

Northeast Iowa Community College

HLC ID 1771

STANDARD PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review

Review Date: 10/5/2020

Dr. Liang Wee
President

Jeffrey Rosen
HLC Liaison

Susan Murphy
Review Team Chair

James Baber
Team Member

Janette Funaro
Team Member

Deirdre Heistad
Team Member

Tom Hughes
Team Member

Sarah Robb
Team Member

Damian Von Frank
Team Member

Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

10/5/2020

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
- Federal Compliance (if applicable)
- On-site Visit

- COVID-19 Response Form
- Multi-campus Review

Institutional Context

NICC is a mature comprehensive community college serving an expansive district (5000+ square miles) with certificate, diploma and degree programs that facilitate entry level employment and transfer opportunities. The college is rural in nature and hosts 2 campuses: Calmar and Peosta, along with academic and support services operations provided at high schools through partnership arrangements. In recent years, enrollment has been declining and adjustments in staffing and re-design of services have been made allowing college financials to remain strong.

The college had its most recent Comprehensive Visit in 2016 and subsequently submitted a report in 2018 on topics covering high school operations, faculty evaluation processes, concurrent enrollment, faculty credentials and assessment. A recently revisited set of Mission statements, a new Strategic Planning effort and revised enrollment trends set the stage in recent years for a redesign of the institution's organization and academic and student support processes.

Given the Covid virus, the visit is being conducted chiefly remotely with only one team member on campus for the first day of the visit.

Interactions with Constituencies

President

Vice President for Learning and Student Success

Associate Vice President for Learning and Student Services

Vice President of Business and Community Solutions

Associate Vice President of Operations

Executive Assistant to the President and Board Secretary

Vice President of Finance and Administration

Executive Director of Human Resources

Director of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)/College Senate President

Director of Organizational Development/ALO

Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Advancement

Executive Dean of Liberal Arts, Science and Business

College Faculty (approximately 50)

Director of Registration and Retention

Executive Director of Finance

Executive Director for Risk Management and Title IX, ADA/504 and Equity Coordinator

Director of Institutional Research

Associate Director of Human Resources

Learning Center Coordinator

Director of Registration and Retention

Dean of Instructional Innovation and Design

Director of Recruitment

Learning Management System Administrator

Instructional Designers

Executive Dean of Liberal Arts, Science and Business

Support Technician

Enrollment Advisors

Construction Manager

Director of Plant Services

Administrative Assistant Operations

Director of Computer Information Systems

Executive Director of Finance

Financial Accountant

Learning and Student Success Information Analyst

Board of Trustees

Associate Dean of Liberal Arts, Science and Business

Concurrent Faculty (15)

Dean of Agriculture, Animal Science and Transportation

Dean of Allied Health and Human Services Education

Dean of High School Partnerships

Director of Registration and Retention

High School Career Specialists

High School Principal

Instructional Designers

Learning and Student Success Information Analyst

Learning Management System Administrator

Registrar

High School Superintendent

Center Directors

Director of Career Services

High School Counselors

High School Partnerships Administrative Assistant

High School Partnerships Career Specialist

Success Coaches

Director of Student Life

Director of TRIO-Student Support Services

Human Resources Coordinator

Associate Director of Human Resources

Disability Services Coordinators

Mental Health Counselor

Learning and Student Success Information Analyst

Wellness and Life Stage Program Manager

Director of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)/College Senate President

Director of Enrollment Operations

Veterans Consultant

Dean of Allied Health and Human Services Education

Dean of Nursing

Dean of Agriculture, Animal Science and Transportation

Director of Computer Information Systems

Director of Data Services

Support Technician

Dean of Allied Health and Human Services Education

Additional Documents

There are no additional documents reviewed.

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 articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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 and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC's Mission, Vision and Values (MVV) statements were most recently updated and approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) in January 2019 through a process that engaged the college's broad constituencies. The change process began mid-2018 and work on the statements took place in conjunction with the development of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. The Plan itself reflects full integration of the MVV. Recommended changes to the MVV were shared in meetings, Town Halls, through campus communications, and YouTube; responses were solicited vigorously. NICC clearly exhibited leadership and commitment to engaging campus and community stakeholders as the MVV review and update process was conducted.

The MVV statements are current and reflect the college's commitment to providing programs and services that support students through to their own defined success. NICC seeks to serve its district beyond degree and certificate programs by providing a large selection of community education offerings, working with high schools by providing college coursework, and providing relevant workforce programs, both credit and non-credit. Program offerings and services support student success for both program retention and completion and are consistent with stated institutional values. These efforts confirm the vitality of the Mission and the college's practice of follow through on its collective Mission statements.

The college offers academic programming suitable to its local communities' interests and employment needs along with a typical array of student academic and support services which reflect the institution's Mission claims. The programs and services underscore NICC's role as a comprehensive rural community college seeking to serve the diverse constituents of its large district.

Constituents can access the college MVV statements easily on the college website and through the many types of printed materials, e.g., Strategic Plan, catalog, institutional Handbooks, and student resource materials. The Mission statements are widely available and consistently communicate the college's purpose and intent to serve its district.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
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 external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As a public community college, NICC is not obligated to serve any superordinate entity and BOT policy affirms the Board's duty to serve institutional constituents and the NICC district. The college's array of academic and community programs illustrates a clear commitment to meeting the educational needs of its expansive district and funding allocations reflect focus on the needs of the institution's learners---whether on campus, through partnerships or offerings to businesses. Dedication to serving the public good is further evidenced in employee engagement as described in interviews and most compellingly in the Minutes of Advisory groups, operation of high school partnerships, and the volume of business relationships forged in order to share college expertise in support of economic development. NICC works comprehensively to appeal and bring services to the constituents of its large district.

The NICC Foundation serves as a financial support to the college making both scholarships and special service projects supporting faculty and students possible through their ongoing philanthropy.

NICC's significant engagement in providing higher education instruction to high school students is reflective of its service to the community and commitment to the public good. The college provides a valuable service to high school students in making college educational choices available and affordable. Non-credit customized education offerings to district-wide businesses through the Business and Community Solutions Division serve as another example of services to the college's diverse public constituents.

The college's credit and non-credit offerings are designed to support economic growth through preparation of entry level employees. Accordingly, the co-curricular programming serves as evidence that the college seeks to help students connect to their community through service programs.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC's commitment to student success is clearly articulated in the college Mission and Vision statements and is promoted across each campus and through digital media, notably, the college website. The Mission Statement declares NICC's objective to provide "in-demand education and training focused on improving the lives, driving business success, and advancing community vitality". The updated Mission and Vision were approved in January 2019. The team verified that the institution's constituencies not only understand but have a clear and even passionate commitment to fulfilling institutional purposes.

The college has identified the following areas as co-curricular activities: Career Services, Career Readiness curriculum, Student Life (iMPACT), student organizations, Academic Competitions, clubs, and committees. Student learning outcomes have been identified in the student services area and provided in the Career Hub platform that is published on the college's Faculty/Staff Menu of Services publication. The variety of co-curricular activities offered confirms NICC's commitment to offer a menu of mission related activities to its students.

Evidence that NICC understands the connection between Mission and diversity can be found in the student clubs and activities sponsored by the college. Examples of clubs include the Career and Student Organizations (CTSO) that support career and technical curricula, e.g., Business and Professionals (BPA), Iowa Professional Agricultural Student Organization, National Student Nurse Association (NSNA), Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), Annual Writing Competitions, and the Shooting Club. The program related co-curricular opportunities speak to the institution's desire to offer both supportive and experiential opportunities to complement academic pursuits..

The college has implemented and follows policies designed to support equity and diversity as demonstrated in the Diversity Low Income Equity Summary, the NICC Equity and Diversity Communication and Training, and Board Policy 201 on Nondiscrimination. Collectively, these documents confirm that the college does have policies in place that are designed to support equity and diversity at the institution.

The college has demonstrated a commitment to diversity and equity through a variety of clubs, activities, hosted events and focused staff positions on its campuses and at its centers. Training on diversity and equity has been provided for all employee groups. The team encourages the institution to seek the means to increase its diversity in the student and employee ranks as feasible. The college addressed inclusiveness by promoting an institutional campaign and theme that "ALL ARE WELCOME HERE", and provides a LGBTQ safe zone.

NICC has implemented and follows policies designed to support diversity as demonstrated in the Notice of Nondiscrimination Policy that is listed in the College Catalog, course syllabi, and Board Policies. The college has as one of its core Values "Respect" which applies to all campus stakeholders internal and external.

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.

Rationale

NICC enjoys recently revised/updated Mission, Vision and Values statements that its many stakeholders debated and considered. These statements were approved in tandem with the creation of its most recent (2019-2022) Strategic Plan.

The Mission Statement is published in college documents, websites, admission flyers, and widely in many public and internal college documents. The college's commitment to diversity and equity is expressed in the theme "ALL ARE WELCOME HERE"! The college couples this openness and dedication to diversity with its commitment to serving the public good through partnerships with high schools, businesses and in its workforce and economic development engagement.

