Southern West Virginia Community & Technical College - WV

HLC ID 1671

OPEN PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review   Visit Date: 10/2/2017

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Context and Nature of Review

Visit Date

10/2/2017
Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

Scope of Review

- Mid-Cycle Review

There are no forms assigned.

Institutional Context

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical college is a comprehensive community college offering both transfer and career education. The college is located in a rural environment serving the southern West Virginia area. In 1995, the service area of the college was expanded by the West Virginia legislature, and that region included eleven districts. Counties served include: part of Raleigh County as well as all of Boone, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, and Wyoming counties. Southern serves approximately 2,000 students and the great majority are part-time. Non-traditional students make up a significant portion of the college's enrollment.

Southern had a recent Commission visit in 2013 that was very positive in regard to most Criteria for Accreditation. The last visiting team did recommend a monitoring report on governance due to potential conflict of interest issues given the former president was the wife of the State's governor who appoints the Board of Governors, the body that exercises control over Southern. That concern was engaged and rectified to the Commission's satisfaction with reports submitted in 2014 and 2015.

Currently, Southern submitted its Assurance Argument to the Commission for a Team to conduct an Assurance Review as part of the Open Pathway process.

Interactions with Constituencies

Given that this was a distance Assurance Review, the team did not plan an on-site visit to interview constituents. During a request for additional documentation the team requested in order to complete their report, a brief telephone interview with the President was conducted. Aside from that, all evidence was in electronic form.

The Assurance Review was to be a distant review only, but considering the no confidence vote by faculty regarding the president and additional concerns noted by the Peer Review Team from analyzing the written report, the Commission determined that an on-site visit was in order to clarify core component concerns. Beyond the review and a phone call between the Peer Review Team Chair and the President, the visiting team of three members conducted a special visit to verify and validate identified concerns on-site. Multiple interviews were conducted and noted in the evidence section.

The team conducting the on-site Assurance Argument Review visit also engaged the following in interviews:

President
Vice-Presidents of Academics, Finance, Student Services, Workforce/Community
Assessment Committee
Lead Faculty Members
HR Director
Faculty
Students
Academic Chairs
Director of Media
Academic Program Coordinators
Institutional Research
Classified Staff Council
Board of Governors
Williamson Campus Staff
Executive Assistant
Open Meetings: multiple faculty

Additional Documents

In addition to reviewing documents cited in the Assurance Argument, the Team did request the following documentation as supplemental to what was provided.

- 2013-06-12 Grievance_1_2013_Redacted.pdf
- 2013-08-13 Grievance_2_2013_Redacted.pdf
- 2014-05-12 Grievance_1_2014_Redacted.pdf
- 2014-07-02 Grievance_2_2014_Redacted.pdf
- 2014-12-17 Grievance_3_2014_Redacted.pdf
- 2016-08-17 Grievance_1_2016_Redacted.pdf
- SWVCTC HLC Request for Clarification 103117.pdf
- 2010-2015 Meeting the Challenge Master Plan An Institutional Compact for Success.pdf
- 2015-12-09 MCAS Meeting Minutes SWVCTC.pdf
- 2016-03-23 MCAS Meeting Minutes SWVCTC.pdf
- Academic Program Reviews BOG Approvals AY 2014-2015.pdf
- BS 124 Syllabus Fall 2017 Puckett Chuck.pdf
- Math 121A Syllabus Fall 2017 CRN 483 White Denise.pdf
- MT 121.121A Syllabus Fall 2017 CRN 482.483 Redmiles Lisa.pdf
- MT 130 Fall 2017 Ward Chris.pdf
- PY 201 Syllabus Fall 2017 Baisden Susan.pdf
- PY 218 Syllabus Fall 2017 12-Weeks Baisden Susan.pdf
- SP 103 Syllabus Fall 2017 Alderman Will.pdf
- Math 121 A Syllabus Spring 2017 CRN 356 Jackson Liza.pdf
- MT 121.121 A Syllabus Spring2017 CRN355.356 Redmiles Lisa.pdf
- Email Regarding Student Evaluations – Adjuncts Spring 2016 Redacted.pdf
- Email Regarding Student Evaluations Spring 2017 Redacted.pdf
- Student Course Evaluation Instructions Redacted.pdf
- Adjunct Faculty Student Evaluations SWVCTC Redacted.pdf

Additional Sources Reviewed

Assessment Week Documentation
Most recent IPEDS documents
West Virginia Report Card
Transcripts for full-time, adjunct and dual credit faculty and for Student Services staff
Faculty and staff evaluations.

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College has a number of mission documents and the Assurance Argument delineates a history of updates with participation of constituents. This includes a review of all mission documents in 2015 with the addition of new Commitments and Core Values. Most recently, the new president initiated a review of the Mission Statement, which received Board of Governors (BOG) approval in June 2017. Southern policy dictates that all proposals for change of rules, guidelines, procedures, and policies must be posted for a 30 day comment period (SCP-1000, Manuals, Announcements and Policies Development System), which allows input from all internal and external constituents (covered in detail in 2A). This indicates that the mission is developed through appropriate processes and adopted by the governing board.

A review of the 2017-1018 College Catalog shows that Southern offers skill set, certificate and degree programs in transfer and career education, and the Institutional Commitments (part of their Mission documents) clearly support the stated Mission of the college. SCP-3620, Policy Regarding Program Review, specifies that each program will be evaluated on its consistency with the college's Mission every five years as part of the process. Recent actions that show commitment to their Mission include the restructure of the Transitional Studies Department to a co-requisite model in order to facilitate completion of required English and math courses by students who tested into development level courses. Also, new certificate and associate degree programs were added to meet perceived needs of the local workforce. SCP-3000, Distance Education dictates professional development for faculty who wish to teach online courses to assure quality education to those students. Additionally, Southern's application for institutional participation in the National Council for State Authorization and Reciprocity Agreements was approved in 2017. These actions indicate Southern's programs and services are consistent with its stated mission.

In order to improve communication and decision making regarding planning and budgeting, a lengthy process culminated in the implementation of a new governance structure in 2015. A refashioned Strategic Planning and Financial Review Committee initiated a review of the Institutional Compact/Master Plan which was reviewed and approved through the new governance process. In 2016, the Board of Governors approved the 2015-2020 Master Plan. While addressed in more detail in Criterion 5, Southern has developed a procedure which ties each of the six Commitments (part of the Mission Documents) to a specific organizational unit (such as Academic Affairs or Student Services) to assure that budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. Each unit submits a budget request form with justification to their vice presidents, which then proceeds through a specified process. All of these developments assure that Southern's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support their mission.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern's Mission Statement, Institutional Commitments, Vision Statement, and Core Values are clearly delineated and the Peer Review team found them prominently displayed on the college's website and in the 2017-2018 College Catalog. However, the review team did not find printed signage at the entrance to each building. While the institution clearly articulates it statements of purpose, vision, values, goals and institutional priorities, displaying these through signage on their campuses could increase awareness.

A review of the college's policy SCP-1500, Philosophy, Vision and Mission of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, shows the mission documents are to be reviewed "on a regular basis with the time frame for review to be determined by the President..." Written documentation from the BOG to Southern's President indicates that the most recent revisions to the Mission Statement and Institutional Commitments were approved by the Board of Governors in June 2017. These documents clarify the institution's emphasis on education and training and show that the documents guiding this focus are current.

West Virginia designates 9 community and technical college service districts in the state which prescribes the intended constituents for Southern. The review team's inspection of the Mission Statement shows a clear focus on "accessible, affordable, quality education and training that promote success for those we serve." The Commitments provide more specific guidance on what services are to be offered including pre-college level; college level transfer degrees; career and technical programs through skill sets, certificates, and Associate of Applied Science degrees; workforce development programs; support for individual student success; and community interest programs for personal growth and cultural enrichment. Then the college's Core Values and the Vision Statement set ethical behavior standards for all. These documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents for the institution.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Review Team examination of the Student Profile Analysis for Southern shows that the make-up of the student body was consistently over 90% Caucasian in Fall 2013 through Fall 2016; the 2010 U.S. census indicates similar statistics for West Virginia. Acknowledging that this demographic profile challenges the college to expose its constituents to more diverse populations, the institution provides a comprehensive Diversity Philosophy (SPC-1160) which codifies embracing diversity. It has also taken action to improve such exposure by developing new courses such as Non-Western World Literature and Religions of the World. Additionally, a team review of committee minutes shows the addition/revision of courses to include more emphasis on diversity such as modules offered within the healthcare curriculum in order to help prepare students to compete and succeed in a broader diverse society in which they may work and live.

Southern assures nondiscrimination to all with an inclusive Equal Opportunity Statement (found on the College website) and Affirmative Action statement (in the 2017-2018 College Catalog). The institution supports inclusiveness with many cultural events such as Harmony 365. Media announcements indicate that this series of events and activities is a joint venture between the college, local public entities, and the NAACP in recognition of the diverse society. All of these policies and actions show that Southern understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society and is taking active steps to expose its constituents to a more diverse world.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Evidence

A review of Southern's Mission documents (available on the College website and College Catalog) clearly identify the public good of providing quality education to the area's residents. This includes the array of higher education offerings appropriate for a community and technical college that are listed in the College Catalog. Review team interviews revealed that the Office of Workforce Development offers a large selection of non-college credit courses to constituents such as training for miners, computer skills training, outline courses through Ed-to-go, and an entrepreneur program offered in partnership with the Hatfield-McCoy trail system. Additionally, the college provides many community activities such as plays, workshop, career fairs, and wellness events. The overarching structure of the institution requires that nine of the 12 members of the Board of Governors are public representatives. This is meant to assure that the public interest is supported.

