

Draft 2024 Accreditation Standards With Draft Review Criteria and Suggestions for Evidence

Contents

Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness	1
Standard 2: Student Success	4
Standard 3: Governance and Decision-Making	10
Standard 4: Infrastructure and Resources	14

Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution has a clearly defined mission that reflects its character, values, and organizational structure as well as its unique student and community demographics. The mission outlines the institution’s explicit commitment to equitable student achievement and serves as a guiding principle for institutional planning, action, evaluation, and improvement.

- 1. The institution’s mission defines its commitment to assuring equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. The institution regularly reviews and disaggregates data to engage with its stakeholders to ensure that the mission reflects its unique character and identifies its broad educational purposes.**

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution’s mission appropriately reflects the community and students it serves.
- The institution’s mission appropriately reflects the nature and structure of the institution (public, private, non-profit, corporate, etc.).
- The institution’s commitment to equitable educational outcomes is informed by an understanding of the characteristics of its student population.
- The institution’s mission demonstrates alignment with ACCJC’s *Policy on Social Justice*.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Documents or webpages that articulate the overall mission and purpose of the institution (mission statement, vision statement, values statements, goals statements, strategic plans, factbooks, key performance indicators, etc.)
- Minutes from meetings, retreats, or other events at which the mission is discussed
- Evidence that shows engagement with internal and external stakeholders around the institution’s overall mission and purpose (annual reports, presentations, surveys, etc.)

2. The institution establishes goals that are aligned with its mission and reflect pursuit of institutional excellence. The institution works to fulfill its mission with commitments to continuous quality improvement and equity-minded practices.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution establishes its goals in a process that is appropriate for its character and context.
- The institution has clearly defined institutional goals that align with its mission, are appropriately forward-looking, and include consideration of equitable student outcomes.
- The institution's goals align with key initiatives within its scope of responsibility.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Documentation of procedure/process for setting and reviewing institutional goals
- Documentation illustrating institutional goals and assessment of progress toward them
- Documentation of meaningful discussion of equity data and actions to close equity gaps

3. The institution's mission directs resource allocation, innovation, and continuous quality improvement through ongoing systematic planning and evaluation of programs and services.

Possible Review Criteria:

- Institutional systems for comprehensive planning are designed to support accomplishment of the mission and lead to institutional innovation and improvement.
- Institutional systems for planning are integrated such that information from program planning informs processes for resource allocation, decision-making, and short- and long-term operational planning.
- Institutional systems for planning are designed to occur on a regular basis, include appropriate participation from institutional constituencies, and use valid sources of data and information.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Examples of procedures/processes detailing comprehensive integrated planning systems (handbooks, planning platforms, etc.)
- Examples of completed institutional plans, program reviews, and/or similar institutional planning documents
- Examples of improvements and innovations emerging from the institution's comprehensive planning systems
- Evidence of prioritizing and funding resource allocations that arise through program review

4. The institution holds itself accountable for achieving its mission and goals, and for closing opportunity gaps. It regularly reviews relevant, meaningfully disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate its progress and inform planning, improvement, and innovation.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has established and published standards for student achievement (i.e., institution-set standards) in accordance with Commission policy.
- The institution regularly reviews and discusses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate its progress toward achieving the mission, enhancing understanding of students' experience, informing short and long term planning, and implementing improvements as needed.
- The institution regularly reviews meaningfully-disaggregated data, identifies equity gaps, and engages in planning and improvement to close these gaps.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Documentation of how institution-set standards and assessment of student learning are used to support the institution as it evaluates progress towards its mission
- Examples of improvements and/or innovations implemented as a result of discussions of progress toward the mission
- Minutes or other documentation of meaningful discussion of disaggregated data, equity gaps, and action plans in response to the data

5. The institution regularly communicates progress toward achieving its mission and goals with internal and external stakeholders in order to promote shared understanding of institutional strengths, priorities, and areas for continued improvement.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution regularly communicates the results of its progress assessments with internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate to its character and context.
- Institutional evaluation reports and program reviews can be accessed by constituencies.
- Data and evidence related to institutional strengths and areas for development are used to inform discussions of institutional priorities.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Examples of regular communication related to the institution's evaluation of its progress toward achieving mission (published reports, presentation materials, meeting minutes, factbooks, external newsletters, website content, press releases, conference presentations, etc.)
- Examples of how data and evidence related to institutional strengths and areas for development are used to inform institutional priorities (minutes showing discussions of data; planning documents; budget assumptions; resource prioritization and allocation documents, etc.)