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 establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC conducted an assessment and update of the Mission, Vision and Values statements of the college in 2018. Stakeholders from the campus and surrounding communities were given opportunities to contribute to this process. The current statement includes “Integrity : We are ethically accountable to ourselves and others” as an institutional value.

NICC has developed policies to govern the operations of its governing board and its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions. These policies are regularly reviewed by the appropriate administrative or governing body. They, as well as guiding procedures, can be found in documents including the Board of Trustees Policy Manual, the Employee Handbook, the Finance Department procedures, the Learning and Student Success Policies and Procedures, and the Student Code of Conduct. Those stakeholders directly governed by these policies and procedures have ready access to these documents and are made aware of the policies through orientations and training and announcements of policy changes. The Board of Trustees is further governed by Chapter 260C of the Iowa Code and by its own policies which includes a Code of Ethics.

Financial integrity is confirmed in NICC’s Financial Statements noting that the college received unmodified opinion ratings by an independent auditor for fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019. A review of the college’s latest Annual Institutional Update Data report shows a positive trend of financial audits and Composite Financial Index (CFI) scores. Discussions with the Chief Financial Officer and Board of Trustees verified that the Board regularly reviews and approves the budget, is well-informed, and ensures integrity in the college’s financial matters.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC presents itself to its students and to the public through the use of the college website, printed materials, publications, marketing campaigns, and public interactions. The primary mode of communication is the college website which incorporates many of the other modes of communication as well. The website contains HLC accreditation information and its seal along with information for specialized accreditation bodies for 10 academic programs and NACEP programming. Along with the college website, the institution also communicates through social media via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Virtual discussions provided numerous examples of public interactions including presentations, marketing, recruiting, and public service.

A review of the evidence provided numerous examples of communication such as College Program Pages, the Viewbook, the Blue Book, and the College Catalog. College Program Pages have recently been redesigned to align with the college's Guided Pathways efforts and provide information including program description, degree awarded, credits, location offered, entry points, tuition and fees, supply costs, financial aid information, career outlook information, enrollment process, admission requirements, program information, accreditation relationships and awards, transfer information, and program contacts. The Viewbook is geared toward prospective students and contains general promotion of cluster areas, programs, college statistics, services, enrollment steps and campus visit days. The Blue Book, maintained by institutional research and published annually, is a source for data, statistics, and commonly sought after institutional information. In summer 2019, a newly designed interactive College Catalog was launched and integrated into the college website providing a user-friendly, searchable format. NICC makes all reasonable efforts to communicate current and accurate information to its many audiences.

As evidenced by Advisory Committee agendas and minutes, Advisory Committees review program web pages to ensure that information provided is clear, accurate, and reflective of workforce needs. Tuition and fee rates are updated and provided on the college website for prospective students along with estimated costs of attendance for both the current and upcoming academic year. In addition, the Net Price Calculator is available on the admissions and financial aid websites for students to estimate costs of attendance including tuition, required fees, books, and supplies.

Along with digital communication, NICC offers written publications and articles evidenced by Friday Takeout, a weekly newsletter by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness; Focus, a biannual magazine for business constituents and students; Visions, a biannual publication by the Office of the President regarding current college issues; and the Donor Steward Impact Report, a biannual publication to donors. Information contained in these documents is supported by a variety of data sources. For example, both the Bluebook and Viewbook are supported by data found in the Community College Transfer Report, the CCSSE, the SENSE, and Common Learning Outcome assessment dashboards. In addition internal and external constituents can access data and metrics via the Voluntary Framework of Accountability Public Outcomes Report and the US Department of Education NICC Scorecard linked from the college website. It was also shared during discussions that dynamic assessment data is now publicly available on the college website.

Evidence found in the Assurance Argument, on the NICC website, and during the visit confirms that NICC presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC's Board of Trustees derives its authority from Chapter 260C, Code of Iowa with specific autonomous duties and actions specified under 260C.14 Authority of Directors. According to Section 260C.14, the Board has the responsibility and authority to formulate broad public policy in community college education. Specifically, "It shall function as the legislative and policy-making body charged with the oversight and control of College activities." As evidenced by Board Policy 104, new members are to be provided orientation with "its purpose acquainting new members with the policies, duties, and responsibilities of the Board and the programs of the College." The occurrence and value of an orientation and training for new Board members was confirmed through discussions with members of the Board of Trustees.

The college president, members of his Cabinet and other college staff attend the Board's monthly meetings and provide updates and necessary information to keep the Board abreast of operations so they may make informed decisions with respect to financial and academic policies. The Board also shared that additional discussions take place throughout the month such as requests for information by Board members and college emails and phone calls providing information on new/additional topics of interest. Board members work diligently to remain current and focused on institutional issues.

A review of Section 260C.14 Code of Iowa and Board Policy Manual 104 provided articulated priorities and responsibilities for Directors on the Board. Board Policy 106 also clearly specified a Code of Ethics for Directors. Example BOT Minutes provided additional evidence that the Board deliberates and acts in the best interest to preserve and enhance the institution. Board minutes confirmed that the Board follows the Code of Iowa and Board policy for reviewing the interests of both internal and external constituents. Section 21.3 Code of Iowa specifies the open meeting law

requirements to include notification of the public about meeting times, location, and agendas. This requirement is detailed in Board Policy 105 which also includes processes for oral and written communications to the Board. Per this policy, "The Board encourages its citizens to offer their advice and counsel on matters of policy, administration, and other items of public concern affecting the College." Confirmation of open meetings and requests for public input occurred during discussion with the Board.

Much evidence exists that policies are in place to protect the Board's independence from undue influence as substantiated by Board Policy 106 which specifies, "A Board member will insure that any Board decisions which he/she helps make will not result in any conflict of interest on his/her part" and Board Policy 601 which states, "The potential for conflicts of interest shall be avoided, in that Board members and College employees who could personally benefit financially from a decision to be made by the Board or the College shall abstain from participating in that decision." In addition, Board members are required by state code to swear an oath of office found in Iowa Code 63.10.

It is evident from both policy and Board conduct that day to day management of the institution is delegated to the president and that the faculty are expected to oversee academic matters. Board Policy 102 identifies the president as "the chief administrative officer of the College." The president's responsibilities and duties are defined in Board Policy 108 as having responsibility for initiating, guiding, and directing activities necessary to fulfill the mission of the college. Board members were very clear with regard to their expectations of the president to manage day to day operations of the college and their trust with regard to the expertise of college faculty in academic matters.

The president's contract stipulates, "The President shall have charge of the administration of NICC under the direction of the Board. The President shall have such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board or by law. Subject to the approval of the Board, the President shall direct and assign faculty and other employees of NICC; shall organize, reorganize, and arrange the administrative and supervisory staff, including instruction and business affairs, as best serves the interest of NICC; shall select all personnel; shall from time to time suggest regulations, rules, procedures, and policies deemed necessary for the well-ordering of NICC, and in general perform all duties incident to the office of President and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board from time to time." Policies also reveal that faculty are responsible for overseeing academic matters at the college. This is evidenced by Board Policies 501, 502, 503, 206, 504, and 307. Interviews confirmed that the institution indeed functions consistent with these policy declarations.

As evidenced by the Assurance Argument, documented artifacts, review of Iowa Statutes and Board Policies, and virtual discussions with the Board of Trustees; the governing board of NICC is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of NICC in compliance with Board policies ensuring NICC's integrity in operations and personnel conduct.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC demonstrates its commitment to academic freedom through the establishment of and adherence to a number of policies and principles. A NICC faculty committee undated the institution's Academic Freedom policy in 2014. Grounded in the 940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure as defined by the American Association of University Professors and Association of American Colleges, the NICC Academic Freedom Policy reflects best practice.

To ensure that the policy remains a living document, The Academic Freedom Policy remains a standing agenda item on the Faculty Labor Management agenda where policy concerns can be addressed on a regular basis. The HLC review team was able to verify via Committee agendas and minutes that the Faculty Labor Management committee meets regularly.

NICC also has a number of policies in place to demonstrates its commitment to freedom of expression. Furthermore, the final section of Board Policy 206 Freedom of Speech and Expression explains to members of the college community how to file a complaint should one believe to have had their rights violated.

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, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC's activity in support of basic and applied research includes allowing participation in appropriate research activities from doctoral students with external IRB approval. There are one or two of these requests each year, and based on evidence provided in the addendum, it is clear that the institution makes sound decisions regarding this participation. In addition, NICC has recently engaged in a four year agreement with the USDA-NRCS to conduct applied research related to soil health and crop rotation on site through their agricultural programs. Also, due to the veterinary programs offered at NICC, the college has created an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee to ensure the protection of the animals used in the veterinary program. Based on these examples, it is clear that NICC supports research and ensures compliance and accountability. Although NICC made several documents related to internal IRB activity available in the Assurance Argument, questions surfaced re: the currency and use of the college's Charter document. The team notes that the Charter and operating procedures document is outdated (2007 appears to be its last update) which asserts a relationship with the OHRP that expired in 2014. The team also recognizes that this finding has no material effect on the operation of the IRB since the college does not accept federal research money. That said, NICC should update this procedural document and others to reflect its current practice and status.