Again, referring to the mission documents promulgated by Southern, the Mission Statement specifies its focus on quality education and training to promote success for those they serve. The Institutional Commitments then clarify what they will provide to accomplish this mission. With these documents used to guide them, the institution provides many examples of consultative governance where constituents are active members in determining institutional direction. Evidence of this is found in minutes from committee meetings and dissemination of proposed policy to the public with a required 30 day comment period before approval. In addition, a review of SCP-2562, External Professional Activities of Faculty and Other Professional Staff, show that the college guards against conflict of interest in outside employment. These factors indicate that the institution's specified educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes.

Southern's website and 2017-2018 College Catalog indicate the many ways that the college serves its constituents by providing higher education in numerous locations and modes of delivery. In addition, the institution offers a myriad of community activities and annual events, as listed in the Assurance Argument, including the World on Wellness Retreat at the Williamson Campus which provided activities dedicated to Tolerance Education which served more than 100 participants. The Southern West Virginia College Foundation has raised funds so the college can initiate new and expand current

credit and non-credit programs and serve more students; examples include providing over $230,000 for scholarships annually and over $50,000 for college operations. All of these actions show that the institution engages with its identified communities and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Evidence

Southern's Mission Documents include the Mission Statement, Institutional Commitments, Vision Statement, and Core Values. Evidence shows that academic programming and services are guided by these documents. For example, the restructure of the Transitional Studies Department to improve student success directly addresses the Mission Statement and the first Commitment. Also, a new budgeting procedure ties all requests to at least one of the six Commitments. It will be useful to see the next time the Commission visits the effects of the restructuring of the developmental education program.

The Mission Documents have recently been updated and evidence shows that they are articulated publicly through the internet and College Catalog. Southern acknowledges the challenge of a predominately Caucasian constituency to preparing students to compete and succeed in a broader diverse society and takes action to address this challenge through written policies, curriculum, and events which include partnerships with the NAACP.

Southern's focus on providing higher education in numerous locations and modes of delivery indicates how the college serves its constituents. Many community activities and annual events also show service and dedication to the public good. The consultative governance is touted by the organization, but is addressed with greater criterion relevance and with more detail in Criterion Five.

In light of the evidence provided, Southern has shown that its mission is clear and articulated publicly through a number of mission documents that guide the institution's operations.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

Southern has policies and procedures in place to address integrity, fairness, and ethical behavior. The College functions under State Statute, the West Virginia Governmental Ethics Act. Fiscal affairs are guided by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. Institutional policies that deal with Criterion Two components include ones on academic integrity, student rights and responsibilities, and acceptable use policy, among others. The Board operates following standard procedures for reviewing policy, providing time for public comment, and passing policy at a later date. One potential concern the team did observe during the initial Assurance Review, and covered in more detail in 5B, is the consolidation of key positions on campus onto one person. Some adjustments have been made since then. The CEO had served as CAO, and HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer. The President's assistant serves as the Assurance System Coordinator. Such a concentration of influence reduces the opportunity of checks and balances within the organization. Most recently and just prior to the Team visit, a new CAO had been hired who has experience as an ALO. These actions do move the institution to safer ground. Shared governance could be diminished in respect to such a consolidation of influence. Interviews on site by the team provided some reassurance that this consolidation was due to multiple CAO departures, two since the last visit, and the departure of the ALO, a newly trained faculty by a long-time administrator who led Commission and College relations. Interviews suggest that little communication with the campus community regarding the Assurance Review had taken place and very little had been written. That is one reason the institution asked the Commission to delay the date of the original review. The institution is now able to demonstrate ongoing decentralization of positions as it moves forward.

Southern has established policies concerning fiscal responsibility. The two audits provided (2014, 2015) paint a sound fiscal basis for College operations. It should be noted that the liabilities encumbered by Southern in 2015 were significant over that shown in the 2014 audit ($125,666 in 2015 versus $1,070 in 2014); however this liability was "assigned" to the College in response to new legislation requiring institutions to report pension amounts.

The College demonstrates fiscal responsibility toward students through the implementation of

numerous policies concerning textbooks. These policies govern the selection and purchase of textbooks in conjunction with the rest of the West Virginia College system and help keep textbook costs contained. Textbook decisions are made through the Textbook Affordability Committee which consists of faculty, students, administration, and representatives from the campus bookstore. This committee also submits an annual report to the West Virginia Community and Technical College System concerning the effectiveness of textbook and course material selections. Results from the 2017 report show the College scores consistently in the high 90's in all categories which include the deadline date for faculty assignments (98.4% average) and the deadline for textbooks and course material selection (95% average).

The College has extensive policies that cover commonly expected and required areas including: Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual and Domestic Misconduct, Stalking, and Retaliation Policy. In 2015, the College reviewed and revised related policies due to major changes in federal and state laws as a result of amendments to the Clery Act. Southern requires new employees to attend an orientation session conducted by the Human Resources Department and is given an electronic copy of the Employee Handbook and/or Faculty Handbook as relevant. Employees must sign off on such training, including ethical. They are also asked to verify with signature that he or she received a copy of the Ethics Act Brochure provided by the West Virginia Ethics Commission. Additional State standards require employees to maintain records of outside employment in an effort to avoid conflicts of interest.

West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education has comprehensive policies regarding employing and evaluating presidents (Series 5) as well as the evaluation of faculty, and classified and non-classified employees (SCP-2202). According to policy, presidents shall be hired after a thorough search and hired by a search committee. Presidential contracts are generated by the Council as well as the length of the employment contract and the compensation. The Board of Governors is required to conduct a formal and written performance evaluation every third year of a president's employment. The *Personnel Assessment Philosophy and Practice Statement* (SCP-2202) provides guidelines for employee evaluation and is based on the premise that, "It has been said that we cannot improve ourselves without improving others. As strengths are shared and weaknesses are remedied, we will of necessity contribute to the development of others. The entire organization is enhanced and improved as each individual receives feedback, helping them to perform better." Non-tenured faculty members are evaluated on a yearly basis, and tenured on a three-year rotation. Classified and non-classified employees are evaluated during the probationary period at 3-month and 6-month periods and at least once annually thereafter, prior to July 31st. Non-classified employees are "will and pleasure" and the aspects of probation does not apply to their terms of their employment. Non-classified employees are evaluated annually. These processes include written performance evaluations. State policy also dictates that classified staff job descriptions are uniform across institutions. Standard grievance procedures exist as dictated by State guidelines. Six grievances have been filed in the past four years; all grievances centered around the perceptions of application of employee policies. Each complaint included a response from administration and was assigned a process for resolution which ranged from a personal meeting with an administrator to a full hearing with legal counsel. Only one of the grievances warranted the highest response; it was a disability grievance from 2014. Evidence shows the institution has established policies and processes for fair and ethical treatment of employees. Interviews on site did reveal two litigation challenges regarding reimbursement.

Interpretation of institutional and Commission policies regarding faculty credentialing is a subject of contention at the campus. Interviews with multiple stakeholders demonstrate only a recent awareness of the Commission's statement on faculty credentials. Confusion as to past experience, past practice, waivers, Commission mandates, and related controversies exist at Southern. Clarity of who can teach

what is confusing for many employees.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

Regarding the consolidation of key positions by the CEO, who until recently served as CAO, HLC and Accreditation Liaison Officer with his assistant serving as HLC Assurance System Coordinator, that has been improved and moves the institution towards more commonly accepted shared governance. Nevertheless, because of so many leadership changes and challenges with communication of Commission expectations, there is significant confusion, for instance, on the part of faculty and staff regarding the Commission's policies on faculty credentials. The team determined that a subsequent focus visit to Southern is justified in order to interview key stakeholders about delineation of duties and understanding of as well as application of Commission policies. The visit will focus, in general, on shared governance within the institution, particularly regarding institutional engagement with accreditation processes and also pertaining to faculty credentials. Confusion regarding these topics has led to tension on campus. Employees at all levels could benefit from professional development on these subjects. Should funding be available, faculty and staff are encouraged to attend Commission sponsored events so that messaging regarding accreditation processes and policies are not lost in translation. As a suggestion for both content dissemination and an exercise in collaboration, an on campus presentation, by faculty and administration who attend the same Commission event, for example, could be beneficial to report. While not prescriptive, that suggestion should serve as the type of engagement the institution must demonstrate in its subsequent report and Commission visit in two years.

The visiting team should examine Southern's improvement in both the communication and application of faculty credentialing policy as mandated by the Commission. The team should also examine faculty files to make sure that consistent application has been followed. Campus-wide engagement of Commission processes, policies, and expectations should be evident by this next visit. Extended and relevant discussion on this visit regarding the topic of shared governance is also explored in Criterion 5B.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern is transparent to the public with regard to its program requirements, accreditation relationships, costs, and faculty and staff qualifications.

The College maintains an active presence on social media. Southern employs a Director of Media Services to guarantee that information shared with the public is both accurate and timely. The College website is easy to navigate and offers a broad range of information to potential students and the public. The Mission and Vision Statements provide an overlying framework of what the College hopes to accomplish in summary fashion. Specific information concerning academic programs, Financial Aid, Financial Assistance, Student Services, and Tuition and Fees pages provide prospective students with both information as well as requirements for enrollment. In addition, the *College Catalog* link ties to both the Catalog and the *Student Handbook;* faculty and staff credentials and contact information are included in the Catalog. The website also links to the emergency notification system, *Southern ALERTS*, which provides instructions for student and staff members in case of an emergency. As required by Southern College Policy, the bookstore link enables students to receive information regarding class requirements which include a listing of the textbook required by class and the cost of the textbook.

Students are able to register for classes and make payment arrangements through the Banner Self-Service portal. This system also enables students to view financial aid requirements and accept their financial aid in a remote fashion. Students are able to make payments through this system which then are routed to the West Virginia State Treasurer's Office. Students are able to order transcripts online via the *eTranscripts Service*.