Checklist Items – Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- The institution has procedures/practices for periodic review of mission/mission-related statements, including provisions for revision if/when revisions are needed
- The institution's procedures/practices for review and revision of mission/mission-related statements allow for participation of institutional stakeholders, as appropriate for the character and context of the institution
- The mission has been approved by the institution's governing board
- Procedures/processes for setting institutional goals include relevant institutional stakeholders, as appropriate for the character and context of the institution
- The institution has established standards and goals for student achievement (i.e., institution-set standards), including standards and goals for course success, degree and certificate attainment, transfer, job placement rates, and licensure examination pass rates

Standard 2: Student Success

In alignment with its mission, the institution delivers high-quality academic and learning support programs that are designed to engage and support students through their unique educational journeys. Academic and learning support programs are structured to promote equity in student success, and the institution evaluates student learning and achievement data to inform improvements and advance equitable outcomes.

1. Academic programs at all locations and in all modes of delivery are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission and reflect breadth, depth, and rigor appropriate to higher education.

Possible Review Criteria:

- Consistent with the institution's mission, academic programs are structured to lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, employment, or other similar credentials.
- The institution's processes for curriculum design and development ensure all academic programs align with the institution's mission.
- The institution's processes for curriculum design and development reflect generally accepted practices in higher education for ensuring breadth, depth, and rigor appropriate to the level of instruction (e.g., associate or baccalaureate level) and across all modalities.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Examples from the institution's curriculum development and approval processes (including processes for distinguishing lower and upper division content, if applicable)
- Examples showing curriculum review cycle and criteria by which existing courses are reviewed and updated to ensure breadth, depth, and rigor appropriate to the content level
- Catalog listings of academic programs outlining expected learning outcomes

2. Academic programs are designed to support equitable attainment of student learning outcomes and achievement of educational goals.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution's processes for curriculum design and development include appropriate faculty oversight for ongoing review, monitoring, and revision of programs in order to close identified gaps in student achievement.
- Processes for program design include consideration of feedback from workforce/industry partners, as appropriate for the institution's mission and program discipline.
- The institution's processes for curriculum design and development includes dialogue around student equity and maximizing equitable student success outcomes.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Examples of how student learning and achievement data inform ongoing curriculum design and development

3. All degree programs include a general education framework to ensure the development of broad knowledge, skills, and competencies and intellectual concepts. The institution's general education program articulates the knowledge that the institution's graduates will possess in order to participate in a diverse, quickly changing global society.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has a faculty-developed rationale for general education that serves as the basis for inclusion of courses in general education and is listed in the catalog.
- The institution's general education philosophy reflects its degree requirements and is consistent with expected norms in higher education for lower division coursework (and upper division coursework, if applicable), including courses in the arts and humanities, sciences and mathematics, and the social sciences, and competencies related to critical thinking, information literacy, and global awareness.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- General education philosophy, as documented in institutional policy, catalogs, and/or other official publications
- Documents and/or narrative detailing process for arriving at and reviewing philosophy for general education (including faculty input into general education)
- Documents and /or narrative outlining curricular processes that determine a course's inclusion in general education
- Documents and/or narrative detailing expected learning outcomes of general education component and indicating assessment results are used
- Demonstration of the institution's commitment to global awareness and cultural competency

4. The institution establishes student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. Learning outcomes reflect relevant discipline and industry standards as appropriate, and are consistently communicated to students.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution defines student learning outcomes for courses and academic programs (including degree and certificate programs).
- The institution reviews its learning outcomes for alignment with discipline and industry standards.
- The institution provides students with accurate, current, and consistent student learning outcomes for the courses and programs in which they are enrolled.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Program information (from catalog, website, etc.) showing program learning outcomes for degree and certificate programs
- Documents outlining institution's processes for communicating learning outcomes to students
- Sample syllabi and corresponding course outlines
- Processes for establishing and maintaining currency and relevancy of learning outcomes (curriculum review, industry advisory discussions, etc.)

