

## **Section A: Team Members, Titles and Institutional Affiliation**

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees and Students of  
Rowan College at Burlington County  
Mount Laurel, New Jersey

by  
A Team Representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared in context of and following a visit  
to the institution on March 24-27, 2019

Members of the Team:

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## **Section B: Institutional Representatives at the Time of the Visit**

President: Dr. Michael Cioce

Chief Academic Officer: Dr. David Spang, Senior Vice President and Provost

Chair of the Board of Trustees: George Nyikita

## **Section C: Team Findings**

### **I. Institutional Overview: Context and Nature of the Visit**

**Type of institution:** Public, suburban-serving, large two-year

**Degree levels offered:** Associate's degree

**Branch campuses:** None

**Additional locations:** The college's Mt. Holly location is home to the following degree programs: Culinary Arts, Pastry Arts, Fine Arts, Fashion Design, Graphic Design and Photography. Six team members were provided an on-site tour of the facilities at Mount Holly by faculty, and the team had the opportunity to learn about the programs from the faculty.

**Distance programs:** The College offers the following online degrees and certificates:

Associate of Arts (A.A.)

- Liberal Arts
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Education
- Sociology
- English
- History

Associate of Science (A.S.)

- Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice

Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.)

- Business Management Technology
- Health Information Technology
- Cancer Registry Management

Certificates

- Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Cancer Registry

**Approach to self-study:** Standards-based

### **Institutional Priorities**

Rowan College at Burlington County (RCBC) is a public community college located in Mount Laurel, New Jersey. The college offers an array of associate degree and certificate programs, as well as seven 3+1 programs leading to associate and baccalaureate degrees in collaboration with Rowan University.

The institution was founded as Burlington County College in 1969 and occupied the buildings that became its main campus in Pemberton, New Jersey in 1971. The college was first accredited by the Middle States Commission in 1972. The Mount Laurel campus was opened in 1995 and, as transportation and development patterns evolved in the region, became the major place of enrollment. In 2018 Mount Laurel was designated the main campus, documented through a MSCHE Substantive Change process, and operations are now concentrated there, while the Pemberton campus is slated for closure.

RCBC has no branch campuses. However, it has an additional location in Mount Holly, where six degree programs serve the interests and nature of the area, and it has instructional sites in Willingboro where courses and services are offered and at the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Education Center. The latter site has classrooms, computer labs and offices, and it offers flexibility of course scheduling for the benefit of the service members and their families.

The college initiated its self-study in September 2017 with the goals of attaining reaccreditation and developing a document that can serve as a guide for institutional planning, growth and advancement. More immediate goals were to engage the campus in a process of analysis, to explore ways through which the learning outcomes of educational programs might be improved, and to enhance the college's ability to adapt to change. The process led to involvement of 140 members of the community comprising a cross section of faculty, staff, students and administrators encompassing the full diversity of the campus.

### **II. Evaluation Overview**

Rowan College at Burlington County has admirably demonstrated stability of function over seven years following departure of its long-term President in 2012, even as the President's Office has been occupied by five different individuals. The current President, Dr. Michael Cioce, was appointed to the office after serving for a year as Acting President, and he has promptly established a vision and firm leadership of the college.

The Board of Trustees wields firm control over the institution through detailed by-laws and procedures that give it approval authority of a surprising range of administrative actions. All personnel actions require the approval of the board, and appointment of senior administrators, including the President, are carried out by the Board without consultation with the campus

community. The board has well-established policies on ethics, codes of conduct, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. There is a well-organized governance process, involving four Senates that cover all constituencies on the campus, and plenary governance sessions of all four Senates are convened regularly by the President.

Notable advances and attributes of the college are, first, the collaborative arrangement with Rowan University for 3+1 degree programs in which students remain on the RCBC campus for a third year of study before completing the baccalaureate through different available means. Second, the college created a Workforce Development Institute which, over its three-four year existence, has enjoyed considerable success in advancing that aspect of a community college mission. Third, the building of the Mount Laurel campus has resulted in excellent facilities, especially in the most recent addition—the Student Success Center. The investment in state-of-the-art facilities has however positioned the college in difficult financial circumstances. And fourth, maintaining a low tuition relative to its New Jersey college peers has made the campus attractive to students seeking to save on expenses, although given financial stresses it is not clear that this current relative level can be sustained.