A highlight to the social media presence is the public access channel (*Channel 17)* which broadcasts shows providing information to the public concerning issues at the College and services provided. Southern uses this broadcast link which serves as a video message board and has strategically placed mounted televisions near campus entrances. The purpose of this message board is to notify students, staff, and the public about College events.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Per State Code, Southern's board has autonomy on decisions related to finance and educational policies. The Board approves significant College documents and statements, including mission, master planning, budget, among other relevant items of broad institutional significance. The Board may enter into contracts and agreements. The conflict of interest issue noted by the previous Commission team has been addressed by Southern as evidenced by a report on institutional governance submitted to and accepted by the Commission. The prior president retired and a new president was named, thus alleviating the potential conflict of interest of a president being the wife of a sitting governor who names the College Board. The Board meets at least six times a year in a public setting, and each meeting follows the open public meetings guidelines in compliance with State code as evidenced from a review of agendas and minutes. A recent no confidence vote in the President by the faculty was deliberated by the Board followed by a renewal of the President's contract. More information regarding this dimension of governance is covered in the Team's review of Criterion Five as it is more relevant in that area.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning is comprehensive and documented in college documents. In dealing with student behavior and the social campus experience, guidelines are in place through the ***Student Rights and Responsibilities*** policy which provides a "framework for an atmosphere which encourages freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth."   Academic integrity for students is promoted through its delineation in the Academic Integrity policy as well as the College Catalog and Student Handbook. Appropriate grievance procedures are defined in these same documents.

Freedom of expression is encouraged through the use of faculty evaluations that are completed each semester by students. Results are shared with faculty to encourage positive growth in the classroom. In addition, the College encourages artistic expression through the publication of a literary arts magazine and hosting various cultural events.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College provides policies concerning release time for scholarly practice and the pursuit of knowledge. The College Catalog, Student Handbook and website address fair use of resources, the student code of conduct, academic dishonesty, accessing online resources and databases. The College enforces its policies on academic dishonesty and acceptable use of internet resources.

Infractions of the student code of conduct policy are processes according to the type of infraction. Students are guaranteed the Right to Due Process as outlined in the ***Student Rights and Responsibilities*** policy. These procedures allow for an investigation, decision, and appeals process on every infraction, and state that the student shall be considered innocent until proven guilty of any charge.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Evidence

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College is generally committed to standards of ethical and responsible conduct. Its expectations are documented through the application of state policies as well as through the College Catalog and Student Handbook. There is a sufficient balance between the roles of the Institutional Board, the state of West Virginia, and the administration. The Team did note a concern regarding the consolidation of key positions by the CEO, who served as CAO, HLC and ALO with his assistant serving as HLC ASC but recently began to redistribute such roles in a move to improve shared governance. However, due to concerns regarding accreditation policies and procedures and in particular the application of faculty credentials policy, a subsequent visit to Southern is justified in order to interview key stakeholders. The visit will focus on shared governance in the institution. Extended and relevant discussion on this visit regarding the topic of shared governance is also explored in Criterion 5B.

Southern has established policies concerning fiscal responsibility and demonstrates sound decision-making in College processes and those concerning students. Audit summaries show a continued pattern of asset building in relation to the liabilities incurred. Participation in a required state consortium allows institutions to keep student costs as low in the purchase of textbooks.

The College has established policies that govern personnel matters which are provided to faculty and staff upon employment contained in the Employee or Faculty Handbook. In addition, each employee receives the Ethics Act Brochure. Employees are required to report and maintain records of outside employment to avoid conflicts of interest.

Comprehensive policies are in place for the hiring of employees as well as for the position of president. Job descriptions are standardized across the state, guaranteeing fair and equitable hiring practices at institutions. Evaluation processes are in place for all positions and are conducted annually after the probationary period has ended. There is a grievance process in place with six complaints filed in the past four years, and were handled according to policy.

Southern maintains an active presence on social media which includes a website that is easy to navigate and offers all pertinent information to allow the College to be transparent in dealings with the public. The website supports the student in every step of the registration process from application to the College to the final step of paying for classes or accepting financial aid. The College utilizes a television station to provide informational programming to inform the public as well as provide student notifications like payment deadlines and weather announcements.

The Governing Board for Southern has autonomy for decision-making and is supported by state policies. The Board meets at least six times a year and follows the open meetings guidelines in compliance with State code which encourages interaction with the public. The Operational Guidelines Policy allows for the diversity of members and viewpoints.

Freedom of expression is constructed through a framework which allows for student pursuit of truth, which is found in both the College Catalog and the Student Handbook. In addition, students are

allowed to express their opinions in the faculty evaluation process which occurs at the end of each semester. Artistic impression is conveyed through student publications and community cultural events.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Rating

Met

Evidence

A review of Southern's 2017-2018 College Catalog by the peer review team reveals program offerings that are common for community and technical colleges, i.e. Associate of Arts Degrees, Associate of Science Degrees, Associate of Applied Science Degrees, Certificates, and Skill Sets. The Associate degrees require a minimum of 60 credit hours, the Certificates require a minimum of 30 credit hours, and the Skill Sets require from 6-18 credit hours. Currency is assured in SCP-3620. Policy Regarding Program Review stipulates that each program be evaluated every 5 years with a final recommendation for continuation (with or without corrective action) or discontinuation. A review of the final approval by the Board of Governors from April 2015 exemplified the process for six programs. A review of meeting minutes show that feedback is gathered from Advisory groups; examination of annual employee satisfaction and graduate surveys also provided input on the currency of programs; however, the return rate appears low. One other measure of the appropriateness of courses is the number of individual articulation agreements between Southern and four-year colleges and universities (12 listed). Review team inspection of agreements showed a wide range of institutions accepting credits as equivalent such as American Public University (online), Bluefield State College, and the College of Engineering and Mineral Resources of West Virginia University. These examples show that the courses and programs are current and appropriate.

SIP-3160.A, Course Syllabus Format, specifies a common course syllabus format that includes a delineation of "...common division-generated, division-approved goals." An example of a syllabus for MT 121/MT 121A, College Math for General Education, shows specific goals for this course. The 2015-2016 Nursing Student Handbook also reveals specific goals for each course. The collaboration between faculty and academic leaders in developing learning goals was shown by reviewing the

Institutional Governance Recommendation form for MT 105/105A Practical Math for Industrial Occupations. The Review Team examined seven other sample syllabi (see Addendum) and determined that this evidence indicates that the institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its programs.

The Assurance Argument lists many delivery modes offered by Southern including traditional classroom teaching, interactive closed-circuit television (ICR), fully online and hybrid courses, and dual credit courses. SIP-3160A, Course Syllabus Format, mandates a minimum of 80% commonality in course objectives in all sections of offered courses and use of the same textbook which help assure consistency among sections. Also, common assessments are used; examples include the Persuasive Speech Evaluation Rubric used in SP-103 Speech Fundamentals and the Common Writing Assessment Scoring criteria used in EN 101, Composition I. The Assessment Report 2013-2014 identifies and evaluates common assessment practices. The review team examined the ICR Faculty Guide which specifies common practices for that delivery mode. Online courses all use Blackboard as the content management system which provides consistency, and all online faculty are in the process of being trained in the Quality Matters standards (according to the Assurance Argument). This combination of guiding policies, common templates and rubrics, and assessment of results supports the consistency of quality across all modes of delivery. Southern is in compliance with its HLC stipulation regarding distance delivery.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern lays the foundation for all its programs and offerings in its Mission Statement documents. The General Education Philosophy and Goals, found in the 2017-2018 College Catalog states that the purpose of general education at Southern is to "generally educate students" which directly supports the Mission of the college. Also, as part of the state system, the college is guided by regulations promulgated by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education and Southern meets or exceeds the minimums set by this body.

SCP-3637, General Education Philosophy and Goals, states that all students who complete the general education requirements will have improved in each of the general education goals; this is also stated in the College Catalog. The goals include generally accepted elements such as critical thinking, oral and written communication, mathematical skills, technology skills, scientific inquiry/reasoning skills, and cultural/global perspectives. These goals are embedded into each program. A review of course syllabi reveals that each course delineates which general education goals are covered in that class. The A.S. and A.A. degree programs specify which academic courses need to be completed to satisfy general education requirements (listed in the College Catalog). Career and technical programs may embed learning goals in major courses; an example of this is the Medical Laboratory Technology Program which provide a matrix delineating which General Education goals are taught in each course required for the degree. The 2017-2018 College Catalog states the philosophy supporting the requirements, which includes helping students develop qualities and skills associated with College-educated adults, promoting critical and conceptual thinking skills, and preparing students for their role

as productive and responsible members of society. With a clearly stated purpose, philosophy, and goals, and a delineation of courses needed for completion, the institution imparts broad knowledge and skills that every college-educated person should possess. Again, it should be noted that Southern is part of the state system and adheres to their rules regarding general education.

Completion of the six General Education Goals (listed previously) requires that students engage in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry or creative work, and developing skills adaptable to changing environments. A review of the Annual Assessment Report 2013-2014 (over 700 pages long), documents students' engagement in these goals. However, more recent documentation of completing these goals covered in 4.C.

As stated in Criterion 1.C, Southern acknowledges the challenges faced due to the homogeneity of the service area's population, which is mirrored in the institution's student body. SCP-1160, Diversity Philosophy, codifies Southern's commitment to valuing and promoting diversity. Building on that policy, the college developed new courses, such as Religions of the World, World History, Non-Western World Literature and Fine Arts Appreciation. In addition, faculty created a new literary journal, *Sticks*, to promote student creativity and celebrate cultural expression which, upon review, did contain many diverse works. These actions in tandem with goals specified for general education recognize the human and cultural diversity of the world.