NICC uses a new student orientation system to introduce students to services and resources that assist with research and scholarly activity. In addition, NICC offers a college experience course for those students with limited college experience to introduce essential academic skills including specific assignments covering plagiarism and campus resources. Instructors at NICC have been supported through the availability of Turnitin.com as a resource for them to use to monitor plagiarism in coursework. Through the site visit, multiple faculty members referred to its use, specifically noting that it is integrated into the LMS Brightspace for the ease of instructor use. Lastly, other tools are made available to ensure the integrity of coursework including a self-authenticating system called Honorlock for students when accessing learning materials online and a proctoring system for exams

for pre-Nursing students. The examples of support services evidenced in the Argument confirm that NICC ensures integrity of scholarly practice.

NICC's library staff assists with the guidance in ethics of research and information literacy. For example, library guides for researching and using databases are made available via the website. While these guides seem to be relatively new on the website, the guide titled "Library Research" has had over 1000 views indicating that it is well used by students. This guide provides students with information related to plagiarism and copyright. These useful guides are available on-demand and encourage the discovery of knowledge. In addition, faculty members can request a research instruction session from library staff that can occur during class time. Library staff measures student feedback from these training sessions and uses the responses to measure co-curricular learning. In both 2018 and 2019, there were 24 requested training sessions and 10 in 2020. As a result of these training sessions, 81% of students surveyed indicated they felt more prepared to complete their class assignments using library resources. The library staff are commended on the work they do to provide guidance for students in the ethics of research and use of information and the effort they have put forth regarding assessing their activities.

NICC faculty members enforce the well established Academic Integrity policy through clarifying the policy on the syllabus for each class, evaluating academic activity, and reporting violations through an effective monitoring system. The institution encourages the use of a statement regarding academic integrity on syllabi, and although not all syllabi reviewed during this visit included the statement verbatim, a notice regarding academic integrity was always present in those syllabi reviewed. As previously mentioned, Turnitin.com is a tool made available to faculty members to help monitor plagiarism in coursework. If a violation of the academic integrity policy is identified, faculty members complete an Academic Integrity Report that is submitted through the Maxient software system that automatically provides the information to the immediate supervisor for further action. Based on information provided in the addendum, NICC has an average of 28 violations per year which provides actual evidence that the college enforces the policy. Based on the review of syllabi and the data associated with tracking academic integrity, it is clear that NICC enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

NICC acts with integrity by implementing policies and practices that promote ethical and responsible behavior. Integrity and responsibility was found to permeate NICC's financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. The Board of Trustees exercises appropriate authority over NICC in accordance with the laws and policies that govern its duties and responsibilities such as Chapter 260C of the Iowa Code and established Board policies including a Code of Ethics. Additionally, day to day management of the institution is delegated to the President and Cabinet while faculty oversee academic matters.

NICC presents itself clearly and completely, as evidenced by the college website, printed materials, publications, marketing campaigns, and examples of public interactions. Provided information is routinely reviewed and supported by a variety of publicly available data. The college's website provides a majority of the presentation of information to the public including program pages, requirements, student costs, faculty and staff, leadership, and accreditation relationships.

It is readily apparent that NICC is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression as evidenced by adherence to guiding principles and policies such as the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure and the college's Academic Freedom policy, which is a standing item on the Faculty Labor Management agenda. NICC follows responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff, and students. Academic honesty and integrity are enforced through the Academic Integrity policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its 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

Rationale

The institution has processes in place to ensure the currency of its courses and programs as well as the establishment of requirements for student and appropriate assessment of that learning within those courses and programs.

The CTE program advisory process gives adequate opportunity for aligning industry needs with program curriculum, with Advisory Committee meetings scheduled bi-annually. This advisory committee process, i.e., membership, member training, agenda focus, recommendations, follow-up--- is robust. The institution's participation in regional and sector partnership boards also affords it essential input on industry and labor market needs.

Liberal Arts programs rely on Comprehensive Program Review as well as forged transfer agreements as the formal means of ensuring discipline currency. Program reviews are to occur every five years with outcomes assessments reviewed during intervening years of the review cycle. A new/revised Program Review process for the liberal arts has been instituted within the last two years, with both the Mathematics and Social Sciences reviews taking place in 2019-2020. The program review document reveals one question with a focus on program currency. NICC participates in a statewide transfer and articulation committees and agreements involving Iowa community colleges and its public universities. These committees and the agreements they oversee ensure that transfer course outcomes remain current and aligned. The college's many agreements with receiving institutions and adherence to a state transfer guide suggests that the college courses remain current within cycled reviews.

The institution's Curriculum Committee has established processes to ensure that all proposed curriculum – whether new or modified – is reviewed thoroughly for its outcomes and their impact within its own program by including revised curriculum maps, course guides, identified assessments and CLOs for the curriculum. New and modified curriculum proposals must also clearly identify impact on existing programs.

All CTE and Liberal Arts programs have processes in place for setting, stating and assessing learning outcomes. Using curriculum maps, all programs have aligned their course, program and common outcomes to ensure that successful students reach the required performance level. For each program, all courses have stated Education Learning Outcomes which are outcomes to be attained within each course, Program Learning Outcomes are those to be attained in each program, and College Learning Outcomes which are to be attained “through an NICC education”. Embedded assessments in all courses make possible the assurance that students are attaining this level of achievement.

The institution has policies and processes in place for ensuring consistency in staffing, course and program outcomes and assessment of those outcomes across all modalities and locations.

NICC ensures that all faculty – full-time, part-time, adjunct/concurrent faculty – meet the same credential requirements and requirements for on-boarding and professional development over the course of their employment as specified in the NICC's *Quality Faculty Plan* and communicated to faculty in such documents as the online *Faculty Guide*. Initial credentialing includes a series of required learning modules for each faculty member during their probationary period. This credentialing is then followed by “re-credentialing” professional development requirements every five years.

The evaluation of faculty was recently outlined in the Faculty Evaluation policy approved in September, 2020. This policy articulates a different evaluation process during the three-year probationary period for the full-time faculty on one hand and for the part-time, and adjunct/concurrent faculty on the other. All faculty have a classroom observation by their dean each of their first three years and receive feedback from their dean on these observations. Only full-time faculty are also required to perform a self-evaluation, are subject to a full evaluation and attend a formal performance review meeting. Full-time faculty also have peer evaluations during their first two years. All faculty administer student evaluations to students in all courses and receive feedback on these student evaluations.

In addition to the formal evaluation process, since 2018 NICC has in place regular, annual discipline-specific faculty meetings in which all faculty members are to discuss curriculum, course guides and assessments. These meetings afford opportunities for essential interaction between full-time, part-time, and adjunct/concurrent faculty and are recorded for those faculty unable to attend. Program review – well established in CTE programs and since 2018-2019 regularly scheduled in Liberal Arts programs – also give faculty the opportunity for interaction on curriculum, course organization and assessment.

To ensure consistency for all online courses, the Instructional Innovation and Design department reviews the courses' content and alignment to course standards. This process is to begin for all courses in the fall of 2020. The *Course Credit Equivalency Tool* further aids faculty in assuring that online courses are consistent in faculty instructional time and student work time.

NICC has a well-developed plan for identifying, articulating and aligning course-level, program-level

and college-level learning outcomes. These outcomes are featured on each “Course Guide,” the document which is the primary means for communicating consistent requirements to all instructors of a given course. The institution makes clear through documents such as the full- and part-time faculty job descriptions, the online *Faculty Guide* and the Assessment site that all faculty must engage in learning outcomes assessment.

PLO and CLO dashboards have been created to show comparison of student proficiency levels for each concurrent enrollment partner. Analysis of this data and action steps based on it are still being planned. A new dynamic dashboard provides data on CLOs and PLOs for all faculty; training on the use of this dashboard had just begun at the time of this site visit.

It is expected that by the time of the next scheduled review, the institution will have fully developed training for use of the assessment dashboard and the data housed within it not only for improving assessments, but also for the ongoing improvement of student learning across all modalities and locations.

NICC has put into place a process, including an annual site analysis and an annual audit of each site, for determining the percentage of a degree or certificate offered at each location. A sample audit report was provided in the Assurance Argument evidence.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. 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. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC operates and adheres to the general education and program requirements as specified by Iowa Board of Regents for Community Colleges---Units of Instruction. In its offerings---the Associate of Arts, the Associate of Science, the Associate of General Studies, and the Associate of Applied Science degrees, programs require 60+ credit hours which include varying requirements in general education/liberal arts instruction. The NICC catalog identifies nine certificates, twenty diplomas, and fifteen transfer majors which not only meet the general requirements for degree credentials of the state of Iowa but also are consistent with good practice and conventions in higher education. The general education required in degree programs reflects the institution's interest in providing students with a broad exposure to disciplines while simultaneously offering the benefit of reliable course transfer given the many transfer agreements in place.