The team makes a number of suggestions and recommendations, including that the board consider, as it gains confidence in the President and his leadership, relaxing the extensive approval required by the board for numerous administrative actions. The team also urges the board and President to institute best practices for hiring senior administrators wherein consultation with the campus community is undertaken as a means of seeking acceptance and support of newly appointed administrators. The college has effectively advanced learning outcomes assessment, and a few suggestions of the team pertain to collection, distribution and use of data for continued improvement of the programs and instruction. This process extends to making available to prospective students, their parents/guardians and the public the outcomes of academic programs, which reflect positively on the college. It is commendable that the college established a Faculty Excellence Coordinator whose role focuses especially on professional development of adjunct instructors—of which the college has a large proportion among its faculty—and it is recommended that this position be confirmed as full-time and expand the scope of the coordinator’s work to include more work with full-time faculty. The student services and support functions are well organized and effective.

The areas of greatest concern to the team lie in standards 2, 5 and 6. While the college in many respects is in compliance with the Ethics and Integrity standard (2), it has failed to clearly implement, inform the campus and train faculty, staff and administrators on Title IX requirements, and the campus cannot therefore be considered in compliance with this standard nor the Requirement of Affiliation 5. As stated above, there is a well-designed and implemented student learning outcomes assessment program. However, the extension and development of that system to assessing the effectiveness of administrative, service and support units is lacking, and thus compliance with standard 5 is incomplete. (Note that the self-study addresses institutional effectiveness in both standards 5 and 6.) And finally, the college’s investment in the building of the Mount Laurel campus—a beautiful physical plant indeed—has incurred debt which will present challenges in covering debt payments while ensuring sufficient funds to operate and

improve. Therefore, the team's concern for this financial stress leads it to conclude that the college is not in compliance with standard 6.

## I. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

### Standard I: Mission and Goals

**The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.**

In the team’s judgment the college *appears to meet* this standard.

#### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

- RCBC’s Strategic Plan, mission and goals were developed through the broad participation of many constituents of the college community – external as well as internal – and included faculty, staff, students and administration. The Plan was presented at the Governance Meeting on November 19, 2015 and was subsequently approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 15, 2016. Goals are appropriately aligned with the college’s mission and reflect a dynamic institution with a strong sense of direction and purpose.
- Upon completion of the strategic plan, the college experienced significant change in leadership; however, this does not appear to have affected RCBC’s ability to implement the strategic plan.
- Twelve Strategic plan goals are clearly linked to the mission. The Plan is characterized by four pillars – Access, Affordability, Quality and Effectiveness, and Student Success – and were developed based on campus-wide feedback regarding the college’s priorities. The plan serves as a driver for institutional planning and decision-making at all levels. The college’s goals are consistent with the mission and are realistic and appropriate to higher education.
- The College’s purpose to “deliver innovative, high-quality and affordable educational opportunities to a diverse population” is exemplified in its 2015 partnership with Rowan University, which resulted in its renaming as Rowan College at Burlington County and provided a seamless pathway to an affordable four-year degree in several areas, and in its enhanced focus on academics, student success and workforce development.
- Student learning goals are supported by the curriculum, robust educational experiences and a variety of student support programs and services. Four degree tracks are available for students: Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Fine Arts, and Associate of Applied Science. Students are provided opportunities to gain career skills and training as part of the Workforce Development Institute, and there are opportunities to engage in research. Academically advanced students have access to dedicated

programs, and the college provides comprehensive academic support and student services including cultural activities.

- The college's goals are assessed through a robust multi-layered process that involves faculty, staff and external experts and include assessment of learning outcomes and academic program reviews. Academic program reviews are conducted on an 8-year cycle, institutional effectiveness assessment occurs annually, and student learning outcomes are assessed on a 4-year cycle. There is some variance in the understanding of policies, procedures and processes related to assessment.
- There is evidence that the College is engaging in activities to meet its Strategic Plan goals. Most noteworthy is the college's commitment to access (Pillar I) and affordability (Pillar II). The campus' move from Pemberton to Mt. Laurel situated it in a more accessible location, and the college's tuition is among the lowest among its peer institutions in New Jersey. Students reported affordability and access as key factors in their decision to enroll at RCBC. The College's commitment to quality and effectiveness (Pillar III) are demonstrated in the creation of the position of the Faculty Excellence Coordinator whose role it is to organize professional development opportunities for adjuncts with the goal of enhancing the quality of their teaching and student support skills. The College's commitment to Student Success (Pillar IV) is evident especially in the development of pathways from high school to college and career. The decision to create the Workforce Development Institute in 2015 aligns academic certificates and degrees with the needs of the workforce of the region. The WDI has demonstrated positive results in development of partnerships with industries, and in the development of training programs for employees and 3 +1 associate degree programs.
- Progress toward meeting the goals of the strategic plan are tracked and shared with the college community annually. This information guides the college in making decisions on resource allocation, program and curriculum development. Because of limited funding however there are challenges in implementing strategic plan priorities. To their credit, the college implemented a process to address this issue. The timing of the budgeting calendar however did not result in allocations being directed as planned by the new process.
- Evaluation of faculty performance includes a review of contributions to professional scholarly activity.