The Evaluation Planning Document used in conjunction with SCP-2218, Evaluation of Full-time Faculty, requires that faculty address curriculum development, professional growth, research and publication annually; after the form is completed, the results are discussed with administrators. In an effort to assess whether faculty are encouraging students to contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge, a Survey of Student Perception of Instruction is solicited which inquires about a faculty member's emphasis on conceptual understanding versus memorization and assignments that require creative and original thought. Results are also reviewed at the annual faculty evaluation. As covered in 3.D.5, all degree and certificate programs at Southern require successful completion of EN 101, English Composition I. Per the official syllabus, this course includes learning research skills and producing a research paper. Again, the new literary journal provides an avenue for students' creative endeavors. These examples indicate that Southern's faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to an extent appropriate for a two-year college.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Even with a decline in enrollment evidenced from Fall 2013 to Fall 2015 (as shown in the West Virginia Higher Education Report Card), full-time faculty members increased by one (documented in the Employee Listing). The National Center for Educational Statistics lists a13:1 ratio of students to faculty at Southern. Of the 70 full-time faculty in Fall 2016, the Employee Roster indicates that 50% had been employed by the College ten or more years which indicates stability; however recent departures of senior faculty (noted during the team visit) may impact this. The Assurance Argument provides a table regarding the number of faculty serving on committees which includes 11 faculty serving on the Assessment Committee and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee with nine faculty members. Also, a review of the schedule for a recent Assessment Showcase Week at the college shows active involvement of faculty in assessment of student learning including samples of student learning from varied disciplines and meetings of both English and math rubric scoring teams. Maintaining consistent numbers of full-time faculty, faculty longevity, low student to faculty ratio and active participation of faculty in curriculum maintenance and student assessment evidence sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles.

SCP-2171, Professional and Educational Requirements for Faculty, specifies requirements for faculty and actually states that the requirements reference HLC's policies on qualified faculty. Administrators at the College report that the policy lacks adherence to the Commission's base faculty credentials requirements. Ultimately, Commission policy regarding faculty credentials will outweigh an institutional policy that lacks minimum standards set by the Commission in regard to accreditation

compliance standards. An initial review of documents provided in the Assurance Argument raised concerns about qualifications. However, a follow-up review of a random sample of 25% of faculty files during the on-campus visit indicated that these concerns appear to be attributed to inaccurate reports in the Assurance Argument. The on-campus review of official transcripts showed that of the 75 full-time faculty, 19 of 19 checked met requirements; of the 33 adjunct faculty, eight of nine checked met requirements (one had no official transcripts), and of the 29 dual credit faculty, seven of eight met requirements (one had only a Bachelors in Education). The review team believes that future report inaccuracies could be curtailed by developing a cover sheet for each faculty file which documents the nature of the job, the requirements, and whether these requirements have been met. Subsequent meetings with faculty led to questions about who was qualified to teach in what areas. Random samplings did not demonstrate a significant problem; however, any such confusion regarding Commission compliance and faculty credentials is addressed later in this Assurance Review and subsequent professional development that might clarify for all stakeholders Commission standards. Additionally, random samples may not include specific areas of concern regarding any credentialing issues, a note worthy of making in light of campus communication.

SCP-2624, Evaluation of Full-time Faculty, delineates what is to be evaluated, time lines, responsibilities, procedures and forms to guide completion. Elements of the review include faculty self-evaluation, classroom performance reviews, and administrator/faculty meetings. Completed forms are forwarded to the VPAA and then to Human Resources. SIP-2220, Course Feedback, provides direct student input regarding faculty effectiveness. This policy did not address adjunct evaluation. The process delineated in policies set a solid foundation for evaluation of full-time faculty and completed evaluations were reviewed by the visiting review team. The addendum document Clarification Information Requested states that adjunct faculty evaluation happens through classroom visits, phone calls and emails. The lack of written policy to assure a standard procedure for adjunct evaluations reveals an area for improvement that should be addressed by the institution. While student evaluations are one means of verifiable faculty performance, professional peer and supervisor evaluations beyond phone calls and general discussion are common expectations.

SCP-2624, Employee Development, provides guidelines for education and training reimbursement for employees at Southern. This policy states that funds are made available, and a process delineated for employees to receive funding; figures regarding actual expenditures for professional development provided in the Clarification Information Requested document shows amounts from $318,982 in FY2014 to $197,111 in FY2017. The monies for FY2017 were increased by about $30,000 from FY2016. Examples of workshops and training provided for employees by the college were presented in the Assurance Argument including a workshop on Student Engagement and multiple sessions on assessment of student learning over the years. A link to employee sign-in sheets during one such event showed active participation by many. The Argument stated that annual training was provided on campus safety, addressing sexual harassment, and compliance with Title IX. With the foundation of a solid policy and procedures regarding professional development for employees, actual budget expenditures, and some examples of participation in training, Southern appears to provide for on-going education and training for faculty.

SCP-2875, Workload Requirements, delineates that Full-time faculty designate and post 7 1/2 hours per week for students to contact and or meet with them. This indicates that instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

The organizational chart indicates 23 positions (full- and part-time) in the student services area (with three designated as vacant). A review of the job descriptions for several of these positions show the required credentials are appropriate at the Bachelor or Master level; a review of Student Services personnel files indicated that all checked met the requirements. The Employee Development policy

addressed earlier governs all employees, not just faculty and so is available to address the needs of student support personnel including attendance at conferences and tuition reimbursement. Also, the workshops and training offered by the college that were referenced earlier are available to all employees.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern's policy regulating admissions (SCP-4000) states that the college is an open admissions institution. It serves the Appalachian coalfield region which is an economically depressed area and so it offers a variety of support services to students. Some services are offered through a partnership program with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources that specifically target students receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Two Student Services Specialist through this program provide career and personal counseling as well as advice regarding financial issues. Initial assessment data for this program show positive results (TANF Program report Fall 2015 - Spring 2017). The College also offers Disability Services and Veterans Services. These examples evidence that Southern provides student support services suited to the needs of its student population.

Governed by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education policy, Southern requires students to reach a minimum score on a specified nationally normed test in English and math, or they must receive extra help in order to be adequately prepared for success in the college level courses required. Recently the college replaced their developmental courses in English and math with supplemental instruction required while enrolled in the college level course. Initial results show these co-requisite pairings are improving student success. Other learning support services are offered such as tutoring and workshops for students. It appears that Southern provides learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students.

Full-time faculty must participate in academic advising through regularly scheduled office hours (see 3.C.5) and at other times as assigned (per SCP-3100, Full-time Faculty Responsibilities for Academic Advising of Students). Also, the Organizational Chart identifies several Student Services Specialists whose job description includes academic advising. First-time students meet with a Student Services Specialist and then most students may choose to meet with a faculty member in their field or can

continue to see a Student Services Specialist. However, some technical education students are required to meet with someone in their field, such as Nursing Program students. The process and procedures described in the Assurance Argument indicates that Southern is meeting the needs of its students regarding academic advising. The 2014 CCSSE results support this contention as Southern scores were 10 points higher than their cohorts' scores when asked whether students talked with Faculty or Advisors often or very often.

Southern provides full libraries on two of its four campuses; a peer reviewer visit to the Williamson Campus library provided evidence of the quality of this facility. Students at the other two campuses and the Lincoln attendance center have access to library services through a small resource center at each and through inter-campus loans. Starting in Fall 2017, the college began partnering with the West Virginia Library Commission to assure access to information and digital resources. Of note, the Harless Library (Logan campus) houses the West Virginia collection of resources on the Appalachian area and the Williamson Campus library has the Children's Collection and is the repository for the State of West Virginia government publications. The Library Accomplishments Report delineates statistics about attendance, circulation, computer usage, and library orientations that indicate a substantial number of constituents access these services. All four campuses provide scientific laboratories and have computers available for classes and also for individual use. Performance space is available on two campuses with the Logan Campus housing the Savas-Kostas Theatre. The Applied Technology Center on the Williamson Campus offers extensive laboratory equipment specific for the Welding, Mechatronics, and Electromechanical Instrumentation Programs. Narrative presented and the team visit indicate that the institution provides both students and faculty the infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning.

A review of the 2017-2018 College Catalog shows that all degree and certificate programs require successful completion of EN101 English Composition I. The syllabus for this course indicates that mastery of effective research is required and that all sections use a standard set of policies regarding research requirements. Also, all incoming students (some exceptions) must complete an orientation course, either one for technical programs, one for A.A. and A.S. programs, or a two day non-credit Nursing orientation. These orientations provide guidance in information resources. Combining the requirements for EN101 and an orientation experience provides a strong knowledge base for students in the effective use of research and information resources.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Evidence of offerings outside of but complementing the regular curriculum at Southern included the Appalachian Leadership Academy; this four semester commitment includes specific courses in leadership each of those semesters and a community service project. In EN-230 Western World Literature, students participated in Ramadan fasting concluding with a feast of Middle Eastern cuisine to reinforce their learning about other cultures. Also, students in the Information Technology program offer free computer tune-up service which supports skill development targeted in that program. The Assurance Argument referred to encouraging students to form student clubs, but none were found on the College website or College Catalog except the Student Government Association which is charged with designing supplemental student activities. Visiting team interviews with students and college administrators did indicate that the institution is considering the addition intramural sports options for students in a new facility they recently obtained and are renovating. All of these activities and offerings presented co-curricular activities that could contribute to the educational experience of the students.

Southern's Mission Statement claims that the college "provides accessible, affordable quality education and training that promotes success for those we serve." To that end, the institution offers many academic enrichment events such as a literary magazine, *Sticks*, an annual Meet the Author event, and structured job shadowing experiences prior to acceptance into certain programs. In addition, the college offers over 300 non-credit online courses through Ed2Go; review of these offerings revealed a variety of courses from learning Spanish to improving job search skills. Posters advertising presentations in the Performing Arts Centers included plays, musicals, and concerts. When all of these events and activities are combined with the educational programs offered, Southern demonstrates that it fulfills any claims it makes in its Mission Statement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Evidence

Southern offers courses and programs that are common with other community and technical colleges with requirements consistent with peer institutions. The college has policies and practices in place to assure their offerings are current and appropriate. Also, they are part of a State system and regulated by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education which includes requirements for regular program review. A common syllabus format requires learning goals for each course. All sections of a course, regardless of delivery mode, must follow the common syllabus, which assures some consistency.