5. The institution communicates clear, accurate, and accessible information regarding programs, services, and resources that foster success in students' unique personal and educational journeys. The institution uses multiple communication methods to provide information to students when and where they need it.

Possible Review Criteria

- The institution has mechanisms for ensuring effective communication with its students regarding the programs, services, and resources available to support the student journey.
- The institution regularly reviews its communication practices, policies, procedures to ensure clarity, consistency, accuracy, and relevance.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Samples of student-facing communications in multiple formats, modalities, and (if applicable) languages, tailored to meet the needs of specific student populations
- Examples of how the institution evaluates the effectiveness of its student-facing communications (communication survey results, website/social media analytics, processes for ensuring consistency of messages across multiple communication platforms, etc.)
- Examples of changes/improvements in communication--in messaging, format, or modality resulting from evaluations

6. The institution holds itself accountable for students' success by scheduling courses in a manner that ensures degree and certificate programs can be completed in the expected period of time.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution schedules classes in alignment with student needs and program pathways to ensure students have the opportunity to complete programs (including baccalaureate programs, if offered) within a reasonable period of time.
- The institution evaluates the degree to which scheduling facilitates timely completion of degrees, certificates, and transfer.
- The institution reflects on time-to-completion data in program review and institutional evaluation, and devises plans to improve completion rates.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Documentation and/or narrative detailing how the institution's scheduling processes ensure programs can be completed in a timely manner
- Recommended sequencing or pathway maps, as published in the catalog or other student-facing documents
- Enrollment management plans that take into consideration time to completion and program pathways
- Analysis of student achievement and/or progression data that demonstrates how the institution evaluates the effectiveness of its scheduling, pathways planning, and enrollment management practices

7. The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that meet student and curricular needs and promote equitable student learning and achievement.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its delivery modes and teaching methodologies to supporting equitable student learning and achievement, and uses results to guide improvements.
- Institutions have practices in place to ensure ongoing alignment with federal requirements for distance education and correspondence education, as defined in ACCJC's *Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education* (if applicable).

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Program reviews that disaggregate student learning assessment data and student achievement data by mode of delivery
- Examples of improvements to delivery modes and/or teaching methodologies there were made in order to address gaps in student learning and achievement
- Institutional reports on diverse and changing needs of students and resulting plans for developing or improving delivery modes and teaching methodologies
- Local guidelines that establish expectations for effectiveness and quality in distance education and/or correspondence education (if applicable)

8. ~~The institution designs and delivers effective and equitable services and programs that support students in their educational journey, address academic and non-academic needs, and maximize their potential for success.~~

The institution designs and delivers equitable and effective services and programs that support students in their educational journey, address academic and non-academic needs, and maximize their potential for success. Such services include library and learning resources, academic counseling and support, disability services, and other services the institution identifies as appropriate for its mission and student needs.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has an effective process for identifying students' academic, non-academic, instructional, non-instructional, personal wellness, and basic needs.
- The institution provides quality intake and onboarding services ~~to students (such as~~ orientation, registration, counseling, educational planning, financial aid workshops, and/or basic skills workshops, etc., etc.) to maximize preparation, success, and retention.
- The institution provides learning support resources such as library collections, library instruction, learning labs, and tutoring services in a variety of modalities (face to face, hybrid, online, etc.) dependent on institutional mission and student need.
- The institution provides quality student support services through programs such as counseling, academic advising, first year experience, veterans services, disability services, mental health services, etc. learning support, and libraries in a variety of modalities (face to face, hybrid, online, etc.) dependent on institutional mission and student need.
- The institution provides clear information and supports for students regarding transfer and career opportunities.
- The institution's expectations, documentation, and communication to students (catalogs, policies, procedures, etc.) regarding support services are clear and consistent.
- The institution systematically collects and analyzes disaggregated data to evaluate the effectiveness of its support services and learning support resources ~~these services~~ in supporting equitable student success and uses the results for planning and improvement.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- ~~Examples of e~~Communication to students regarding supports (catalogs, handbooks, policies ~~and~~ procedures related to student-facing services such as Financial Aid, Admissions and Records, FERPA, or similar)
- ~~Evidence showing how the institution collects and disaggregates~~ Disaggregated data used to determine students' needs and appropriate supports/services ~~to meet them~~
- Documentation of how the institution evaluates services to ensure their effectiveness in maximizing student preparation, success, and retention (program review, survey results, planning documents, etc.)
- Documentation/evidence of how the institution evaluates the effectiveness of its student support services and learning support resources (program review metrics, disaggregated data, institution-set standards, and/or similar program outcomes related to student success outcomes ~~success, completion, transfer, and/or workforce employment, etc.)~~
- Evidence outlining how the institution monitors students' progress towards their educational goals (e.g., early alert or similar tools, survey results, pathways-related discussions, etc.)
- ~~Evidence and e~~Examples of institutional innovations to support students (e.g., changes to tutoring, use of mixed support modalities)
- ~~Examples of resources the institution provides to all students~~