NICC offers a broad menu of liberal arts/general education courses through its concurrent enrollment partnerships at twenty-five high schools. These offerings serve to confirm the college's interest in having students fulfill general education requirements as they prepare for a college career.

NICC participates in the Iowa statewide Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS) and Transfer major agreements which ensures that all pre-baccalaureate transfer programs include the statewide LACTS general education courses that prepare students with the knowledge and skills necessary to transfer successfully to four-year institutions in the state of Iowa. The Community College Transfer Report provides data that validates the preparedness of the community college transfer student. In addition to transfer agreements with public institutions, NICC has forged

transfer agreements with three private institutions: Allen College, Ashford University, and Bellevue University, providing another opportunity for student transfer.

NICC offers classes at its campuses in Calmar and Peosta and through its many high school partnerships offers a substantial menu of courses for dual credit/concurrent enrollment. The college offers instruction in multiple modalities including: evening, on-line, face-to-face, and clinic courses though recently, the vast majority of instruction is currently offered online.

The college declares four Common Learning Outcomes(CLO): Critical Thinking, Communicate Effectively, Lifelong Learning, and Diversity. These four outcomes are published in the college catalog, strategic plan, and documented in other college publications as a means of communicating with transparency the expected outcomes for all degree graduates.

The institution has recognized the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work by providing students with an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals in a global society and the college cites diversity as one of its Common Learning Outcomes. All programs are required to weave diversity as a knowledge or performance expectation into their curricula and specific courses in general education and the major regularly measure achievement of this outcome.

In additional support of human and cultural diversity, NICC hosts campus-wide diversity events regularly to promote the understanding of differing perspectives and has seeks to convey deeper insight on social justice and advocacy issues. Examples of cultural events hosted recently include: the annual MLK event and the iMPACT (Student Life) Spring trip to Phoenix, Arizona that gives students the chance to visit and experience a different state and city. Through its curriculum, campus events and subsidized travel, NICC demonstrates its support of helping students grow in understanding of human and cultural diversity.

NICC faculty and students have various opportunities to present their creative works and scholarship to the greater campus community, including projects from engineering tech students who have presented renderings for local businesses. Additionally, NICC offers a spring showcase spotlighting the efforts of its art students creativity.

NICC is committed to providing opportunities for students to develop learning abilities that will last a lifetime by providing an expanded view of cultures, places, and people.

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 strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC implements hiring and employment processes to ensure nondiscrimination. On its college website, the institution maintains both an annual notice of nondiscrimination and a statement of nondiscrimination which reads in part, "It is the policy of Northeast Iowa Community College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age (employment), sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, religion, and actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by federal and state civil rights regulations." Hiring procedures are based on the NICC Human Resources Talent Search and Hire Process which includes standards such as, "In employing College personnel, the board shall consider the qualifications, credentials, and records of the applicants without regard to race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, national origin, religion, age or disability." Search efforts are implemented locally, regionally, and nationally in order to attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates. Discussions during the visit revealed individual recruitment efforts of hiring managers to increase diverse representation in the hiring pools. However, it may be advantageous for the college to implement additional institutionalized search efforts that target under-represented populations in order to increase minority recruitment.

According to the NICC Blue Book and presented evidence, NICC has 102 full time faculty, 18 part

time faculty, and 154 adjunct faculty, which is sufficient to oversee the curriculum, teach, and assess student learning outcomes with a faculty to student ratio of 13.1 and an average class size of 14. Full time faculty average 12 years of tenure and teach 72% of the college credit hours. Based on the Calculation of Faculty Workload Policy, the Faculty Workload Guidelines, Iowa Code 281.24.5, and the HEA Bargaining Agreement, full time Arts and Sciences faculty have a 15 hour teaching load and CTE faculty have a 20 to 23 hour contact load with a 35 hour expected work week. Included in the Faculty Job Description under Essential Tasks, NICC requires all faculty, both full time and adjunct, to be active in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Evidence such as the IDEA Ratings of Student Instruction Survey (Spring 2019), the CCSSE (Spring 2019), and the SENSE (Fall 2018) supports the finding that NICC clearly meets student needs through Student-Faculty interaction.

NICC provided evidence that it has policies and procedures in place to employ appropriately qualified instructors. The Iowa Community Colleges Guideline for Faculty Qualifications: A Resource for Administrators and Accreditation Reviewers, updated May 2018, specifically states qualification standards for Instructors in the state of Iowa that are aligned with both HLC faculty qualification guidelines and Iowa Code 260C.48. NICC's faculty hiring evaluation process is located in the Faculty Experience Evaluation for Hiring Policy, last updated October 2018. New faculty qualifications are evaluated by the hiring supervisor using the Faculty Credential, Education, Experience, and Credit Audit Information Sheet. All paperwork, including official transcripts, must then be approved by the Vice President of Learning & Student Success and audited by Human Resources staff. A review of open employment opportunities for Dual Credit Instructors and Adjunct Instructors on the college's website confirmed adherence to established qualification standards.

As part of the visit, the team conducted an on campus audit of 14 faculty files. The review included a wide range of faculty teaching profiles including full time, part time and concurrent faculty who teach a wide variety of courses. The review confirmed that NICC has robust processes in place to evaluate the credentials of faculty and uses those processes to ensure that all instructors are appropriately qualified.

NICC has a well documented process for evaluating faculty regularly, as evidenced by the Faculty Evaluation Policy (September 2020) and the Professional Development and Evaluation Plan Toolkit (August 2020). Faculty are evaluated in accordance with their performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. According to policy, all faculty are reviewed annually during their three year probationary period and then "will be placed on a three-year observation/evaluation rotation following their probationary period, or more often if needed." The evaluation policy establishes evaluation procedures for both full time and adjunct faculty. As stated, "Concurrent faculty are considered adjunct faculty at the college." Language found in both the Concurrent Enrollment Instructor Handbook and Annual High School Contracts further support the classification of concurrent faculty as adjunct.

In addition, policy requires all faculty to elicit student feedback at the end of every class taught utilizing the IDEA Center "Student Ratings of Instruction." Along with being a part of faculty evaluation, the annual data is aggregated and summarized for use in the creation of professional development opportunities. While the evidence clearly reveals an inclusive evaluation process, given the recent date of the Faculty Evaluation Policy (September 2020) and the Professional Development and Evaluation Plan Toolkit (August 2020), the team is unable to determine consistent college wide adherence for future practice. However, discussions with the VPLSS revealed the recent documented policies and procedures are a collection of past utilized practices. In addition discussions with

faculty, both full time and part time, evidenced the continued use of evaluations. In fact, concurrent faculty reported greatly appreciating the very formative based evaluation process focused on continuous improvement.

NICC maintains a well developed professional development plan for new hires and continuing faculty as evidenced by the NICC Quality Faculty Plan. Stated in the plan, "In accordance with legislation passed by the 79th General Assembly of the Iowa Legislature (H.F. 2394) and signed by Governor Vilsack on March 29, 2002 (H.J. 1117) and Iowa Code 260C.36, Northeast Iowa Community College appointed a 23-member Quality Faculty Plan (QFP) Committee for the purpose of developing and administering a plan to hire and develop quality faculty." The QFP Committee is comprised of faculty and administrators equally from both career and technical and the arts and sciences with three subcommittees being: 1) On-boarding of New Faculty, 2) Professional Development, and 3) Credentialing and Compliance.

The NICC Quality Faculty Plan details a three year on-boarding plan and criteria for re-certification that applies to all faculty. Along with receiving both general and department specific orientations, new faculty are assigned a mentor for their first two semesters of employment. During the three year probationary period, faculty must complete the following courses: Faculty 101 Acclimation topics; Faculty 102 Course Development topics; Faculty 103 "New Teacher Workshop"; Faculty 104 "Teaching Methods"; and Faculty 105 "Leadership". All of these course experiences contribute to the institution's interest that faculty are adept in their teaching roles.

Upon completion of the three year probationary period, all faculty are required to complete and submit six CEUs every five years for re-certification. Additionally NICC conducts an annual Faculty Development Day every October and provides bi-monthly professional development opportunities during their common hour. To support ongoing professional development, NICC utilizes a variety of established funds such as district-wide faculty development funds, Perkins V funds, a budget for HLC events, and general department budgets. The application process for requesting funds is laid out in the Faculty Professional Development policy and includes funds to provide stipends for substitutes for Dual Credit Faculty during trainings.