The general education program is guided by a written philosophy and specific goals and the purpose is to "generally educate students" which directly supports the college's Mission. The goals for the program are embedded into each program and each degree or certificate delineates how these goals are fulfilled in that program. With a clearly stated purpose, philosophy, and goals, and a delineation of courses needed for completion, the institution imparts broad knowledge and skills that every college-educated person should possess. Through the completions of the six General Education goals, students are required to engage in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and developing skills adaptable to changing environments. As covered in 1.C, Southern recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world.

Southern has maintained consistent numbers of full-time faculty even with declining enrollments. This consistency along with faculty longevity, low student to faculty ratio, and active participation of faculty in curriculum maintenance and student assessment evidence sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom roles. A review of documents presented in the Assurance Argument indicated several issues with faculty meeting credential requirements; however, a review of personnel files on campus showed that these issues were caused by inaccurate reports and the team recommends that the college improve record keeping in the personnel files.

Full-time faculty are evaluated regularly according to institutional policy, and a review of files supported that these reviews were completed and documentation was satisfactory. An area for attention that is recognized by the institution and is expected to be addressed is the lack of written policy regarding adjunct faculty evaluation. However, the college does show that it provides professional development opportunities for faculty and student support services personnel, that faculty are accessible for student inquiry and that student support services personnel are properly qualified.

Southern provides support services specifically for students in their service area including an innovative program offered in partnership with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources that targets students receiving TANF funds. The recently revised developmental education program has shown very positive results and shows that the college provides learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. Scores on the 2014 CCSSE support that student academic advising is meeting student needs. The narrative presented by Southern and visiting team observations indicate that the institution provides both students and faculty with the infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning. This includes libraries, auditoriums, laboratories and classrooms. The requirements for EN 101 English Composition I and an orientation

course for the successful completion of all degrees and certificates provides a strong knowledge base for students in the effective use of research and information resources.

Many activities and offerings, such as the Appalachian Leadership Academy and the World Literature course that participated in Ramadan events provides co-curricular activities that could contribute to the educational experience of the students. When all of the academic programs along with offerings outside of but complementing the regular curriculum, Southern has demonstrated that it fulfills any claims it makes in its Mission Statement.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern follows established state guidelines and criteria for conducting regular program reviews for each program. The College makes distinctions between programs which hold special accreditation and those that do not. The review is done on a five-year cycle. Program reviews are generated at the program or department level and presented to the Institutional Board of Governors. Newly implemented programs require a Post-Audit Review after three years of program implementation, which then rolls to the five-year cycle. Program reviews are either accepted as presented to the committee, or require a corrective action plan to be implemented in the next cycle. The reviews include assessment results, retention numbers, persistence rates, enrollment, and other factors that contribute to the viability of the program.

The College uses the federal credit hour definition for awarding credit, and publishes the policies for articulation and acceptance and transfer of credit (including experiential credit) in the Academic Catalog. State mandates require that 60-72 credits from community colleges shall be transferable to baccalaureate granting institutions. Southern only accepts credits from regionally accredited institutions. According to the Catalog, students are referred to Academic Advisors for evaluations in the transfer credit process. Southern also recognizes student achievement through the granting of advanced placement credit, alternative forms of academic credit such as reading, private study, or work experience. Guidelines for each follows written policy.

Faculty determine the course offerings as well as prerequisites for those courses. Creating and deleting courses as well as creating new programs are evaluated by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. There are many layers of approval for curricular approval which include the "academic department, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, MCAS, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President's Cabinet." Southern credits this multi-layered approach with the quality of the programs of student learning at the institution. Southern is currently engaged in the statewide effort to standardize course requirements to ensure transferability. Each discipline oversees the rigor of the courses, student learning objectives, resources, and faculty credentials. Dual credit expectations are equivalent to traditional college-level courses in both the curriculum requirements and the faculty credentials. Six programs maintain specialized accreditation and are all health careers related. Specialized accreditations include the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), the Joint Review Committee in Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT), and the Committee on Accreditation for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP).

Southern evaluates the success of its students by tracking required performance measures which are submitted to the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC). These performance measures include certificates and degrees awarded, student success rates, six year graduation rate, and the one year retention rate. 2015 statistics show that the College awarded 306 degrees and certificates, achieved a student success rate of 33.5% which surpassed the state rate of 29.5%, realized a six year graduation rate of 26% again surpassing the state rate of 24.4%, and had a one year retention rate of 48.2%, which exceeded the state percentage of 42.2%. Finally, the College utilizes Graduate surveys for both general graduates and for the Nursing program to gain information such as employment, annual salaries, and suggestions for program improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

A review of multiple program documents indicates that the faculty have identified learning outcomes appropriate to their fields. Data is gathered though yearly assessments and included in the program review process. As previously stated in Criterion 4A, Southern conducts program reviews every five years. According to the SCP-3620 document entitled *Policy Regarding Program Review*, the viability of programs in evaluated by Southern Utilizing the following guidelines: 1) Continuation of the program at the current level of activity, with or without specific action; 2) Continuation of the program at a reduced level of activity or corrective action; 3) Identification of the program for further development; and 4) Development of a cooperative program with another institution, or sharing of courses, facilities, faculty, and the like. The policy also allows for a post-audit review to determine if curricular changes are meeting the targeted outcomes. Programs meeting the upper guidelines of continuation of the program without action are reviewed every five years. On site review found that programs which satisfied the criteria for a next review in five years did not continue to be monitored in the "off years". Faculty participate in an annual *Assessment Showcase* which highlights academic achievements of students and institutional gains in the area of assessment. Site visitors were provided with copies of the poster presentations included in the 2016 Showcase.

According to the institution's Assessment Report, programs with external accreditation provide assessments each year.   Evidence exists that demonstrates Southern's assessment activities in academic programs bring about change. For example, the radiology technician program altered lab times as a result of identified challenges. Additionally, math assessments led to collaborative learning. The College could perhaps make the ongoing use of results more apparent in its reporting process, and it is expected as its assessment culture grows that will occur. Southern has developed a *General Education Philosophy Goals* policy which outlines six goals with developing skill sets that aim for student improvement. The *Assessment Report* template for the programs and general education is very clear and includes a list of student learning outcomes, benchmark, method/assessment tool, time frame and responsible person and the analysis and action plan. The most recent Assessment Report (2015-2016) included the program assessments for the allied health

programs, but also implemented an assessment on the writing and math classes as included in Southern's co-requisite developmental sequence. These assessments presented percentages by class-- in the interest of true co-requisite assessment, it would be beneficial for future assessments to combine results to evaluate effectiveness of this new program. Interviews conducted found a division in the opinion of the effectiveness of this program. Faculty teaching in the program felt it was effective because students could complete the sequence in a shorter period of time which allowed for the student to begin the degree sequence earlier. Administrative personnel felt the program was a failure because roughly 87% of the students failed the Math portion of the program. An outside consultant obtained from the West Virginia Community and Technical College System evaluated the program for effectiveness and to develop possible solutions to address the current negative outcomes. Faculty suggested the changes to be minor in nature, but administrators stated the program needed major revisions to remain viable. Administration is currently evaluating next steps for the program.

Written assessment documents submitted for the Assurance Argument showed a process that is used to facilitate change; examples include the disciplines of English, Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Math, Physical Science, and Chemistry and may include the revision of course objectives or student learning outcomes. Onsite interviews conducted with Division Chairs and Administration provided the insight that assessment within programs with outside accreditations is robust; data is collected analyzed, trended, and used for program improvement. General education, with the exception of those courses mentioned above, essentially does not exist. Interviews with faculty found that assessments were designed by individuals within the discipline. Faculty members were required to provide all data to the VPAA, who in turn was responsible for the data analysis and reporting portions of the assessment plan. The continuous turnover in that position negated the compilation of any useful assessment results or action plans. This has been the case for the past three years.

As noted in Criterion 3E, evidence of offerings outside of but complementing the regular curriculum at Southern included the Appalachian Leadership Academy; this four semester commitment includes specific courses in leadership each of those semesters and a community service project. In EN 230 Western World Literature, students participated in Ramadan fasting concluding with a feast of Middle Eastern cuisine to reinforce their learning about other cultures. Also, students in the Information Technology program offer free computer tune-up service, which supports skill development targeted in that program. The Assurance Argument referred to encouraging students to form student clubs, but none were found on the College website or College Catalog except the Student Government Association which is charged with designing supplemental student activities. These activities and offerings presented co-curricular activities that could contribute to the educational experience of the students. However, Southern presented no evidence goals for these co-curricular learning opportunities, assessment of goals, or uses of assessments. The Assessment Report states that Student Affairs conducts a variety of surveys and analyses of student satisfaction with support services, but no reference to goals or learning outcomes assessment for co-curricular offerings (see pages 202, 558, and 708). Review team interviews with administrators, faculty, and students corroborate the lack of co-curricular assessment.