9. The institution fosters a sense of belonging and community with its students by providing multiple opportunities for engagement with the institution, programs, and peers. Such co-curricular and/or student engagement activities reflect the varied needs of the student population and effectively support students' educational journey.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution creates formal and informal opportunities for students to engage with the institution, programs, and peers (cultural, academic, clubs, political, ethnicity-based engagement, networking, athletics, internships, career trainings, etc.).
- The institution establishes co-curricular and/or student engagement activities based on the needs of the students and community it serves, including the needs of student populations that have been historically under-resourced.
- If these programs are offered the institution ensures the quality of such programs and frequently assesses activities and programs (qualitative/qualitative).

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Examples of student engagement opportunities in multiple modalities including those related to student life, diversity, equity, and career training
- Qualitative and quantitative data used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs (program reviews, assessments of learning outcomes and/or service area outcomes, student surveys, event attendance, etc.)
- Examples of how activities increase student success and retention (if applicable)

10. Faculty and others responsible for student learning regularly assess students' attainment of identified learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. Analysis of assessment results supports institutional and curricular improvements that promote equitable attainment of outcomes.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution follows established processes for learning outcomes assessment at the course, program, and institutional level.
- The institution disaggregates learning outcomes assessment results and uses the analysis to inform improvements in support of equitable attainment of learning outcomes.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Documentation and/or narrative detailing assessment processes
- Examples demonstrating how assessment results inform improvements to curriculum design and delivery
- Examples of changes to curriculum design and delivery that resulted in decreased equity gaps in learning outcome attainment

11. The institution systematically conducts program review and learning outcomes assessment that advances the institutional mission and improves equitable student achievement.

Possible Review Criteria:

- Program review includes analysis of data related to student learning (i.e., SLO assessment results) and achievement (e.g., course completions and degree/certificate completions), disaggregated for student subpopulations and/or learning modalities as appropriate.
- Faculty and other educators engage in dialogue about learning and achievement data, disaggregated for student subpopulations and/or learning modalities as appropriate, in order to guide program

improvement and curriculum development, address achievement gaps, and inform institutional goal-setting.

- Institutional dialogue about disaggregated learning and achievement data are used for program review and improvement and inform institutional goal-setting.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Documentation of processes for design and evaluation of curriculum
- Documentation of processes for program review, including consideration of how disaggregated data are incorporated and analyzed
- Examples of completed program review reports outlining how results inform improvements in curriculum design and/or teaching and learning practices to support equitable achievement

Checklist Items – Student Success

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- Policies and/or other documentation regarding transfer of credit
- Pre-collegiate curriculum is distinguished from college-level curriculum
- Verification of minimum degree requirements (60 units for AA, 120 units for BA)
- Compliance with Federal standards for clock-to-credit hour conversions
- Policies/procedures related to program discontinuance, demonstrating that the institution provides enrolled students with opportunities for timely completion in the event of program elimination
- Policies related to catalog, communication, recruiting, enrollment, admissions, etc.
- The catalog provides information regarding the purpose, content, requirements, and expected learning outcomes of degree and certificate programs
- If applicable: Policies and/or other documentation related to expectation of conformity with specific codes of conduct, worldviews, or beliefs
- If applicable: Policies and/or other documentation related to credit for prior learning and competency-based credit
- Alignment with *ACCJC Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education*
- Alignment with *ACCJC Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*
- Policies/processes for student complaints are fair and clearly communicated to students
- Student complaints are addressed with due process
- All student records are stored permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup
- Required policies/practices for release of student records
- Documentation related to collaborations/agreements with other external parties regarding the provision of student and/or learning support services

Standard 3: Governance and Decision-Making

The institution engages in clear and effective governance practices that support the achievement of its mission. Governance roles and responsibilities are delineated in widely distributed policies, and institutional decision-making processes provide opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion of relevant stakeholders.