*In the team's judgment, the institution meets Requirements of Affiliation 7 and 10.*

**Commendations:**

- The College is to be commended for its persistent commitment to its mission in the face of significant changes in leadership, location, resources and institutional structure.
- The College is to be commended for its bold and innovative partnership to create 3+1 programs with Rowan University, thereby creating a seamless path to an affordable Bachelor's degree program for its students.

**Suggestions:**

- The college is encouraged to explore ways to improve the ratio of full-time faculty to part time faculty consistent with Pillar III, quality and effectiveness

## Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

**Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.**

In the team's judgment the college *appears to not meet* this standard.

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

- RCBC has established policies and processes addressing Academic Freedom, Intellectual Property Rights, Civility, Academic Integrity, Whistleblower Act, and employee and student codes of conduct.
- The college has established policies and processes addressing complaints and grievances for faculty and employees (however, see below pertaining to Title IX). Access to student academic grievance procedures is readily available in pertinent college publications and at the website. Specific procedures related to the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are also accessible and available.
- Ethical standards for board members are in the Board of Trustees handbook. A Nepotism policy addresses issues regarding hiring and supervisory work relationships. Examples of recusals by Board of Trustee members when their votes could have been perceived as a conflict of interest were found in minutes of the public meetings. RCBC has a Code of Ethics adopted in 2011 that covers 13 ethical standards that apply to all College employees.
- RCBC has established policies and processes addressing non-discrimination for employees. Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement exists as well as CBAs for public safety and support staff. An Onboarding Advocate helps guide new hires in adjusting to the college.
- The college has a procedure, "Literature Distribution on Campus Approval," that covers placement, and posting of literature on campus, and has a communications procedure document that provides information and guidance that govern internal and external communications related to email, emergency communications, advertising and marketing.
- RCBC has an informative and accessible area of the website related to admissions. The admissions webpage provides a wealth of information regarding first year, second year, and transfer admissions. The admissions page also has information regarding early college, non-degree and international student admissions.

- The college has a robust area on its website dedicated to student financial information as well as easy access to Foundation information and scholarships.
- RCBC has one the lowest per-credit-hour tuition rates among its New Jersey community college peers. In interviews with students cost was cited as an important factor in choosing to enroll at RCBC. The website has a net price calculator for tuition with information to enable students to make informed choices.
- Reporting of program pass rates on licensure exams on the college website is inconsistent across the accredited programs and is not readily accessible to students and consumers.
- Interviews with faculty and support staff, as well as with members of the board of trustees, indicated that the recent hiring of the President was a direct board appointment and the campus was not engaged in the process. Through interviews with faculty senate members and representatives of the support staff, it was evident that senior administration (Vice Presidents and President) hiring has not recently involved campus constituencies in the process.
- Information regarding the Title IX process and responsible administration or staff was difficult to locate on the website and in the self-study. In subsequent examinations during the latter part of the visit and in examinations of the web site days after the visit, the team found actions had been taken to make information more accessible. An interview with the Title IX coordinator (Dean of Student Success) indicated that she has never had a Title IX complaint filed with her office. The team was concerned as to whether employees are informed of the process for filing Title IX complaints and whether conditions and time frames are known to employees.

**Commendations:**

- The college is commended for clear, accessible and consistent information in college documents and the college website related to admissions, advising, transfer, scholarships and financial aid for prospective and current students.
- The college is commended for providing competitive, low tuition compared with its regional community college peers.
- The Board of Trustees is commended for establishing clear and consistent policies regarding ethics and codes of conducts that govern acceptable behaviors for students and employees of the college.