The structure of the Assessment Committee as presented in the Assurance Argument includes voting members which allow for wide coverage across academic disciplines, and while good work has been conducted in the past, the current assessment committee indicates that--beyond Assessment Week, which includes volunteer participation--a mature culture of assessment across the entire institution is lacking. Committee membership is restricted to the academic circle. Additionally, the lack of stable leadership in this area indicates a less than robust assessment culture than that present during the last visit. Southern's assessment program, partially due to multiple leadership changes, is limited more now than from the last visit. The lack of co-curricular assessment has not matured since the last visit.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

The lack of maturity in institutional assessment as well as the lack of co-curricular assessment needs attention by the College. The assessment committee lacks a comprehensive representation across the institution and lacks a strong systematic and useful process that is easily articulated and shared as expected of a Commission college. Further, experiential learning in respect to these types of offerings is valued by the College, and as such deserves an assessment program that includes such learning. The Team recommends an interim visit in two years that addresses a more robust assessment plan with at least one year of results including use of those results with strategies for improvement based on results. In addition, the visiting team should find a plan of action for co-curricular assessment as well as at least one year of results with strategies for improvement based on results. This plan should fit within an existing assessment plan that delineates a clear calendar of procedures and action items illustrating a clear and robust culture of assessment covering the entire institution. The next visiting team should be able to review this assessment calendar, clear processes, evidence of broad application, and use of results.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

The Community and Technical College System of West Virginia establishes goals for all community and technical colleges across the state. As a part of this statewide initiative, community and technical colleges report data regarding the results of the stated goals annually. Currently, it is up to the institutions to set benchmarks, but 80% will be the 2019-2020 state target. This is a new plan the State of West Virginia developed beyond its required *Annual Compact Performance Indicators Report.* Although not specifically stated as student retention, persistence and completion, submissions to the CTCS of WV show the following measures under Goal 1 which is, "*Improve the success of students by increasing college completion*":

a. Total degrees awarded: Baseline 280   2016-2017   310   (Completion)

e.   Percentage of first-time freshmen who successfully complete the first college-level Math course requirements by the end of year one of enrollment: Baseline:11.8%   2016-2017: 35% (Persistence)

f. Percentage of first-time freshmen who successfully complete the first college-level English course requirements by the end of year one of enrollment: Baseline: 51.3%   2016-2017: 60% (Persistence)

i. Percentage of students transferring who achieve a GPA of 2.0 or better on a 4.0 scale at the conclusion of their first year of enrollment at in-state four-year public institutions: Baseline: 89.1% 2016-2017: 89.2% (Retention)

On site interviews provided two additional data sources for this criterion. The first was the *IPEDS*

2016-2017 submission. In the category of Full-time First-time cohort retention, the preload number was 352 with a retained number of 183 leading to a retention rate of 52%. The *West Virginia Higher Education Report Card 2017* provided statistics on all community colleges in the state from 2011-2015. One year retention rates for the past three years for Southern were 53.4% (2013), 56.3% (2014) and 54.8% (2015). Data reporting is evident in documents previously submitted to the state of West Virginia in yearly reporting processes; however, stated benchmarks are not included, and although the data shows trending, action plans based on the results are not developed at this time. On site interviews revealed that benchmarks at this point are not set by the institution, and the data is not analyzed or shared with communities of interest.

Southern monitors student success within programs through outside accreditation processes in addition to the five-year program review process. Job placement rates are also defined and measured within the program review process in order to demonstrate best practices in preparing students for the workforce. Finally, tutoring is available to every student and the use of tutoring data allows for student support and the effective use of resources.

The last Peer Review Visit Team noted that Southern's QIS was "making strides" in the use of data to guide institutional improvements. The document, *Meeting the Challenge: MASTER PLAN for the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia for 2009-2010 thru 2014-2015* provided definitions of all three criteria along with goals and results for all three components. For the Assurance Argument support, the *Meeting the Challenge: MASTER PLAN Fulfilling the Vision: 2015-2020* was provided; however previous measures for retention and persistence were not included as evident in the previous document.

Some engagement is noted in this current Assurance Argument update, yet the prior team's comments were not as aggressively approached as one might expect in four years. The previous team recommended that Southern develop a process for gathering student feedback regarding instruction, The Assurance Argument presented no updates in this area. The team provided instruction to develop assessment methodologies in non-instructional areas; the institution included support from the Tutoring Center and Veteran's services, neither of which provide comprehensive services to all students. The 2013 team report provides support for the Enrollment Management Committee with the summary of the Enrollment Management Plan (EMP); however, the document submitted for the Assurance Argument was last updated in 2015 and is currently "under revision." On site interviews revealed that the Enrollment Management Plan is not complete at present. While stakeholder feedback casts cause and/or blame due to prior employees, at the end of the day the College lacks this crucial planning. The original Enrollment Management Plan included the potential for measurable outcomes for departments college-wide. The lack of progress in these areas signify a lack of momentum on a previous plan of action.

The QIS Committee should continue its work on data collection and analysis from a macro-perspective for the College. Individual programs within the institution, such as in nursing and medical laboratory technician, serve as general models for other areas. Southern even admits, via multiple interviews on site, that there is little documentation to prove strong alignment among goals, data, and analysis. In terms of use of such data, Southern admits this is a work in progress. Given that the last Commission team summarized that the College knew of a need to improve this area, little has been accomplished to strengthen this venue of data-based decision making as it has in other successful venues such as assessment and planning.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

Southern must obviously follow mandates from its State governing body and does comply with such. Goals are obvious from the State and the Institution, but beyond the goals for retention, persistence, and completion, the actual collection, analysis, and use of data pertaining to those important student success indicators is lacking at the institutional level. The on-site review conducted previously verified the presence of the requirements of 4.C. Evidence to support this criterion for this review is lacking. An on-site focus visit to examine that status of process and product of this core component is recommended. The institution needs to: (1) actually define student retention, persistence, and completion as well as set measurable goals for each. If it is the institution's wish to use the IPEDS data points, they should be identified as such. Documents reviewed by the team from the previous visit did include the definitions above, but the documents for this review did not. (2) Progress on goals and ideas have occurred, but the expected process maturity has not been fulfilled since the last visit. Southern needs to demonstrate how results will be used for quality improvement as well as present any tangible results up to the time of the report.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Evidence

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its programs and support services through a variety of appropriate processes including regular program reviews; maintaining specialized accreditation; and monitoring graduation, transfer and employment rates through statewide reporting to the Community and Technical College System (CTCS) of West Virginia.

Southern uses the standard federal credit hour definition and has established processes toward the award of transfer credit to students based on traditional college transfer, experiential credit, and work and life experiences.

Faculty determine the course offerings and prerequisites for courses that follow an established curriculum review process. Student learning outcomes are developed by the faculty in the discipline or specialized area of study. Assessments are conducted by faculty and monitored by the Assessment Committee.   Efforts are underway at the state level to standardize courses as well as degree offerings.

The College is required by state law to submit annual reports for an established set of goals. While not specifically addressed as student retention, persistence, or completion, the goals required from the state allow the College to demonstrate effectiveness in these areas. Data analysis is evident, and the College sets current goals for benchmarks; all benchmarks were met as presented.

The Team found that a mature process for using goals and even available data such as IPEDS is lacking at Southern. A process for using data gathered from goals using acceptable measurements to analyze in order to shape positive change for student success is needed.

The institution is encouraged to actually define student retention, persistence, and completion as well as measurable goals for each. If it is the institutions wish to use the IPEDS data points, they should be identified as such. Reviewed documents from the previous visit did include the definitions above, but the documents for this review did not. Progress on goals and ideas have occurred, but the expected process maturity has not been fulfilled since the last visit. The next visiting team will explore this area as detailed in 4C.

Additionally, the visiting team found a limited assessment program and a lack of any apparent co-curricular assessment, which need to be addressed.   The need for a robust assessment culture that is fully documented and updated is absent. Co-curricular assessment must include a definitive plan that should fit within an existing assessment plan that delineates a clear calendar of procedures and action items illustrating a clear and robust culture of assessment covering the entire institution. The next visiting team should be able to review this assessment calendar, clear processes, evidence of broad application, and use of results.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern operates as a public, two-year institution and does not have subordinate entities. The College has sufficient fiscal, personnel, and infrastructure resources to fulfill its Mission. In terms of fiscal stability, a review of the latest CFI scores demonstrate sound fiscal management with a slight upward trend with the last year. While heavily dependent upon state appropriation at just over 60%, Southern has managed its fiscal resources well, per audit reviews, and has no loan debt. The College's reserve fund is growing. Southern adapts to fiscal challenges, such as shrinking enrollment, a national trend. As for Human Resources, Southern has 120 full-time staff, including 66 faculty, 73 classified, and 21 non-classified. Leadership changes have occurred for most senior staff, and reorganization has ensued since the last team visit.

Regarding physical resources, Southern is guided in large part by its 10-year Master Facilities Plan. This detailed plan provides a prioritized list of improvement and building needs for the campus and off-site locations. Capital funds are set aside for such improvements and action has been taken, even since the last Commission visit, such as new roofs on select buildings. As for technology, Southern has made significant upgrades and maintained even with its technology infrastructure since 2010, and utilizes commonly used and tested platforms and information management systems. For instance, Blackboard is used for online modality courses even allowing video chat rooms, lecture capture

storage, and streaming.

Human Resources include qualified staff and are appropriately trained per College systems, including established hiring procedures, evaluation processes, and professional development opportunities. College policy outlines the required credentials for faculty positions, which are established through dialog among the HR Department and appropriate faculty supervisors. Documentation, via the Position Information Questionnaire, further establishes attention to qualifications. Once hired, evaluation methods exist to foster quality improvement. Supervisors are trained on evaluation and offered scheduled professional development days at Southern as evidenced by agendas for those days. Students also provide evaluation for faculty. Besides internal professional development opportunities, the faculty and staff are provided funds that are distributed according to needs as determined by professional development request forms.