1. The institution upholds an explicit commitment to principles of academic freedom, academic integrity, and freedom of inquiry.

Possible Review Criteria

- The institution communicates its commitment to principles of academic freedom and freedom of inquiry to relevant stakeholders, including students.
- The institution communicates clear expectations for honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity to relevant stakeholders, including students.
- The institution has clearly communicated procedures for addressing instances of academic dishonesty.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policies, procedures, handbooks, or similar documents outlining the institution's commitment to academic freedom and academic integrity
- Policies, procedures, handbooks, syllabi, etc. that communicate expectations for honesty and academic integrity and consequences for academic dishonesty

2. The governing board has responsibility for the overall quality of the institution and supports its distinct character. The governing board regularly monitors progress towards the institution's mission and goals, and monitors its fiscal health.

Possible Review Criteria

- The institution has a policy manual or other compilation of policy documents that delineates the governing board's accountability for academic quality and achievement of equitable outcomes.
- The governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality and equitable outcomes.
- The institution has a policy manual or other compilation of policy documents that delineates the governing board's role and responsibility in ensuring the financial stability of the institution.
- The governing board regularly reviews key fiscal information and documents regarding the stability of the institution.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policies that describe the authority and responsibilities of the board
- Board meeting minutes demonstrating regular review of key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality
- Policies that describe the authority and responsibilities of the board
- Board meeting minutes demonstrating regular review of key fiscal information and documents regarding the stability of the institution

3. The governing board establishes and regularly reviews policies to ensure the realization of the institutional mission. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement policies, and refrains from involvement in the day-to-day operations of the institution.

Possible Review Criteria

- The governing board has a system for evaluating and revising its policies on a regular basis.
- The governing board sets clear expectations for regular reports on institutional performance from the chief administrator.
- Board delegation of administrative authority to the chief administrator is defined in policy or other board approved documents.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policy and/or procedure for review of board policies
- Timeline for regular review of board policies
- Policy on board delegation of authority to the CEO

4. Members of the governing board fulfill their legal and fiduciary responsibilities, acting in the best interest of the institution. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, and/or other external parties.

Possible Review Criteria

- Once a collective decision has been reached, board members, individually, demonstrate their support for board policies and decisions.
- The governing board is appropriately representative of the public interest.
- The governing board adheres to its policies for conflict of interest.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policy or bylaws that describe the ways in which the board may make decisions or act
- Results from board evaluations (if applicable)

5. The governing board functions collaboratively and effectively as a collective entity to promote the institution's values and mission. The governing board demonstrates an ability to self-govern in adherence to its bylaws and expectations for best practices in board governance.

Possible Review Criteria

- The institution's governing board outlines its expectations for working as a collective unit in support of the mission.
- The institution's governing board has documented procedures for self-governance and/or addressing behavior that does not align with its policies.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policy or bylaws that describe the ways in which the board may make decisions or act
- Evidence of votes or other board actions taken to promote the institution's values and missions
- Results from board evaluations (if applicable)

6. The governing board systematically develops, ensures, and improves its own effectiveness through orientation, professional development, and regular board self-evaluation.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The governing board has a program for board development and training.
- The governing board has a self-evaluation process, as defined in its policies.

