviewed the college president and the chief financial officer (CFO) regarding the college's facility planning process and decision-making structure to ensure compliance with this standard.

IHCC utilizes a facilities plan that is updated and revised every two years. In reviewing their current 2017-2019 plan, the team was impressed with the list of completed facility projects since 2015. During a campus tour, they found that the CTE facility updates have made the campus current with changing technology. Other impressive facility features that the DE team observed include the following:

- The office of Student Services has incorporated a one-stop concept that is co-located in a building with the bookstore.
- The library is a remodeled church space with beautiful aesthetic and modern accommodations.
- The Student Success Center is welcoming and provides space/rooms for English Language Learner, reading, writing, math, and other subject-specific instruction and tutoring.
- Facility planning is well aligned with the strategic planning process.
- Students and staff seem to be pleased with the decision to institute 24/7 on-campus security. All stakeholders interviewed gave kudos about the support and assistance they have received from security staff.
- IHCC has upgraded the door locks in housing to an electronic system that can be monitored, with student access removed or changed, when necessary.
- Students and staff expressed that the ability to report complaints and incidents via their new web-based system, *Maxient*, is a great improvement over the previous paper process.

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 IHCC's QFP and interviewed the QFP Committee to ensure compliance with this standard.

IHCC's current QFP was approved by the Board of Trustees in September 2017 and is maintained by a 15-member QFP Committee consisting of eight faculty and seven administrators that frequently meet to review the plan and revise, as necessary. The plan, membership, and committee minutes provide evidence of an active, robust, and thorough process for faculty and adjunct professional development. The DE team enjoyed learning about professional development opportunities that IHCC provides and their use of *MyLearningPlan* software for tracking individuals' activity. In particular, the team found the following QFP components to be laudable:

- A $50,000 staff development fund for which an employee application (committee) review process has been established to ensure fair distribution of awards.
- A trustee donated $10,000 to help faculty pay for graduate credits to meet the recent increase in HLC and state requirements (increased from 12 to 18 graduate credits in the instructional field).
- *Lunch and Learn* sessions - Well-attended by both full-time and adjunct instructors.

- An improved process for obtaining faculty input regarding spring workshop topics.
- Seminars regarding how to teach international students, with strategies broken down by the type of student (e.g., immigrant, refugee, and F1 Visa).
- Through *MyLearningPlan*, academic administrators can propose activities for instructors to engage in, which are tied to college strategic priorities.
- The president and CAO continuously stress the importance of professional development focused on instruction and the college's commitment to work with students beyond the classroom.
- The QFP Committee used faculty feedback to increase the required hours of activity for new faculty, include a first-year capstone, and align program learning outcomes to assessments.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Senior Year Plus Programs

There are a variety of requirements for Senior Year Plus (SYP) 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 IHCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed selected staff, and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with this standard.

Indian Hills provided evidence of NACEP accreditation and will be completing the re-accreditation process during the 2018-19 academic year. In preparation, IHCC has convened a team tasked with completing all components of the re-accreditation process. Several members of this team, including the CAO, the deans of Arts and Science and Career and Workforce Education, and the Director of High School Programs, attended the 2017 NACEP national conference to update their knowledge.

The college's SYP program is overseen by the Director of High School Programs, under the CAO. The director is responsible for overseeing IHCC's concurrent enrollment offerings, career academies, and work-based learning opportunities. In addition, the director works in collaboration with the alternative high school program for adults and the four-plus program, *Raising Individual Student Expectations (RISE)*, focused on high school students with individual education programs (IEP) in need of assistance transitioning from high school to college. The director maintains documents and handbooks detailing all pertinent SYP policies and procedures, highlighted by IHCC's high school program manual, which is noteworthy because it consolidates all information relevant to high school students and parents into a single document. This manual includes guidance on student performance expectations, credit transfer, study tips, and more. All of these guidance documents are supplemented by direct outreach to students and parents, the goal of which is to ensure a clear understanding of the expectations, challenges, and consequences associated with enrollment in college-level coursework while still in high school.

The college is currently engaged in two innovative pilot projects utilizing concurrent enrollment as a key enrollment strategy. One project is the Prospective Graduate Planning (PGP) visits, in which IHCC staff meet with high school students to review the student's transcript, discuss future goals, and showcase how the college can assist them in achieving those goals. The second project involves the development of an electronic application for high school students. The application process will tie into the PGP and course registration. This will provide high school counselors access to the system in order to help students with their college-level course selection.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Compliance with Non-Accreditation State or Federal Requirements

Finding: No non-accreditation compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Evaluation Team Recommendations

The Iowa Department of Education community college accreditation team recommends continued accreditation for Indian Hills Community College.

A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation is scheduled for FY 2023 (i.e., Academic Year 2022-2023).