### **Suggestions:**

- The board of trustees should consider updating its handbook so the content is consistent with current policies and practices.
- The team concurs with the college's suggestion that a centralized institutional repository be established for identifying and tracking student complaints and grievances.
- While not all accrediting agencies require the public posting of licensure/board pass rates, it is best practice to do so. The college should assure that all accredited programs list their current licensure/board pass rates on the college website so that this information is readily accessible to students and the public at large.

### **Recommendations:**

- The college should implement an annual report card that documents principal measures for determining the success and progress of the strategic plan implementation. Key metrics, such as graduation rates, retention rates, employee and student satisfaction rates with college services, scholarship statistics, dual enrollment rates, etc., should be annually recorded and distributed to the campus and made publicly available.
- The college should institute best practices for hiring of senior administrators, thereby engaging the campus in a process that engenders a sense of inclusion in the process and support for those hired or appointed. Open, informed and collegial exchange of information regarding final candidate qualifications should be a component of this process.

### **Requirements:**

- The college must adhere to Title IX requirements according to Federal Law. This involves creating a systematic and transparent process to assure that Title IX procedures are clearly articulated to employees and students and that they are consistently reflected in college-wide documents and publications (college website, student handbook, employee handbook, etc.). Additionally, the college needs to assure that college employees have completed training related to Title IX, and that records of complaints are kept in a central repository.

### Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

**An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.**

In the team's judgment, the institution *appears to meet* this standard.

#### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with the staff and faculty, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

- The English and Math faculty engaged in the process of redesign and transformation of the developmental studies program during Academic Year 2017-2018 conforming in considerable degree to nationally recognized models. The revised program includes clinical classes developed as part of an accelerated learning model.
- Anecdotal data indicate the redesign has been successful but concerns were raised during interviews about the delay in accessing institutional data. These data are critical to determine student completion rates and success in sequential courses.
- Placement in developmental studies courses has traditionally been based on Accuplacer scores. More recently, developmental math courses have utilized the ALEKS assessment and learning system. The college is in process of implementing the Advanced Learning Program (ALP).
- Interviews with faculty and staff demonstrated that distance education is clearly an important part of the academic framework at RCBC. Fourteen degrees can be completed online. Enrollment in distance courses continues to increase with a rise of nearly 6 percent from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018.
- While the self-study identifies distance education as a course delivery mode, the narrative provides little insight into the practice. There is no evidence of the success of the training provided to distance education faculty, nor is there narrative to support a common student experience for students taking online courses.
- Support services for distance students mirror those available to on-campus students. Tutoring, library and 24/7 help desk services are all available.
- Demands on the staff serving the online program are greater as enrollment has increased and there is a direct focus on using Blackboard in all courses. A faculty liaison position

has gone unfilled since a recent retirement, limiting the amount of professional development.

- RCBC has a strong focus on workforce development. The recently created Workforce Development Institute brings together opportunities from the college and the county to serve the workforce needs of Burlington County.
- WDI develops the curricula with input from the Burlington County Workforce Development Board. The goal is to raise the skill level of local employees so they can be competitive in the workplace. This seems to be successful.
- The visiting team concurs with the self-study suggestion that stackable credentials be used as a means for students in non-credit programs to provide a more seamless pathway to academic certificates and degree programs.
- The college provides adjunct professional development through establishing the Faculty Excellence Coordinator. The coordinator develops a schedule to accommodate adjuncts who teach in the day or evening. Based on interviews, it appears this schedule of offerings is effective in getting adjuncts to senior adjunct status.
- Full-time faculty may attend the sessions with adjuncts. The majority of professional development for full-time faculty is however through attendance at regional or national conferences, or through professional associations.
- The Faculty Excellence Coordinator is appointed for a two-year term with—as described during interviews—partial release time. The description of this position focuses on designing, developing and creating professional development opportunities to enhance faculty instructional skills. The individual is expected to utilize assessment data and research to evaluate and improve teaching and learning.

*Based on information provided, the team determined that the College does not meet the Requirements of Affiliation 8. This is further addressed in the section on standard 5.*

### **Commendations:**

- The Workforce Development Institute is to be commended for its partnerships and focus on connecting students with employment opportunities. The experiential learning opportunities expose students to real-life work experiences and networking opportunities.
- The Office of Distance Education is to be commended for its support of students and faculty and for expanding online education to provide access for a diverse array of its students and the community.