- The governing board uses the results from its self-evaluation to make improvements regarding its role, functioning, and effectiveness.
- The governing board periodically evaluates the effectiveness of its board development and training program for ongoing improvement.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Agenda and/or presentations from new board member orientations
- Schedule of ongoing training opportunities or topics for board members
- Documentation of board member participation in board development workshops or conferences
- Bylaws, policy, and/or procedures for conducting board evaluations
- Completed board evaluations
- Locations where the results of board evaluations are made public
- Agenda/minutes that note discussions on the board evaluation
- Subsequent evaluations that record improvements made as a result of prior evaluations

7. The institution's decision-making structure and processes are clearly defined, aligned with the mission, and include opportunities for the participation of appropriate institutional stakeholders. Roles, responsibilities, and authority for decision-making are delineated as appropriate to the institution's structure.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution's decision-making structures and processes are appropriate to its mission.
- The institution's decision-making structures and processes are documented and widely available to support shared understanding.
- Constituency roles in decision-making are clearly defined.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Written documents (policies, procedures, handbooks, etc.) outlining role and practices for institutional decision-making
- Decision-making committee charters
- Decision-making committee meeting minutes and agendas
- Examples of a structure and or decision that has advanced the mission
- Examples of decision-making processes involving different institutional constituency groups

8. The institution periodically reviews its decision-making structure and processes to ensure that they are being used consistently and effectively to advance the mission, ensure appropriate participation from institutional stakeholders, and promote equitable student success.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution reviews its decision-making structure and processes with a focus on effectiveness and improvement.
- The institution holds itself accountable for implementing its decision-making structure and processes consistently to ensure participation of appropriate constituencies and shared understanding of decisions.
- Decision-making structures and processes advance the mission of the institution.
- The institution communicates the results of its reviews of its decision-making structure and processes and uses them to improve.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Periodic assessment of structures and processes
- Work accomplished using decision-making structures and processes to support the mission

Draft 2024 Accreditation Standards

- Examples of ideas that have been advanced through the decision-making structures and processes and implemented, with documented result(s)/outcome(s)
- Minutes/reports tracking the progress of ideas from inception to implementation, including documented result(s)/outcome(s)
- Reports of regular evaluation of decision-making policies/procedures and documented result(s)/outcome(s)
- Structures/processes illustrate accountability and action

Checklist Items – Governance and Decision-Making:

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- The institution has clearly-defined policies/procedures for selecting and regularly evaluating the CEO of the college and/or district/system
- The institution's governing board has established policies/procedures/bylaws related to Board Ethics
- The institution's governing board has established policies/procedures/bylaws related to conflict of interest

Standard 4: Infrastructure and Resources

The institution supports its educational services and operational functions with effective infrastructure, qualified personnel, and stable finances. The institution organizes its staffing and allocates its physical, technological, and financial resources to improve its overall effectiveness and promote equitable student success. The institution actively monitors and assesses resource capacity to inform improvements to infrastructure and ensure long-term health and stability.

1. The institution employs qualified faculty, staff, administrators, and other personnel to support and sustain educational services and improve student success. The institution maintains appropriate policies and regularly assesses its employment practices to promote and improve equity, diversity, and mission fulfillment.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has a process to determine the staffing levels and organizational structure it needs to support its mission, educational programs, and operations.
- The institution plans for the recruitment of personnel in accordance with its institutional mission and goals.
- The institution uses appropriate hiring criteria (including minimum qualifications criteria for the system in which it operates and/or degree level, if applicable) to ensure all employees are qualified for their roles.
- Faculty job descriptions are appropriate for the level of instruction offered, and include the responsibility for teaching and learning, curriculum oversight, and the assessment of student learning outcomes.
- The institution verifies the education (including equivalency of degrees for non-U.S. institutions), training, and experience of all new hires to ensure they possess the minimum qualifications outlined in job descriptions.
- The institution tracks and evaluates its record in employment equity and diversity.
- The institution regularly reviews its policies and/or procedures for equitable hiring practices to ensure currency and relevancy.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policies, procedures, or processes that guide the institution's determination of staffing needs
- Policies, procedures, or operational guides outlining hiring practices
- Job announcements with position descriptions for faculty, administrators, and staff
- Policies, procedures, and tools used in recruitment, screening, and hiring
- Policies and procedures related to transcripts evaluation and certifying equivalency
- EEO reports, plans, goals, etc.
- Results from evaluation of the effectiveness of hiring policies, processes, and procedures