Southern follows standard financial procedures, including accounting and auditing. Besides following State law, the College works closely with the State Auditor's Office and adheres to accepted accounting principles and procedures based on the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). The College's financial statements are also in compliance with Government Accounting Standard Board (GASB). Multiple audits demonstrate unqualified findings. Should the College find itself in a resource emergency in terms of fiscal footing, it has standing policy (SCP-5260) on financial exigency to guide the institution during such a period.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

Governance at Southern is organized in a commonly accepted higher education structure. Southern's Board of Governors includes nine governor-appointed members with an elected chair, and the Board's duties are provided by State statute. Some members are new to the Board and bring useful perspectives to the group. Others have been reappointed. Some interviews raised questions about Board member term limits, in reference to 'West Virginia Code Chapter 18B. Higher Education. Article 2A. Institutional Boards of Governors. Findings; composition of boards; terms and qualifications of members; vacancies; eligibility for reappointment.' No definitive evidence of abuse of appointments was provided beyond speculation by some employees. Board members are required to complete six hours of training every two years, and each new member must have three hours of training when first appointed. The executive team provides to Board members at Board meetings reports detailing the work at the College. In addition to these appointed positions, a full-time faculty member is elected by the faculty assembly, and a member of the student body who in good academic standing is elected by the study body to be on the Board. Additionally, a member of the classified staff is elected by the staff assembly to represent that group on the Board. A review of Board minutes provides evidence of an executive team that informs the Board of significant subjects, including fiscal matters and policy review. The Board is very vested and engaged in the College. Their credentials and broad experience are strong.

Shared governance is promoted by the College, and a review of the Institutional Governance Handbook describes structure, process, and timelines of how shared governance structures function. Multiple committees with varied constituent composition exist on campus and function to make major decisions regarding: curriculum, enrollment, facilities, planning, technology, among others. Institutional records provide evidence of the function and utility of these committees, such as with the Strategic Planning and Financial Review Committee. However, as of October 2017 the Faculty Senate at Southern held a vote of no confidence in the president. A full vote of faculty members led to the same vote, with members citing morale and academic concerns. Disputes on how the vote was

executed were noted by multiple constituency groups even beyond administration. Regardless of the competing narrative of how the vote occurred, tensions exist at Southern. The team did not find a particular cause of blame, however. A confluence of change, unstable leadership in many areas of the college, and a lack of communication, and thus understanding, have resulted in a tense environment at all levels of the organization. The Board of Governors recently awarded the President with a four-and-a-half year contract including a pay increase, and they support him and demonstrate an understanding of the "new normal" of the higher education landscape. The Board stated via a press release that they noted the President's innovative ideas, yet noted concerns about morale and encouraged the President to engage the challenge and report back to the Board of Governors.

Interviews on campus were at times conflicting and selective in nature, some without means of paper or electronic verification. The subject matter of those interviews dealt with faculty credentials, low enrollment courses, unique pay structures for some courses in various disciplines, staff turnover, and multiple reorganizations were the chief concerns noted. The credentials issue from a governance perspective was explored in Criterion 2.A. Reasons for maintaining unique course pay structures included student effectiveness; reasons for not maintaining unique course pay structures were low enrollment and equality. Co-requisite courses in math and team-taught nursing courses in addition to some overlapping biology lectures consisted the bulk of the complaints. Other faculty expressed a desire not to be engaged in this controversy. Regarding staff turnover and recent hires, interviews on campus revealed the perception that there existed internal assumptions about the search for a new president after President Tomlin retired. An internal candidate was not selected by the search firm. While the institution is on its third CAO since the last Commission visit, legitimate reasons for the changes were provided, particularly for the second. The most recent hire seems to be poised to engage Accreditation and CAO duties given her experience. However, multi-year instability has led to campus tension.

Additionally, multiple interviews regarding the previous ALO demonstrated a lack of preventative communication regarding, for example, faculty credentials policy by the Commission. Little work had been generated by the ALO for the Assurance Argument, but little oversight was in place to catch those deficiencies. The departure of the ALO also created tension with the faculty.

The Board of Governors is aware of the challenges with governance in terms of tensions and communication, and they stand behind their new president and current staff to move the institution forward. The Board renewed the president's contract for over four years as a sign of support. Interviews with Board members demonstrated their observation of a need for bridge-building at the institution as well as their desire for stability. Faculty express concerns about a lack of academic leadership and even a need for more administration to shoulder the regulatory and compliance work. They note anxiety and a fear of retaliation.

Clearly, institutional concerns regarding organizational climate are obvious. However, as one interview from a voice not associated with any of the controversies stated: We have a culture at Southern that fosters victimage, blame, and rivalry. That needs to stop for the benefit of the student.

That summary is the goal of the monitoring report the Team recommends and detailed below.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

There exists enough evidence from a review of evidence and multiple interviews on site to warrant Commission follow-up. The prior citation on governance has been remedied, which was rectified by the retirement of the previous president who was the wife of the governor. The governor is also now out of office. The College put in place safeguards for the future for such a situation.

Due to the evidence cited herein, the team recommends a focused visit in two years to address governance and communications. The next Commission team should expect from the institution a report that clearly and specifically addresses the following:

1. Revised and improved communication channels, along with results, across the institution.

2. Professional development, particularly on Commission policies and criteria. Faculty, staff, and administration need to be more engaged in the re-accreditation process. Such professional development should encompass multiple personnel avoiding only a select few.

3. Organizational culture assessment that is meaningful, positive, objective, and professional should be engaged, perhaps with the help of an external consultant.

4. Defined process and protocol for managing differences and reconciling disputes, particularly at a small institution. While state statutes dictate reconciling disputes, it is apparent that such statue has not resulted in a harmonious, positive campus culture. Such process and protocol should be more institutional-focused in addition to state requirements. Such processes and protocol may be more managerial focused.

5. New voices utilized on campus in multiple administrative groups that are free from historical challenges and who have fresh insights. While the institution has no control over the appointment of lay members to its Board of Governors, the Commission encourages new members of the Board to offer fresh insights while working with veteran Board members to help move the institution forward and help the campus culture improve.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, especially via its Strategic Planning and Financial Review Committee. An examination of committee minutes demonstrates a review of key institutional goals, discussion assessing implementation status, and budget implications. Goals are the College Commitments which are Board approved, and they are tied to organizational functional areas. These functional areas submit detailed budget requests with rationale to members of the executive team charged with creating the institutional budget.

Additional planning occurs at Southern beyond the Strategic Planning and Financial Review Committee. The College has also developed and prepared an Emergency Preparedness Manual that incorporates response teams and an assessment process for various emergencies. The Facilities Committee now includes safety as a key element of its purpose. Other planning that involves College resources includes both distance education and technology venues. Expanded services and continuing support are engaged by the College as evidenced by multiple sources of documentation, including plans, memos, and fiscal documentation.

A new strategic vision following an in-depth review of the college has been engaged by the new president and his staff. Feedback from internal and external stakeholders provided guidance for the process and the College reports such information will be given to the Strategic Planning and Review Committee for additional processing and development.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Southern engages institutional effectiveness via technological processes, including Ellucian Banner with modules for a variety of functional areas. Blackboard Analytics and ARGOS are also used by staff to utilize the common dashboards for those programs. The College also participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Results are used for improvements in student support as stated in the Assurance Argument. Southern also states it will use data for its new Enrollment Management Plan. Assessment activities and program reviews also provide feedback loops for improved teaching. In terms of facilities, Southern is evaluated by the WV Board of Risk and Insurance Management providing the College with annual reports to help identify safety issues. While attention to institutional effectiveness is obvious, a coordinated manner for systematic dashboards with benchmarks is at best in its infancy at Southern, an area the institution needs to engage in subsequent years.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Evidence

Southern has a resource base that supports is fiscal and personnel needs as evidenced from the agreements and support provided to support Criterion Five. Technology needs are addressed by the institution as is maintenance of a staff sufficient to execute its mission. The College also has a 10-year Master Facilities Plan that guides campus improvements to buildings and grounds.

The Board of Governors is the body created by the state of West Virginia that oversees Southern. The Board demonstrates standard protocols for operations and policy-making as well as respecting its fiduciary responsibilities.

As for shared governance, Southern has had recent challenges that warrant Commission follow up regarding campus operations. A challenge does exist, and despite a two-day visit to the College, the extent of the damage is difficult to ascertain. The College does much to help its students, but unless differences can be negotiated in peaceful and respectful manners, long-term damage to the College may result. The work that needs to be done should not be to determine a "winner" or a "loser" but rather with the common goal of how to serve students and the community while making all other needs secondary. The Board did extend the President's contract by over four years following the no confidence vote and stand behind him. Many faculty have spent years at the College and have strong student support. All parties should find common ground to resolve differences and recognize the fact that there is "new normal" in all of higher education; further, past practices, while desired, may not be feasible in the age of financial reductions, increased public scrutiny, legislative mandates, and evolving economies. Communication and understanding are paramount to the continuing success of Southern. Stakeholders must know that negotiation--at all levels in the organization--requires sacrifice and a willingness to "give" in order to make for a more productive work environment. If the institution continues a "winners" and "losers" approach with their current challenges, the only ones to really suffer will be the students.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met With Concerns
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met With Concerns
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met With Concerns
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met With Concerns
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

Review Summary

Focused Visit(s)

Due Date
3/23/2020

Visit Focus
Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College has many positive attributes, but as can happen during major transitional periods, some core components in the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation are lacking to be rendered fully met. Further attention to these core components will ultimately help strengthen the institution. Southern is required to host an HLC Assurance Review Team in order to examine four areas identified by the Team as being "met with concerns" following an assurance review with the Open Pathways visit in Spring of 2018. The Commission Team will have a focused visit in the Spring of 2020 to address the following core components that are "met with concerns."