**Suggestions:**

- In order to focus on improved pedagogy in both face-to-face and online courses, the college should anticipate the appointment of an instructional designer when resources permit.
- The college should examine multiple measures, including high school GPA, for placement of students in developmental courses.
- Distribution of data, including student success metrics such as completion rates, should be more timely. The process of requesting data could be streamlined.
- The college should consider a full-time Faculty Excellence Coordinator to work on pedagogical improvements of both adjuncts and full-time faculty.

## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

**Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.**

In the team's judgment, the institution *appears to meet* this standard.

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with the staff and faculty, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

- RCBC has a comprehensive financial aid program that includes scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Information to assist students with financial goals and needs are accessible on the institution's website. Financial aid information and instructions are sent via email after students are accepted. This communication not only outlines the process for fulfilling financial obligations but also provides details about scholarships.
- The RCBC Foundation's primary mission is to raise money for scholarships in order to help students meet their financial requirements, thereby providing them accessibility to an affordable higher education. The Foundation offers approximately 34 scholarships. Throughout the year, scholarship notices are regularly updated for students' information. There is a RCBC/Follett Book Scholarship which provides approximately \$10,000 - \$15,000 in book scholarships each year.
- RCBC uses the Accuplacer test for determining appropriate placement in credit or developmental courses. Students are supported with opportunities for tutoring in, for instance, Calculus, Algebra and Anatomy & Physiology.
- RCBC recognizes the importance of students' early academic and social transition to college. The college implemented an orientation program organized by the Office of Student Life which is divided into two parts: one targeting already registered students and the other focused on students not yet registered. In the summer of 2017, 929 students registered for orientation and 850 attended for an attendance rate of 94%. The Self-Study also indicated that a post orientation survey to assess effectiveness of the program had a 13% response rate with 93.5% of respondents strongly agreeing that "Orientation provided useful information." Students not yet registered attended a three-hour orientation session in which they took the placement test and had an opportunity to meet with an advisor and register for classes. One hundred sixty-five students registered with 101 attending for a 61% attendance rate.
- The Educational Opportunity Fund Program (EOF) at RCBC provides an intentional and comprehensive support system designed to promote student success in attainment of their

educational goals. This includes support in academics, personal growth and leadership skills as well as guidance on meeting individual transfer and career development goals. The EOF program enrolls students who are historically underrepresented in higher education and/or are first-generation college students and/or first-time, full-time freshmen.

- RCBC offers THRIVE, a Pre-College Leadership Institute (PCLI). The institute is designed to introduce first-time, first generation students to the college, its resources and expectations as support for ensuring their overall success.
- The college offers the “Dress for Success Program” which is offered to a selected group of students shortly anticipating graduation. Students are required to attend a series of seminars to complete the program. Upon completion, students are required to participate in a Fashion Show and attend a Networking event where they meet business professionals from various industries.
- RCBC offers advanced academic opportunities for high school students in which the Head Start and Jump Start programs enable students to earn college credit.
- The Office of Outreach and Admissions actively engages students during the pre-matriculation process. Staff visits area high schools to conduct information sessions on detailed steps in the enrollment process for students and their parents/guardians.
- Once students are accepted, they receive guidance to complete next steps which include transcript evaluation, registration, and planning for transferring credits to other institutions. Over 4200 transcripts were reviewed in the 2017-18 school year. Currently, a maximum of 49 credits may be transferred into RCBC including credits from prior college attendance, CLEP, Advanced Placement and Prior Learning Assessment programs. High school students may earn college credits for dual enrollment courses taken while in high school. Students who have obtained job-training certificates may be awarded transfer credit for the study.
- The college ensures safe and secure maintenance of student information and records through adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

**Commendation:**

- The College is to be commended for its commitment to student development and success. Its state-of-the-art Student Success Center provides a centralized hub for intentional and supportive resources such as counseling services, enrollment, academic advising and planning. Additionally, access to the library, the bookstore and tutoring are available. Overall, students are provided with effective services and resources to support their academic goals.

**Suggestion:**

- Clearly outline the student complaint process, specifically with regard to grade disputes, and make information on the process accessible to students in various ways such as on RCBC's website, in the student handbook and during the new student orientation.