2. The institution supports employees with professional learning opportunities aligned with the mission and institutional goals. These opportunities are regularly evaluated for overall effectiveness in promoting equitable student success and in meeting institutional and employee needs.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has methods to identify employees' professional learning needs relevant to educational services and operational functions, including professional learning opportunities designed to support institutional efforts to close student achievement gaps.
- The institution evaluates its training and professional learning offerings and uses the results to improve effectiveness in supporting employee needs.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policies, schedules, resources, agendas, or other artifacts related to employee orientation, onboarding, and ongoing professional learning processes
- Employee handbooks/manuals
- Records of professional development opportunities offered, evaluation of impact, and use of data to inform offerings and resources for professional learning
- Sample presentations or other artifacts from trainings related to job functions and/or other professional development events (equity and diversity training; technology use and cybersecurity trainings; federal or state-mandated trainings, etc.)

3. Employees are evaluated regularly, using clear criteria that align with their professional responsibilities and support the institution’s mission and goals. Evaluation feedback supports employees’ ongoing development and improvement.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution regularly and systematically evaluates all of its employees based on their professional responsibilities and uses this information to foster improvement. This process is continuous and ongoing in support of the mission.
- The institution has methods to determine the kinds of support its personnel need to be successful in their roles.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Procedures and documentation related to performance evaluation
- Action plans based on data derived from performance evaluations
- Feedback, suggestions, and recommendations derived from evaluation tools

4. The institution develops, maintains, and enhances its educational services and operational functions through the effective use of fiscal resources. Financial resources support and sustain the mission and promote equitable achievement of student success.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has resources to support essential program needs, as well as educational improvement and innovation when warranted.
- Funds are allocated in a manner to help achieve the institution's stated goals for student learning.
- The institution’s resource allocation process provides a means for setting priorities for funding.
- The institution manages its resources in order to sustain educational services and improve institutional effectiveness at all locations where over 50% of a program is offered.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Annual financial reports (including Audited financial statements)
- Budget allocation model or process
- Analysis of multi-year projections, trends in major budget categories, or similar planning documents
- Examples of the enhancement of programs or services funded through the budget allocation model or process

5. The institution’s mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning. Financial information is disseminated to support effective planning and decision-making and provide opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the development of plans and budgets.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution considers its mission and goals as part of the annual fiscal planning process.

- The institution's processes are used to ensure appropriate stakeholder participation in financial planning and budget development.
- Individuals involved in institutional planning receive accurate information about available funds, including the annual budget showing ongoing and anticipated fiscal commitments.
- Sound financial planning, including a realistic expectation of financial resource availability, is a foundational element of the institution's plans and goals.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Documentation of how the budget development process ties resource allocation to the mission, institutional goals, and/or program review and planning
- Procedures that outline processes and timelines for financial planning and budget development, including responsible parties and opportunities for input from institutional stakeholders
- Examples of how budget proposals, resource allocation decisions, and/or financial decisions are reported to institutional stakeholders
- Documentation of coordination of institutional planning with grants and other alternative funding sources
- Other documents used during institutional planning that identify available or potential financial resources and/or funding sources

6. The institution assures the integrity and responsible use of its financial resources and regularly evaluates its financial management practices to promote institutional mission fulfillment.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has effective internal and external control mechanisms in place to ensure that dependable, accurate, and timely financial information is available for sound financial decision-making.
- Audits demonstrate the integrity of financial management practices, and audit findings and/or negative reviews are addressed in a timely manner.
- Information about budget, fiscal conditions, and audit results are communicated with stakeholders as appropriate to the institution's mission and structure.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Budgets, financial reports, audit reports, and/or similar documents
- Finance department program review, including evaluation of effectiveness of internal controls
- Evaluation instruments for assessing effectiveness and integrity of financial management practices, and the results of such evaluations
- Annual external audit reports and findings
- Audits of any foundations that are not separately incorporated
- Formal responses to external audit reports and findings
- Minutes of meetings when audits and findings are discussed and responses are planned
- Minutes of meetings where the above reports are disseminated

7. The institution assures a reasonable expectation of financial solvency. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities and future obligations to ensure sustained fiscal stability.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution reviews its past financial results as part of planning for current and future fiscal needs.
- The institution continually assesses and adjusts its capital structure and cash management strategies to ensure both short-term and long-term financial solvency.