As stipulated in the Faculty Job Description and the Faculty Guide, all faculty are required to post and maintain office hours each semester which ensures student accessibility. Full time Faculty are required to schedule five office hours per week and Adjunct Faculty, to include Concurrent/Dual Credit Instructors, must schedule two office hours per week. These scheduled hours along with office location and instructor contact information must be posted in each course syllabus, which was confirmed through a review of syllabi. In addition, Faculty Job Duties include participation in co-curricular activities as well. Course evaluations from Spring 2019 indicate students strongly agree that instructors are available to students with a mean score of 4.2 out of 5 for the statement, "Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (e.g., office visits, phone calls, email)."

As evidenced by sample job descriptions, NICC requires a minimum of a bachelors degree to be hired as professional staff providing student support services. Upon hire, staff are on-boarded through trainings, job shadowing, and provided resources. Examples such as the Advising Handbook, the Faculty Disability Services Handbook, and the Student Disability Services Handbook reveal NICC utilizes handbooks as a primary tool for on-boarding and as a training resource. These handbooks are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Student Support Staff engage in professional development through a variety of methods such as Faculty Development activities, Advisory Council meetings, workshops, and professional trainings.

Professional development is supplemented with monthly departmental meetings to cover updates or changes. While it appears NICC staff engage in continuing professional development, it would be advantageous for NICC to continue with plans to establish a formal staff professional development plan in order to ensure continued quality and improvement. As reported during virtual discussions, NICC has already implemented additional staff trainings, new staff orientations, and are in the process of developing a parallel staff professional development plan.

NICC not only has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services, but also has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their quality, training, and continuous improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for 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 offerings 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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC provides Learning Centers for students at its Calmar and Peosta campuses as well as at the Dubuque Center offering enrollment and registration services, advising, testing, tutoring, and instructional support for the High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) as needed. In support of these services, two Instructional Specialists were hired recently, one at the Dubuque Center to provide advisement and a counterpart at the Calmar Campus to provide support services to potential students. Tutoring is widely available throughout the college with the assistance of Brainfuse software (used since 2019), a tutoring platform that can provide academic support 24/7. In the summer of 2020 the college began the process of integrating Upswing, an online tutoring program, writing lab, and a virtual text messaging program. As additional and focused support, students in the Nursing degree, are supported by professional nurses who were hired to tutor degree seeking students. The collection of services offered support NICC's ability to serve both current and future students.

The college purchased the Accudemia tracking system in 2018 which is designed to identify and support student needs. The system tracks student traffic by hours, day, week, and/or type of service provided. The collected data resulted in the hiring of an Instructional Specialist at Calmar serving agriculture and science students in an open lab format and an Instructional Specialist at the Dubuque Center to support students preparing for future enrollment in college-level classes. This is evidence that NICC seeks to make data informed decisions supporting service to students.

NICC has a comprehensive student support system and clear guidelines for admissions, registration, and course placement. NICC services include: open computer labs, Disability Services, Learning Centers, TRIO Student Support Services, advisement, tutoring services, library services, testing, and assessment areas. NICC has sufficient student support services for its students. These services fit with the institution's mission of preparing students for the workplace or preparing students for transfer.

NICC provides learning support and preparatory instruction to students who need additional academic assistance by providing Learning Centers and tutoring personnel. The college also provides an enrollment and advising process to incoming students. Appropriate consumer information is included in college publications, program brochures, and websites while sharing program costs, financial aid information, and the admissions process.

In 2017, the college began utilizing multiple measures to place students at the proper academic level and in the spring of 2020 a college task force of math and writing faculty, advisors, and academic deans convened to review past student entrance and completion data and make new placement recommendations. The task force recommended a minimal high school GPA and a C- or above in specific high school course for placement in the related college writing or math courses. The recommendations were approved by the college and revisions were made to the Placement Chart; removing course placement assessments from the admissions process has reduced the number of students who complete unnecessary tests and allows staff to focus more on the academic potential of the students. NICC mandated advising for all of its degree seeking programs which ensures that all students must meet with an advisor at least once a semester prior to registering for the next semester.

The NICC Placement Chart identified the type of tests and measures used for placement in reading, writing, and math, the length of time that the tests are valid, and assists in determining the level of placement into NICC courses and or prerequisites for some courses. A testing resource sheet has been developed and is provided as an easy read placement test program list. Students may use Iowa's placement test (ALEKS) to advance in some course sequences. The Fall 2018 SENSE data indicated that students were overall very pleased with the services provided them. The college takes seriously its role in providing services to help students succeed.

NICC provides students and faculty the necessary environments/physical resources to support the academic enterprise. The college provides significant library services to include monographs, subscriptions, and research assistance. Additionally, the college provides Learning Centers, testing and assessment areas, along with computer and science labs and campus wide WiFi. In support of college resources, NICC has a Nine Cent Levy that brings revenue to support institutional support purchases such as library software, educational software, and technology.

NICC is fortunate to have two staff members who are fluent in several other languages and are able to assist non-native speakers of English in navigating college admissions and placement processes. "Care Calls" are conducted by staff when a student misses three class meetings to determine how the college can assist the student to ensure their retention. NICC works diligently to respond to student needs and learning support. Having these types of services creates a positive environment for students and citizens not fluent in English.

Both a campus facilities tour and a virtual tour confirmed that NICC provides appropriate and pleasant campus resources, open meeting spaces, technology, and laboratories to match program offerings. The college works purposefully to update its technologies and facilities in support of its many certificate and degree programs.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

Northeast Iowa Community College has systems in place to ensure quality delivery of instruction across modalities and locations. The institution has created a robust assessment process, ensuring that all courses and programs have identified learning outcomes and that assessments are embedded in all courses. While assessment of student learning is currently operational only as regards collection of data, and not yet for the use of that data in the improvement of student learning, it is expected that this essential part of the assessment cycle will also become fully operational.

The institution's program in general education provides its students broad exposure to the knowledge and modes of thinking and creating of its disciplines. Its Common Learning Outcomes further emphasize the institution's commitment to the education that college-educated students should have, including the appreciation of and respect for diversity.

NICC has sufficient numbers of qualified faculty to ensure the oversight and quality of its programs, and it provides its faculty and staff with the ongoing training and professional development necessary to provide these programs. Student support services provide students with support for learning, preparatory instruction and academic guidance. Its infrastructure and resources support student learning in many ways, including through response to student need.

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 ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
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 ensure 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 ensures 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 ensures that the credentials 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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC has created a sound framework for program review by indicating that Annual Key Performance monitoring will occur with a 5 year comprehensive program review. Currently the college has not yet implemented a full cycle for all programs, specifically the general education area which is still "in process." The framework and schedule are appropriate for the institution and a full cycle for all programs---still ahead---will prove both its merit and utility.

Based on State requirements, NICC has maintained a program review schedule for all CTE programs offered at the college and the review cycle for CTE appears to be accomplished on schedule and as required by the state. However, the deployment of regular program reviews in the general education/liberal arts area is not fully implemented; only the Math and Social Science areas have been through the new program review process to date. General education programs are categorized

into Social Science, Math, Communications, Humanities, and Science. A schedule was provided that identified these programs and their assigned year for program review beginning in 2018. The schedule of reviews in the liberal arts prior to that date is not clear. One general education program review that was completed in 2011 was provided in the Addendum, though it is unclear what level of programmatic review for general education was occurring between 2011 and 2018. That said, the Social Science discipline review scheduled in 2018-2019 was completed in academic 2019-2020. Most important in the program review endeavor is creating/discovering useful information to inform the college about program viability, cost, profile and achievements. For the general education/liberal arts areas, understanding these elements and using data to inform change is within grasp but not yet fully achieved.

The Assurance Argument stated that assessment of student learning outcomes had been added to the second year of the five year program review cycle and the template for program review also indicates this, however, the policy governing the process does not mention this feature; the college may want to formalize this feature. While it is clear that NICC is gathering the data related to assessment and annual key performance indicators, it is not yet evident how they are using this data in the program review process for continuous improvement. By the next review cycle, multiple years of this schedule and a complete realization of the assessment cycle should allow NICC to fully implement their review system and provide evidence of their continued attention to all academic programs.

Information in the College Catalog and NICC website provides clear descriptions for the various methods by which incoming students may obtain college credit. Methods include credit from other accredited institutions, articulation agreements with high schools, non-credit programming at NICC, military experience, and other methods including nationally recognized examinations such as AP and CLEP. In all varieties of credit for previous learning, final approval is routed through the appropriate academic dean and the registrar for evaluation and verification to ensure quality. NICC also relies on the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) Standards and the American Council on Education recommendations associated with military experience. These well defined options and related information show a strong commitment to ensuring the quality of the credit NICC awards for previous learning.