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College does not meet the Requirements of Affiliation 8. This is further addressed in the section on standard 5.*

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College meets the Requirement of Affiliation 10.*

## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

**Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.**

(Note: The self-study addressed institutional effectiveness in both this section and in the section on standard 6. Consistent with the guidelines in "*Team Visits: Conducting and Hosting an Evaluation Visit*" (p.37), the team's report evaluates Educational Effectiveness Assessment as presented in the self-study.)

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to not meet this standard.

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with the staff and faculty, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The College's assessment goals are clearly stated in the context of the four pillars of the 2020 Strategic Plan. These goals encompass quality and effectiveness in educational design and delivery, sustainable climate for assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness, support of flexible approaches to learning assessment, and use of assessment results to improve teaching, learning, utilization of campus services, and engagement in student life. This is consistent with the college's mission, which states that the institution "transforms lives by delivering innovative, high-quality and affordable educational experiences in an accessible and diverse environment."
- There is an established culture of assessment on campus, and both full-time as well as adjunct faculty participate in assessment with only rare instances of failure to do so. Based on the self-study, assessment of program learning outcomes is conducted on a 4-year cycle using a systematic process implemented in 2017-2018. Program directors/coordinators meet each spring with the Compliance and Research Specialist in preparation for assessment of academic programs to be performed during the following academic year. Academic assessment plan forms are distributed to each faculty member responsible for an assessment, providing a uniform framework for consistent planning and reporting. In a meeting with a representative of the education department, documentation was shared that demonstrated a clear, concise Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) assessment process that concluded with closing the loop of assessment. In summary, the documentation demonstrated the following elements:
  - A schedule for the assessment of all 5 PLOs, beginning in AY 2017-18 and concluding in AY 2020-2021;
  - An academic assessment plan from 2018-19 detailing which PLO will be assessed, how that PLO is linked to the college's Strategic Goals and Pillars, the course in which that PLO will be assessed, and the means of assessment;
  - The rubric that will be used for the assessment, including the criteria for defining success;

- Results of the assessment, including reflective summary and resultant action plan with specific documentation about whether the action plan has any budgetary implications.
- General Education Courses are assessed in accordance with guidelines provided by the New Jersey Council of Community Colleges (NJCCC).
- The 3+1 program, whereby students take courses through their junior year at RCBC then transfer seamlessly to Rowan University, is assessed in accordance with requirements of Rowan University. This assessment, utilized for 300 level courses, is administered each semester, as per procedures agreed upon with the University.

The college produces an Annual Academic Assessment Report of Student Learning Outcomes that is shared with faculty and deans via email, is posted on the institution's intranet as well as on the college's website.

- Academic program reviews are conducted every eight years. The program review process includes hiring an external consultant to visit the college for a full day followed by submission of a written report, including recommendations for program improvements. The Compliance and Research Specialist reviews assessments with course coordinators to develop a plan to address recommendations. If there are no budgetary requirements, then the coordinators have the opportunity to make changes based on the recommendations. Examples of actions taken as a result of the external reviews include: Psychology PLOs were aligned with APA guidelines; the ESL course was renamed; and the English program curriculum was updated. After one year, changes that resulted from annual PLO assessments are reassessed to determine the impact of the revisions on student learning. If there are budgetary considerations and the recommendation thought to have merit, then it is sent to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for review. The committee subsequently ranks the proposals and submits the top five priorities to administration for consideration. This process is intended to ultimately improve educational effectiveness.
- The institution conducts Course Learning Outcomes assessment to determine whether students are achieving curricular goals. The 2017-2018 Assessment results, as detailed in the Annual Academic Assessment Report, include the following examples:
  - Students in Liberal Arts Programs met 34 out of 37 program outcome criteria.
  - Students in STEM Programs met 33 out of 36 program outcome criteria.
  - Students in Health Sciences Programs met 19 out of 22 program outcome criteria.
  - General Education assessment showed that students met 13 out of 14 program outcome criteria.
  - Students met 10 out of 12 Course Learning Outcomes for 3+1 courses during Fall 2017 semester

For criteria not met, a reflective summary statement was included in the Assessment Report recommending how to better achieve those criteria.