- The institution has reasonable plans for payments of long-term liabilities and obligations (health benefits, insurance costs, building maintenance costs, other post-employment benefit obligations, etc.) and considers these plans in annual budget development and other short-term fiscal planning.
- The institution has an annual assessment of debt repayment obligations.
- The institution has appropriate plans to repay locally incurred debt.
- The institution ensures that locally incurred debt repayment schedule does not have an adverse impact on meeting all current and future financial obligations.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Procedures for short and long-term management of the institution's cash and capital structure
- Reports outlining institutional obligations for future total employee compensation expenditures (employment agreements, collective bargaining agreements, management contracts, including any buy-out provisions, etc.)
- Budgets and/or plans that demonstrate how the institution accounts for payments of both short-term liabilities and long-term and/or future obligations

8. The institution constructs and maintains physical resources to support and sustain educational services and operational functions. The institution assures safe and effective physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and learning support services.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution aligns planning and maintenance of facilities and other physical resources with the institutional mission and goals and needs of programs and services.
- The institution has processes and/or procedures in place to ensure the safety of all facilities, including procedures for reporting of unsafe physical facilities.
- The institution evaluates the effectiveness and sufficiency of its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account.
- Results of assessments and evaluation are used to improve effectiveness of facilities, equipment, and other physical resources.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Long-term planning documents related physical resources
- Plans pertaining to evaluation/prioritization of scheduled maintenance needs of physical facilities
- Documentation of evaluation of use of facilities such as a facilities inventory
- Procedures or systems used for reporting concerns for facility safety, security or maintenance
- Documentation related to regular inspections and maintenance of physical resources
- Documentation from evaluation/review of effectiveness of physical resources operations (grounds, transportation, housekeeping, maintenance, etc.)
- Facilities utilization/occupancy assessment reports

9. The institution implements, enhances, and secures its technology resources to support and sustain educational services and operational functions. The institution clearly communicates requirements for the safe and appropriate use of technology to students and employees and employs effective protocols for network and data security.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution aligns technology planning, implementation, and maintenance with the institutional mission and goals.
- The institution's technology infrastructure is appropriate to support educational services and operations.
- The institution clearly communicates guidelines/rules for appropriate use of its technologies to all users.
- The institution's networks are secure and data is protected.

- The institution regularly evaluates its technology infrastructure (including network security) to ensure ongoing effectiveness in supporting educational services and operations.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- User survey instruments
- Technology plans, educational master plans or program reviews addressing technology needs
- Documentation of procedures for or incidents of security threats and corresponding resolutions
- Publications containing acceptable use policies or guidelines, such as employee handbooks, student handbooks, etc.

10. The institution has appropriate strategies for risk management and has policies and procedures in place to implement contingency plans in the event of financial, environmental, or technological emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances.

Possible Review Criteria:

- The institution has policies and procedures in place that will mitigate emergencies and unforeseen occurrences that would significantly impact availability of its resources.
- The institution has sufficient insurance to cover its needs. If the institution is self-funded in any insurance categories, it has sufficient reserves to handle financial emergencies.
- The institution routinely reviews and updates their insurance coverages.
- The institution has protocols for back-up and recovery of sensitive data systems, including student and employee information systems.

Possible Sources of Evidence Could Include:

- Policies or procedures for risk management
- Records of self-insurance for health benefits, workers compensation, and unemployment
- Contingency plans for financial, environmental, technological, and other emergencies

Checklist Items – Infrastructure and Resources

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- Written policies and procedures for human resources, including hiring procedures
- Employee handbooks or similar documents that communicate expectations to employees
- If applicable, written code of professional ethics for all personnel including consequences for violations
- Annual financial audit reports (3 prior years, including any auxiliary organizations)
- Practices for resource allocation and budget development (including budget allocation model for multi-college districts/systems)
- Policies around Title IV including the most recent three-year student loan default rates
- Policies guiding fiscal management (e.g., related to reserves, budget development)
- Any agreements that fall under ACCJC's policy on contractual relationships with non-accredited organizations
- Policies, procedures or agreements (e.g., AUAs) related to appropriate use of technology systems