In addition to the policies outlined in the College Catalog, since 2010, NICC has had two additional policies in place that support ensuring the quality of the credit it awards for previous learning. The Credit for Prior Learning Policy and the Credit for Life Experience/Portfolio and Skills Assessment policies have both been revised multiple times since their inception and are reviewed by the Vice President of Learning and Student Success, academic deans, and the Registrar. Recently, a third policy regarding an appeal process was developed that further supports NICC's commitment to ensuring quality of credit awarded.

NICC developed a curriculum handbook that outlines the composition, responsibilities, and duties of the Curriculum Committee members. Through discussions with faculty members during the site visit, support was provided that faculty members feel confident and supported when suggesting curricular change. They are treated as content experts and their voice is very important at the college.

A common course guide including standardized learning outcomes are used for all course sections, regardless of location or modality. The use of these guides promotes common expectations for student learning. In addition, the implementation of embedded assessments now provides a common framework among all sections of a course in the Brightspace LMS. Full participation with data submission for embedded assessments is not yet occurring, perhaps due to such recent

implementation or other logistical reasons. For example, concurrent instructors are not required to use Brightspace for attendance or grades as it duplicates work in other systems in use at their respective high schools; though they do use Brightspace to record their professional development and assessment activities. It is not clear if all assessment data is being submitted through the LMS and whether delays are caused by waiting for paperwork to be submitted and then converted to the system.

Dashboards have been created to track four distinct assessments, including program level outcomes, common learning outcomes, a summative assessment, and an indirect student satisfaction outcomes. These dashboards support a consistent quality of education across all modalities and locations. Improved use of these dashboards will require additional training to educate faculty and other stakeholders, e.g., Advisory Councils. Additional training is presumed during the academic year.

The office of Instructional Innovation and Design has provided guidelines and templates to support consistency in online and hybrid courses. Much consideration has been placed on a commendable Z-degree program that includes holistic support services for at-risk students and reduces the cost of a degree through the use of open educational resources.

An improvement occurred in 2018 when NICC promoted the Director of High School Partnerships to an Associate Dean in order to message the clear administrative support and need for evaluation of concurrent instructors. This standard point of contact has helped manage the 25 high schools in the service region of this college. Content-specific support systems for concurrent faculty includes meetings that are suggested to occur at least two times per year and where applicable, Advisory Board meetings. Several examples of additional communication exchange between concurrent and full time faculty members were provided through discussion during the site visit such as summer training days and lunch gatherings (pre-COVID).

Several academic programs offered at NICC have external, specialized accreditation. In some cases the accreditation is required, while in other cases NICC programs have voluntarily sought out accreditation. Based on a review of correspondence with the various accreditors, there are two programs with required accreditation that, while accreditation is current and the college is in good standing identified current issues that must be responded to. As a recommendation, the college should provide these details in its next Assurance Argument to reflect transparency of current status. For example, the Large Animal Vet Technician program was provided full accreditation in 2019, however, continued reporting is required for one critical deficiency and four major deficiencies. The same situation occurred with the Radiologic Technology program. In 2013 there were items of non-compliance that required response. Providing documentation or reports that showcase responses to cited issues would be helpful during a subsequent evaluation if needed. Again, these program accreditation findings do not have an affect on program recognition or affiliation.

Data is collected from graduates of NICC through both an alumni survey and a post-graduate survey. The alumni survey is used to determine employment and/or educational status with one year's worth of a summary provided and the post-graduate survey focuses on the students' satisfaction with their experience at the college. In addition, other data is collected regarding pass rates of students in programs that require licensure exams after completion of the program. The use of post-graduate success data was described in the HIT program when they analyzed the licensure pass rates and developed a plan to adjust program requirements to help assist in bringing pass rates up. The enrollment services team has developed benchmarks associated with a post-graduate survey, and three semesters of data were described in the Argument outlining student satisfaction with communication they received and their overall experience. While the benchmarks have not always

been met, the goals are attainable. The college should work to identify and document specific changes related to communication methods as part of the action plan as a result of data.

Analyzing the success of the students who transfer to 4 year institutions is available through feedback reports provided by the Iowa State Department of Education. Work should be undertaken to integrate this data into program assessment and review.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC has developed processes to guide and inform the assessment of student learning in all course modalities and locations, as well as in its co-curricular programs. It provides to its faculty and staff robust instructional documents for designing learning outcomes and the assessments to evaluate those outcomes. The "Comprehensive Assessment Plan" and "Assessment Handbook" are supplemented amply by an Assessment website where faculty can find direction on all aspects of the assessment process: the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the assessment process; thorough explanations of course, program (PLO) and common (CLO) learning outcomes; direction on the writing of outcomes, their sequencing within programs; the creation of evaluation rubrics; as well as NICC's process for assessing CLOs and PLOs.

Faculty have developed PLOs for every program of study and have identified the CLO for every course offered by the college. Embedded assessments have been created for each course and are implemented by all faculty regardless of modality or location (full-time, part-time, adjunct or concurrent enrollment). Data from these assessments has been collected and displayed first on static dashboards, and now, as of very recently, on a dynamic dashboard. These dashboards are accessible by all faculty. Training in the use of the dashboards and in the use of the data contained within them has begun.

The five co-curricular areas identified by the college (Career Services, Enrollment Services, Learning Centers, Library and Student Life) have each identified learning outcomes for their areas. Each collected outcomes data in 2017-18. Interviews during the site visit indicated that co-curricular areas at the college make use of their data to improve student learning, both through internal discussions and discussions with appropriate faculty members.

The college has made tremendous strides in creating a culture of assessment/learning improvement. In coming years, it is expected that this culture will yield a fully operational assessment cycle in which the data faculty now regularly collect is used for continuous improvement in student learning.

An enormous effort has been made to integrate the use of embedded assessments in all course sections using the LMS Brightspace. This framework and methodology is sound and the college should be commended on the work they have accomplished. However, the next step of the cycle requires the members of this institution to use this data regularly for improvement. This step of assessment process has yet to be fully achieved at NICC.

Assessment data is being collected and applied to dashboards, however, NICC has provided limited evidence of the use of the data for continuous improvement or using assessment data to inform change. At this point, some data is confidentially used at the administrative level through the Course Performance by Delivery Method charts. The college has struggled to determine the best way to share assessment data with the faculty to inform change at their level. It is clear that the framework exists to gather the data and it seems there is an intent to use the assessment data to inform change, however evidence is lacking to show that it is actually occurring in all academic programs. NICC has created an excellent foundation and framework for closing the loop in assessment. It would be expected that in the next review cycle that assessment results will be fully integrated into continuous improvement, including regular discipline discussions, annual key performance reports, and that this information would be analyzed within comprehensive program reviews.

The intent to use assessment data is further supported by the creation of dashboards that are available to all faculty. Using the data from 2017-18 and 2018-19, individual dashboards were created for each academic program. Team members from the college recognized that these static dashboards, while useful, were not as helpful to the end user---faculty members. The data collected can become overwhelming and with the expertise of one of their own faculty members, a new dynamic dashboard has been created in which the user can drill down by term and program to the data they need. Next steps will need to include providing direction and guidance to the faculty members so that they are able to retrieve, understand, and use the data in the process of improvement. It is imperative in the next few years, that the NICC administration provide support to all faculty members through training in the use of the data and dashboards to support ongoing maturity in assessment efforts. It is clear that some faculty members have received training on how to interpret the dashboards and how to integrate them in their review and improvement of programs, however not all faculty members have had that training.

NICC provided an example of co-curricular assessment data being used to impact change. A small study was completed regarding the intervention of a tutor for at-risk students interested in the Nursing program. As a result, programmatic change for operation of the Learning Center at the college resulted. Co-curricular goals are well established and monitoring of results is documented on tracking spreadsheets. While there is limited action due to results at this point in the assessment cycle, the college is well poised to use data collected to improve student learning.

NICC has developed processes for the assessment of student learning, for the collection and synthesis of assessment data. It has also created a dashboard that makes its course, program and common assessment data accessible to all faculty. Faculty are currently required to hold discipline-specific meetings in which they discuss assessment, along with other discipline-related topics. Each faculty member attends one such meeting per year. These meetings are recorded for part-time, adjunct and concurrent enrollment faculty. Certain agenda topics are required to be discussed, including assessments and a review of assessment data. With training in the use of their data, faculty will be well-positioned in the near future to begin the last critical phase of the assessment cycle: regular opportunity to improve student learning.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve 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, 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

Rationale

NICC has created clear and concise dashboards to document student progress toward meeting institutional goals for student retention from one term to the next and persistence toward completion of their educational goal. The College's Retention Committee has established clear retention, persistence, and completion targets that are realistic for the student population served. Having an easily understood and regularly updated visual representation of retention and completion data is an essential part of an effective persistence and completion strategy. In addition, retention and completion trends are shared college-wide through college publications like the college fact book (The Blue Book). NICC recently adopted Informer as its business intelligence platform, which has allowed the institution to move from static dashboards to dynamic, interactive visualizations of data. These dashboards are important tools for the institution to use, and they should serve NICC well in this work.