- Evidence of an existing, ongoing, systematic approach to unit review of non-academic programs is lacking. RCBC has a unit review calendar outlining an 8-year plan for assessment of non-academic departments. This plan began in 2017 with the assessment of a single unit, RSVP, and was followed in 2018 with the assessment of three areas. Funding exists to support the assessment of one area of the college in AY 2018-2019; assessment of distance education was completed in February 2019. Notably, questionnaires have been developed by the Director of Compliance, Assessment and Research that are specific to each individual non-academic unit of the institution. These questionnaires are intended to guide each unit in assessing program goals and objectives, program overview, quality assurance, and ultimately enable development of an action plan for improvements moving forward. The calendar for a cycle of assessment every eight years, in combination with the unit-specific questionnaires, attest to the college's intent to assess non-academic areas. However, routine and systematic review of these non-academic units has not yet been implemented. Based on evidence collected during the site visit, this results, in part, from a lack of funding. The process preferred by the institution to assess a single unit includes the hire of an external peer reviewer for \$1000. Due to institutional budgetary constraints, there has not been sufficient funding allocated to hire external consultants; hence, unit reviews have not followed the proposed calendar. Contributory to the lack of systematic unit assessment are the many responsibilities assigned to the Compliance, Assessment, and Research unit. This unit is responsible for overall Institutional Review, as well as assessment of all academic programs and all non-academic departments. To accomplish this workload, the Compliance, Assessment and Research office has full-time director, a full-time compliance and research specialist who, along with the director, oversee assessment of academic programs, and a full-time Institutional Research Manager.
- Measures are being taken to help students prepare for successful careers and future education. The college's Career Link database provides students with access to job postings, while Career Services provides workshops on resumes and interviewing skills, shadowing opportunities in the workplace ("Road Trip to the Real World"), and employment recruitment opportunities. Graduate transfer rates from 2014 to 2018 are included in the 2017-2018 Graduate Survey, but data have not been collected to assess subsequent graduate rates from those 4-year institutions. Employment rates, in combination with professional licensure examination pass rates, for graduates of AAS Health Science Programs, generally support the assertion that graduates are prepared to join the workforce.

  - From 2014 to 2018, the five-year average job placement rate for graduates of the Radiography program seeking employment is 96%.
  - Diagnostic Medical Sonography (data collected from survey responses received)
    - From 2013 to 2016: job placement rates ranged from 50% to 75%
    - 2017: 67% job placement rate
    - 2018: job placement rate was 82%
  - Paramedic Science Program: 2017 Summary of Student/Graduate Achievement
    - Percent of Graduates Passing First Attempt National Registry Written: 100%
    - Percent Retention: 45.4%

- Percent of Graduates Positive Placement: 91.7%
- Nursing Student/Graduate Achievement
  - 2015: 79.1% were employed within five months
  - Annual NCLEX-RN pass rate
    - 2015: 76.67%
    - 2016: 85.71%
    - 2017 First Quarter: 88.57%
- Health Information Technology
  - Of the eight graduates from the HIT program in 2016, five were employed in healthcare positions within one year of graduation. Three pursued further education.
- RCBC has several mechanisms to communicate assessment results to internal and external stakeholders. The Annual Assessment Report is posted on the intranet for faculty and staff, distributed to the Board of Trustees, and is available to the public on the college website. In addition, the report is distributed to faculty via email. The Compliance and Research Specialist has been working with Marketing and Communications to share assessment results and disseminate information on benefits of assessment in improving professional practice via the bi-monthly e-publication, “RCBC Briefly.”
- RCBC has made efforts to use assessment to improve pedagogy and curriculum. A summary of results from the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey from fall 2016 (Table 5.5 on Self-study page 76) showed that the quality of instruction was below the national average. Measures were taken to improve quality of instruction, including:
  - professional development activities organized by the Faculty Development Coordinator
  - using Pearson’s Mastering Program in all anatomy and physiology courses to improve consistency in instructional delivery
  - fostering collaboration between full-time and adjunct faculty to standardize exams and lab manuals
  - scheduling Faculty Learning Communities for adjuncts, on an annual basis, to discuss such items as classroom management, course content, content delivery, and examination procedures.

The results of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey from fall 2018 showed improved ratings in multiple measures of instructional effectiveness, including two of the items highlighted in the self-study (page 76) that had been rated low in 2016, suggesting that the above noted actions taken by RCBC may have contributed to improved pedagogy and curriculum.
- The college has fostered review and revision of student support services as evidenced in the following:
  - Student Success Division created a new position, Retention Advisor, to help at-risk students better access academic services. This was done in response to the Fall 2016 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey.
  - Based on recommendations in a report by visiting representatives of NACADA, a strategic plan was developed that included development of an advisor assessment

and academic advising planning template; professional development for advisors was provided and new advising technology was purchased to improve the student experience.