Criterion 2a

Because there is significant confusion on the part of faculty and staff regarding the Commission's policies, particularly those on faculty credentials, the team determined that a subsequent focus visit to Southern is justified in order to interview key stakeholders about delineation of duties and application of Commission policies. The visit will focus, in general, on shared governance in the institution, particularly for broad institutional accreditation processes and also for faculty credentials. Confusion regarding these topics has led to tension on campus. Employees at all levels could benefit from professional development on these subjects. Should funding be available, faculty and staff are encouraged to attend Commission sponsored events so that messaging regarding accreditation processes and policies are not lost in translation. As a suggestion for both content dissemination and an exercise in collaboration, an on campus presentation, by faculty and administration who attend the same Commission event, could be beneficial to report. While not prescriptive, that suggestion should serve as the type of engagement the institution must demonstrate in its subsequent report and Commission visit in two years.

The visiting team should examine Southern's improvement in both the communication and application of faculty credentialing policy as mandated by the Commission. The team should also examine faculty files to make sure that consistent application has consistently been followed. Campus-wide engagement of Commission processes, policies, and expectations should be evident by this next visit. Extended and relevant discussion on this visit regarding the topic of shared governance is also explored in Criterion 5b.

Criterion 4b

The lack of a robust institutional assessment culture and the lack of co-curricular assessment need attention by the College. The assessment committee lacks a comprehensive representation across the institution and lacks a strong systematic and useful process that is easily articulated and shared as expected of a Commission college. Experiential learning in respect to these types of offerings is valued by the College, and as such deserves an assessment program that includes such learning.

A focused visit may yield additional evidence by the College not found in this Assurance Review. The College needs to address a plan of action for comprehensive assessment, including co-curricular assessment, as well as at least one year of results with strategies for improvement based on results. This College needs to provide evidence of a comprehensive assessment calendar that encompasses academic and operational services. Co-curricular

assessment planning should be integrated into the College's assessment plan. The College's assessment committee should include additional membership in all functional areas beyond just academics. This action will help the institution's assessment efforts mature from their current status. The next visiting team should be able to review this assessment calendar, clear processes, evidence of broad application, and use of results.

Criterion 4c

As identified in the Team's analysis of 4c, Southern obviously must follow State mandates and does so from all indications regarding 4c. However, beyond the goals for retention, persistence, and completion, the actual collection, analysis, and use of data pertaining to those important student success indicators is lacking at the institutional level. The on-site review conducted previously verified the presence of the requirements of 4c. Evidence to support this criterion for this review is lacking. For future assurance processes, the institution is encouraged to actually define student retention, persistence, and completion as well as measurable goals for each. If it is the institutions wish to use the IPEDS data points, they should be identified as such. Reviewed documents from the previous visit did include the definitions above, but the documents for this review did not. Progress on goals and ideas have occurred, but the expected process maturity has not been fulfilled since the last visit. A focused visit team will seek to clarify any evidence the institution may have to counter this concern.

Ultimately, the current visiting team identified in its electronic review slower than expected growth in the area of retention, persistence, and completion. The College, via state requirements and internal structures, has set goals pertaining to this core component. However, from this electronic review there is a lack of data since the last visit pertaining to useful tracking of students and use of data. Both process refinement and data production with applied examples should be engaged in this report. While two years will not provide sufficient data for long-term trends, the Team expects the institution to move forward in this venue of student service and success with a tangible path. The focus visit should include specific attention paid to the following:

1. Clear institutional definitions of retention, persistence, and completion as well as process refinement to include how data will be assessed against goals and then moved to action.

2. Definitive evidence from goal measurements with analysis and demonstrated use of results. While use may be less than reliable for radical change based on a limited data set, a pattern of evidence with thoughtful analysis should be evident.

Criterion 5b

As stated in the Team's review of Criterion 5, the distance review did not yield sufficient evidence to warrant a clear conclusion to render the core component "met." Given that the Board of Governors requested follow up from the president on campus morale, so too should the Commission see follow up on the status of campus morale, especially as it relates to decision making at Southern. However, beyond campus morale is the need to educate faculty and staff regarding the "new normal" in higher education and as referenced in Criterion 5 Summary of this Assurance Argument Review document. One person does not totally control a campus climate, and improvement in that it will take an institutional willingness to engage one another to help move the institution forward. Follow up evidence should provide a variety of perspectives at levels of decision making. The institution should document the process it engages and integrate goals and actions into a dimension of its institutional effectiveness, such as assessment or planning.

There exists enough evidence from a review of documents and multiple interviews on site to warrant Commission follow-up. The prior citation on governance has been remedied, which was ultimately fixed by the retirement of the previous president who was the wife of the governor who is also out of office at present. The College also put in place safeguards for the future for such a situation.

The Team recommends a report with focused visit in two years to address governance and communications. The next Commission Team should expect from the institution a report that clearly and specifically addresses the following:

1. Revised and improved communication channels across the institution.

2. Professional development, particularly on Commission policies and criteria. Faculty, staff, and administration need to be more engaged in the re-accreditation process. Such professional development should encompass multiple personnel avoiding only a select few.

3. Organizational culture assessment that is meaningful, positive, objective, and professional should be engaged, perhaps with the help of an external consultant.

4. Defined process and protocol for managing differences and reconciling disputes, particularly at a small institution. While state statutes dictate reconciling disputes, it is apparent that such statue has not resulted in a harmonious, positive campus culture. Such process and protocol should be more institutional-focused in addition to state requirements. Such processes and protocol may be more managerial focused.

5. New voices utilized on campus in multiple administrative groups that are free from historical challenges and who have fresh insights. While the institution has no control over the appointment of lay members to its Board of Governors, the Commission encourages new members of the Board to offer fresh insights while working with veteran Board members to help move the institution forward and help the campus culture improve.

Conclusion

The Team determined that Southern has many superior initiatives and assets. It is a strong and capable institution in many respects. The College fulfills its mission to the constituents it serves, and it does so, from the evidence consulted, in accordance to rules and regulations at regional, state, and federal levels. The assessment program and planning processes, while still growing and changing, generally follow expected practice. Southern is to be commended for its exemplary service to its region, including outreach, opportunities for engagement, and student services. Nevertheless, the Commission believes further examination to 2a, 4b, 4c and 5b must be conducted. Southern has the ingredients to be successful. Collaboration and negotiation will be central to its success or failure.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation
Limited to Standard

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, WV
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Open Pathway Assurance Review
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	Assurance Review team has called for an on-site visit per HLC policy INST.C.10.020 to conduct further review of specific issues arising from the Assurance Review. The team has identified several areas of concern primarily with regards to co-curricular assessment, persistence and completion, faculty credentials, shared governance and planning. This visit will be conducted Feb. 5-6, 2018.
DATES OF REVIEW:	10/2/2017 -

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: nc

Degrees Awarded: Associates

Recommended Change: nc

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

 Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2013 - 2014

 Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2022 - 2023

Recommended Change: nc

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

 Prior Commission approval is required for substantive change as stated in Commission policy.

Recommended Change: nc

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Additional Location:

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: nc

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change: nc

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway   Open Pathway

Recommended Change: Standard Pathway

Upcoming Events

Comprehensive Evaluation: 2022 - 2023

Recommended Change:

Quality Initiative Report: 08/31/2022

Recommended Change: None due to change of pathway

Quality Initiative Proposal: 08/31/2020

Recommended Change: None due to change of pathway

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change: Focused visit by March 2020 on shared governance, faculty credentials, assessment of student learning, student success and organizational culture.

Institutional Data

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Educational Programs		Recommended Change:
Undergraduate		
Certificate	14	_____
Associate Degrees	31	_____
Baccalaureate Degrees	0	_____
Graduate		
Master's Degrees	0	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____
Doctoral Degrees	0	_____

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

Boone/Lincoln Campus, 3505 Daniel Boone Pkwy, STE A, Danville, WV, 25053

Williamson Campus, 1601 Armory Drive, Williamson, WV, 25661

Wyoming/McDowell Campus, 128 College Drive, Saulsville, WV, 25876

Recommended Change: nc

Additional Locations

Lincoln County High School Site, 81 Lincoln Panther Way, Hamlin, WV, 25523 - Active

Running Right Leadership Academy (Running Right Way), 431 Running Right Way, Jullian, WV, 25529 - Active

Recommended Change: nc

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: nc

Distance Delivery

11.0103 - Information Technology, Associate, Information Technology

11.0103 - Information Technology, Certificate, Information Technology

12.0401 - Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General, Associate, Salon Management/Cosmetology

13.1501 - Teacher Assistant/Aide, Certificate, Paraprofessional Education

19.0708 - Child Care and Support Services Management, Associate, Early Childhood

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, Associate in Arts

24.0102 - General Studies, Associate, Board of Governors Adult Completion

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

24.0102 - General Studies, Certificate, General Studies

24.0199 - Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other, Associate, Associate in Science

30.9999 - Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other, Associate, Occupational Development

41.9999 - Science Technologies/Technicians, Other, Associate, Technical Studies

41.9999 - Science Technologies/Technicians, Other, Certificate, Technical Studies

42.2812 - Forensic Psychology, Certificate, Forensic Psychology and Investigation

43.0104 - Criminal Justice/Safety Studies, Associate, Criminal Justice

43.0104 - Criminal Justice/Safety Studies, Certificate, Criminal Justice

43.0301 - Homeland Security, Associate, Homeland Security and Emergency Services

51.0801 - Medical/Clinical Assistant, Associate, Medical Assisting

51.0908 - Respiratory Care Therapy/Therapist, Associate, Respiratory Care Technology

51.1012 - Sterile Processing Technology/Technician, Certificate, Central Sterile Supply Technician

51.2601 - Health Aide, Associate, Health Care Professional

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Associate, Strategic Business Integration

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Associate, Business Administration

52.0205 - Operations Management and Supervision, Associate, Management

52.0299 - Business Administration, Management and Operations, Other, Associate, Mine Management

52.0301 - Accounting, Associate, Business Accounting

52.0402 - Executive Assistant/Executive Secretary, Associate, Office Administration

52.0402 - Executive Assistant/Executive Secretary, Certificate, Office Administration

None

Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: nc

Consortial Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: nc