The Retention Committee, Strategic Enrollment Management Committee, and Data Task Force are examining persistence and completion trends. The Data Task Force is responsible for managing data integrity and data documentation.

Compelling evidence indicates that NICC is actively addressing the retention, persistence, and completion imperative. Several strategies have been identified for increasing the number and percentage of students completing their educational goals; these include early alert referrals, non-attendance outreach, and mandatory CTE advising. Completions data shows a steady and significant increase from 34% to 45% over the past five years. The college's recent Care Calls Initiative, which contacts every new student by phone early in the semester, was a direct result of analyzing data that

identified persistent retention issues for students completing less than 50% of their first semester credits.

NICC uses IPEDS methodology for defining retention, persistence, and completion measures. The institution is commended for including transfer-in students in their retention and completion analyses, going beyond the IPEDS first-time, full-time requirement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rationale

NICC has a strong commitment to providing a quality education. Clear and effective policies provide guidance to all members of the college community to meet the educational mission. A qualified pool of faculty members provide the content expertise in their discipline to provide quality student learning experiences. Engagement from business, industry, and community partners provides powerful leverage in ensuring that their educational offerings are current.

A solid foundation for evaluation of the effectiveness for student learning exists though in the next Commission review, clear evidence of the full implementation of plans and the ongoing use of data to inform continuous improvement should be provided.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The institution demonstrates its commitment to intentional shared governance at various junctures within the administrative structure. The evidence provided suggests that the College Senate includes balanced representation from within the faculty, staff and student ranks. The College Senate minutes confirm that the College Senate is active on campus, meets on a regular basis, and provides input on a wide-range of meaningful institutional issues. The minutes also confirmed that the NICC administration engages in and regularly attends the College Senate meetings which, combined with the fact that the College Senate maintains a seat within the President's Cabinet, indicates that the governance structures allow for a wide range of collaboration and information sharing.

The team visit confirmed that faculty and staff believe that the culture of shared governance is appropriate for the institution. In addition to the formal shared governance structure, efforts are made to communicate with and engage students informally. Faculty and staff stated that it was common practice to see administrators and the president having lunch with students regularly, confirming even a casual engagement of students in college matters.

The work of shared governance is taking place and it would be beneficial for all groups to make sure that the work they are doing and the decisions being made are communicated broadly. This could take place via campus updates or the sharing of agendas and minutes.

NICC engages in ongoing strategic planning as related to all aspects of the institution, including, but not limited to facilities, technology, finances, academics and personnel. Many examples of the ways in which data is being used to inform planning and decision-making were shared within the Assurance Argument. The visit confirmed that IR was able to provide data as needed and that data informed decision making is occurring at all levels and in a wide range of areas.

The Learning and Student Success (LSS) team provides leadership and oversight of academic policies and procedures and meets weekly affirming its oversight of academic policy as one of its key functions. The composition of the team, including academic deans, as well as other key representatives from student support, allows the group to collaborate effectively with various campus stakeholders.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC has strengthened its financial position since the 2018 Financial Panel review. The institution has significantly reduced expenditures between FY16 and FY20 through a reorganization and early retirement programs. The college's actions demonstrate a sound fiscal position as evidenced by its most recent CFI (3.64) and recent annual audit reports. Annual audits for FY18 and FY19 reflect no significant material weaknesses and document an improved net position, including an increase in reserves from \$37 M to \$47 M over the past two years. The team confirmed the Board of Trustees meets regularly to review and discuss budget issues and strategies.

The College Foundation has assets of \$4.7 M and dedicates significant dollars annually to support the development of new programs, student scholarships, and other college initiatives, as evidenced by Foundation President's Circle, Golden Ticket, and Campaign for Excellence documents. Over the past five years, the Foundation has awarded an average of \$255,000 annually in student scholarships with FY19 Foundation scholarships totaling \$172 K. Discussions with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) confirmed Foundation support through student scholarships and shared plans for the Foundation to dedicate significant dollars for NICC technology operations in the future.

In response to declining enrollment and revenues, NICC undertook a significant reorganization that resulted in the consolidation of divisions and work activities. The reorganization resulted in a reduction in force. Also, the institution implemented two early retirement programs, one in FY16 and another in FY19. As of FY20, the college has 566 employees, a 14% decrease from FY16 staffing levels. Employee reductions occurred in all categories (FT Faculty, PT Faculty, FT Staff, PT Staff, Administration), except for small growth in adjunct (concurrent) faculty. Discussions with multiple stakeholders confirmed that NICC maintains appropriate staffing levels to achieve its mission and strategic plan despite the decrease in employee numbers. Discussions confirmed that NICC takes a lean and strategic approach to new and replacement hires that consider the college's strategic priorities and needs. Meetings with Computer Information Systems (CIS) and the Department of Instructional Innovation and Design (DIID) staff affirmed strategic staff growth in these areas to

meet institutional needs.

NICC in 2015-16 hired a consulting firm to review job descriptions and qualifications as part of a compensation and classification study. The result was updated job descriptions in a standardized format. Shared in interviews was the information that when a job is posted, the college requires supervisors to review the job descriptions and update if needed. Those job descriptions are then reviewed by HR before the posting is moved forward. The Iowa Community Colleges Guideline for Faculty Qualifications (2018) is in place and being used to assure full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty are fully qualified.

In 2015, the college engaged the planning and architecture firm Invision to facilitate its facilities master plan. The plan was developed with broad staff and faculty participation and used extensive data collection and analysis to inform decisions, as evidenced by the master plan. In 2018, the institution passed a \$39 million bond levy for facilities master plan projects throughout the district. Discussions with the CFO, President, and in multiple meetings it was shared that voters overwhelmingly approved the bond (84%). NICC provided project management documents showing facilities projects, timelines, status, and costs. In addition to facilities improvements, the college has used bond monies to strengthen technology services like additional servers and an upgraded wireless network. A tour of the Calmar campus confirmed that facilities are well-maintained and reflect the college's commitment to a safe, functional, and inviting environment.

The institution is intentional in its budgeting and allocation process and requires justification for how requests align with the strategic plan. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Planning Agenda (December 2019) and Cabinet planning notes covering June 2019 to November 2019 provide evidence of connections between the current Strategic Plan and ongoing budget decisions. The institution continues to refine the process to make the ties even more direct. Discussions with college staff and faculty also confirmed that procedures are in place and working that connect the strategic plan and requests for resources. Examples include funding for Upswing, an online tutoring service, and retention initiatives, both targeted to improving student success.

NICC has sufficient controls for developing and monitoring its budget, as evidenced by a two-year budget forecast, a certified budget, and on-demand financial reports available to budget managers through Colleague. Managers are involved in budget development, make recommendations in their areas, and take an active role in monitoring and adjusting budgets throughout the year. Discussions with the CFO and a Planning and Finance session affirmed that budgeting processes work as presented in the Assurance Argument.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
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, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NICC allocates its resources to its Mission, Vision, and Values and uses the strategic plan to guide budget development. A review of the December 2019 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Planning agenda showed an agenda for FY21 budget development, which considered the strategic plan, current enrollment trends, and strategy for budget considerations. A budget report for the Cresco Center confirmed that NICC centers and off-site locations are adequately considered and resourced. A report by expense category documented that 75% of expenses are budgeted to academic and workforce training, and student support services. Discussions with the CFO and a Planning and Finance session affirmed that budgeting decisions directly align with the NICC mission and strategic plan.

Foundation resources are allocated in support of institutional priorities; allocations include general scholarships and Golden Ticket awards---in total, \$172 K was given in FY19. Discussions with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) confirmed Foundation support through student scholarships and shared plans for the Foundation to dedicate significant dollars for NICC technology operations in the future to sustain technological advancements funded by the Covid-19 Cares Act.

NICC has several efforts in place to align operational evaluations and other student success metrics to the planning process. The Strategic Enrollment Management committee provides KPIs and recruitment and retention information. The institution contracted with Northern Iowa University in 2017 for an environmental scan. Reports on regional employment needs, skills gaps, K-12 enrollment trends, and national higher education studies were provided as information used to anticipate evolving external factors. The linkage between the assessment of student learning findings and budgeting decisions is nascent and faculty struggled to provide direct and substantive examples. Given the critical nature of this connection, the review team recommends that NICC keep this as an

area of focus as the assessment process continues to mature. Other than that observation, the team is favorably impressed with the budget development process.

NICC has adopted a three-year rolling Strategic Plan (2019-2022) to guide the institution. The planning process was comprehensive and included sufficient internal and external involvement. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) oversees the planning process. In addition to the SLT, evidence of key strategic planning contributors was provided. From interviews, it was clear that employees district-wide are aware of the strategic goals, related initiatives, and how they impact their responsibilities. Discussions with leadership and staff explained that the rolling planning approach would enable NICC to be flexible and responsive to dynamic local, state, and national events, while maintaining a focus on the institution's mission, vision, and values. Strategic planning updates at Convocations and All College Days confirm that the college community is regularly briefed on the progress of strategic initiatives and actions.

The Cabinet supports budget development and planning through regular meetings and information sharing. Budget planning meetings begin in the summer and include a review of the prior year budget. A two-year forecast culminates with a certified budget approved by the Board of Trustees. An interview with the CFO revealed that the institution purchased 5Cast---budget forecasting software--- that allows the college to create multi-year budgets and build what-if scenarios.

NICC is working to build a culture of data-informed decision making. Numerous data studio dashboards developed to track assessment data, and strategic initiative action items were shared with the team. Through interviews, the team learned that the college recently adopted Informer as its business intelligence platform, which allows for the building of dynamic, interactive dashboards. The institution administers and uses CCSSE, SENSE, and internal student surveys to facilitate assessment and review. Other state and national project reports like the AACC's Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) are also utilized.

NICC cited numerous examples of using these tools to affect changes and measure success. One prominent example is the 15% increase in completions over the last five years. From interviews, the team learned that the institution evaluated CCSSE findings from before and after staff and faculty cuts to measure if student engagement and satisfaction were negatively impacted. CCSSE evidence confirmed that engagement and satisfaction scores improved despite the reductions in staff and faculty.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Rationale

Northeast Iowa Community College demonstrates strong leadership as it relates to planning and resource management. The institution has significantly and effectively strengthened its budget processes and financial position. There is good recognition of the challenges related to enrollment trends and the changing higher education landscape.

The Board of Trustees represents the communities served and is engaged and operates at the policy governance level. Employee groups are involved in shared governance through Senate and Staff leadership organizations and through key campus committees that generally include student representation.

The college has created numerous plans and processes related to enrollment, facilities, academic program review, and technology that integrate with the NICC Strategic Plan.

Building upon the culture of data-informed decision-making and establishing direct connections between planning, budgeting, enrollment management, and tactical plans will assist the institution in moving successfully into the future.

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.S | Criterion 1 - Summary | |
| 2 | Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct | |
| 2.A | Core Component 2.A | Met |
| 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.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 |
| 4.C | Core Component 4.C | Met |
| 4.S | Criterion 4 - Summary | |
| 5 | Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning | |
| 5.A | Core Component 5.A | Met |
| 5.B | Core Component 5.B | Met |
| 5.C | Core Component 5.C | Met |
| 5.S | Criterion 5 - Summary | |

Review Summary

Conclusion

NICC is a mature institution capably serving its chiefly rural campuses, businesses community, and partnership high schools with programs and services that have a clear student, employee, and community focus. NICC enjoys skilled faculty and staff who demonstrate that they are living the college Mission. The team is visiting the institution at a time when it has recently changed and/or formalized policies and processes related to assessment, program review and faculty evaluation. With initial implementation begun, the college is positioned to grow into these changes and mature in its efforts using available data to inform change while tying findings to budget and planning changes. The team understands that full implementation over the coming years toward a reaffirmation visit would mean that NICC would be able to provide evidence of significant growth and use of data in academic planning. The college is on a path for continued prudent stewardship of its human, financial and physical resources.

The college plans capably for expected change and growth showing its ability to evolve in the management of programs and services. NICC is able to conduct operations competently and consistent with the expectations of the Criteria.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Not Applicable to This Review

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE: Northeast Iowa Community College, IA

TYPE OF REVIEW: Standard Pathway Comprehensive Evaluation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW: Year 4 Comprehensive Evaluation.

An emphasis on the following topics is added to this visit: evaluation full execution and quality of assessment of student learning at the common learning, co-curricular, and programmatic levels across the institution; Dual credit offerings, infrastructure especially in the areas faculty evaluation and consistent quality of work; Full execution and quality of a faculty evaluation process with emphasis on the evaluation of dual enrollment faculty; The consistency, quality, and monitoring of curriculum across the various modes of delivery and locations of delivery including high schools and service locations; and the percentage of a degree or certificate offered at any one location (including a high school) necessitating classification as an additional location or branch campus.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only the following will travel to campus: Deirdre Heistad. The rest of the team will conduct the evaluation remotely.

DATES OF REVIEW: 10/5/2020 - 10/6/2020

No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: No change

Degrees Awarded: Associates

Recommended Change: No change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2016 - 2017

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2026 - 2027

Recommended Change: No change

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, Doctoral

Recommended Change: No change

Additional Location:

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: No change

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

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

Recommended Change: No change

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway

Standard Pathway

Recommended Change: No change

Upcoming Events

Comprehensive Evaluation: 2026 - 2027

Recommended Change: No change

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change: No change

Institutional Data

Educational Programs

Undergraduate

Recommended

Change: No
change



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

| | | |
|-----------------------|----|-------|
| Certificate | 26 | _____ |
| Associate Degrees | 29 | _____ |
| Baccalaureate Degrees | 0 | _____ |
| Graduate | | |
| Master's Degrees | 0 | _____ |
| Specialist Degrees | 0 | _____ |
| Doctoral Degrees | 0 | _____ |

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

Peosta Campus, 8342 NICC Drive, Peosta, IA, 52068

Recommended Change: No change

Additional Locations

Cascade High School, 505 Johnson St. NW, Cascade, IA, 52033 - Active
 Clayton Ridge High School, 131 S. River Park Dr. , Guttenberg, IA, 52052 - Active
 Cresco Center, 1020 2nd Avenue S.E., Cresco, IA, 52136 - Active
 Decorah High School, 100 Claiborn Dr., Decorah, IA, 52101 - Active
 Dubuque Center, 700 Main Street, Suite #1, Dubuque, IA, 52001 - Active
 Eastern Allamakee High School, 569 Center St., Lansing, IA, 52151 - Active
 New Hampton High School, 710 West Main , New Hampton, IA, 50659 - Active
 North Fayette Valley High School, 600 North Pine St., West Union, IA, 52175 - Active
 RAMS (Regional Academy for Math and Science)/ Oelwein Center, 1400 Technology Drive, Oelwein, IA, 50662 - Active
 South Winneshiek High School, 304 South Webster St., Calmar, IA, 52132 - Active
 Waukon Center, 1220 3rd Ave. NW, Suite 102, Waukon, IA, 52172 - Active
 West Delaware High School, 601 New Street, Manchester, IA, 52057 - Active
 West Dubuque High School, 302 5th Ave SW, Epworth, IA, 52045 - Active

Recommended Change: No change

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: No change

Distance Delivery



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Associate, AAS in Agriculture Business
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - Ag Office Technician
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - Agronomy Custom Application
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - Animal Science
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - Animal Science
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - Crop Advisor
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - Dairy
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - GIS/GPS
- 01.0102 - Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations, Certificate, Ag Business - Manager and Marketing
- 01.0301 - Agricultural Production Operations, General, Associate, Agriculture Production
- 01.0304 - Crop Production, Associate, Viticulture Technology
- 01.0306 - Dairy Husbandry and Production, Associate, Dairy Science Tech - General
- 01.0309 - Viticulture and Enology, Associate, Enology Specialist
- 01.0309 - Viticulture and Enology, Certificate, Certificate in Viticulture
- 01.0401 - Agricultural and Food Products Processing, Certificate, Certificate in Enology
- 11.0202 - Computer Programming, Specific Applications, Associate, AAS Computer Analyst-Business & Web Programming
- 11.0202 - Computer Programming, Specific Applications, Associate, Computer Analyst - Network Admin and Tech Support
- 12.04 - Cosmetology and Related Personal Grooming Services, Associate, AAS Entrepreneurial Cosmetology
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA Communication
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA Early Childhood
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA Education
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA General
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA in Business Administration
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA in Criminal Justice
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA Law Enforcement
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA Management Information Systems
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AA Psychology
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AS Agriculture
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, AS Dairy Science
- 24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, Associate in Science
- 44.0701 - Social Work, Certificate, Paraeducator Certification
- 51.0707 - Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician, Associate, AAS in Health Information Technology

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

- 51.0707 - Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician, Certificate, Coding Specialist
- 52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Associate, AAS in Business Specialist
- 52.0301 - Accounting, Associate, AAS Accounting Specialist
- 52.0302 - Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping, Certificate, Accounting Clerk
- 52.0401 - Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General, Associate, AAS Administrative Assistant
- 52.0401 - Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General, Certificate, Office Technology - Legal
- 52.0401 - Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General, Certificate, Office Technology - Medical
- 52.0401 - Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General, Certificate, Office Technology - Secretarial
- 52.0401 - Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General, Certificate, Office Technology-General
- 52.18 - General Sales, Merchandising and Related Marketing Operations, Certificate, AAS Marketing Management
- 52.18 - General Sales, Merchandising and Related Marketing Operations, Certificate, Tourism
- 52.1803 - Retailing and Retail Operations, Certificate, Marketing - Diploma Program

Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: No change

Consortial Arrangements

None

**Recommended Change:
No change**