Results of the fall 2018 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey revealed that multiple items assessed in the category of Academic Advising/Counseling had improved relative to 2016.

- It is evident that RCBC makes a concerted effort to plan and conduct a variety of professional development activities. The Faculty Excellence Coordinator is responsible for planning professional development activities, with a focus on ensuring that adjunct faculty have ongoing training in order to promote consistency between courses taught by full-time faculty and those taught by adjunct instructors. Funds for faculty development are allocated in department and division budgets, although some interviewees seemed not to be aware of this. The Faculty Excellence Coordinator invites RCBC's full-time faculty to present professional development workshops. Two online tutorials were developed based on faculty feedback in a survey indicating that training was needed, one on use of Blackboard Collaborate and one on use of Microsoft Mix. Other examples of professional development events include "Approaches to Classroom Management" and "What is Excellent Teaching". To incentivize adjunct faculty to attend professional development offerings, participation in such workshops is required for promotion to senior adjunct, which is accompanied by a pay increase.
- In an effort to fairly vet and prioritize planning and budgeting for proposals that arise from assessment efforts, RCBC created an Institutional Effectiveness Committee comprised of representatives from various divisions. Notably, however, faculty and student representation on the committee is lacking. The committee is charged with review of those proposals resulting from assessment that have budgetary implications. The responsibility of the committee is to prioritize the initiatives, with each member submitting a ranking. The top 5 proposals, based on the ranking system, are submitted as recommendations directly to the President. For example, the external review of the Psychology program in 2017-2018 recommended hiring of new, full-time faculty member(s) given growth of the program. This recommendation was sent to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for review.
- Specific, targeted efforts have been made to inform constituents about the institution and its programs. The college maintains a website with information accessible from the homepage, including a complete list of degree programs, a tab dedicated to the robust offerings of the Workforce Development Institute, and a testimonial from a student who is in the 3+1 program with Rowan University. Also, according to the self-study, RCBC continues to create targeted and effective marketing messages related to the high value of students pursuing higher education attainment, including 3+1 programs.
- RCBC has taken some measures to improve key indicators of student success (retention, graduation, transfer, placement rates). The Student Success Division addressed these

indicators in the Academic Advising Department's 2017 Institutional Effectiveness Plan (Self-Study Table 5.7, pages 78-79). An Academic Contract for Excellence (ACE) program was implemented by the Retention Advisor. This program provides students who previously would have been removed from the college due to poor academic performance the opportunity to choose a remediation plan (study skills, time management) with the goal of achieving a GPA above 2.0 and successfully completing their Associate degree. Ultimately, only 28% of participants in the ACE program were dismissed for failure to achieve a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

- Assessment results have led to the implementation of additional improvements in programs. For example, the Business Engagement division of the Workforce Development Institute developed a plan to increase customized training and educational programs by 5% based on assessment results. Ultimately, these efforts led to the creation of 44 new placement partnerships and enlisted 18 new business partners.

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College does not meet the Requirements of Affiliation 8 as discussed above in this section.*

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College meets the Requirements of Affiliation 9.*

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College meets the Requirements of Affiliation 10.*

### **Commendation:**

- The Office of Compliance, Assessment and Research (CAR) is commended for its significant role in creating a culture of assessment over the past 10 years at RCBC. Conversations with faculty demonstrate the understanding that assessment is an integral component of teaching. There is substantial evidence that the director has made noteworthy efforts to systematize routine assessment of academic programs.

### **Suggestions:**

- Professional development opportunities could be enhanced by the inclusion of guest speakers from outside the institution to present on targeted, assessment driven topics.
- The college should consider collecting data on the graduate rates of students who transfer to 4-year institutions as a means of assessing whether graduates of RCBC were prepared for future educational endeavors. Consideration could be given to tracking students in the 3+1 program with Rowan University, as this student population might be more available to provide feedback. In addition, if assessment results from Rowan University's traditional students could be obtained for comparison with assessment results from

students at RCBC enrolled in 300 level courses, these data could also be used to assess readiness for success at a 4-year institution.

- The college should consider developing a mechanism for sharing assessment results with students.

### **Recommendations:**

- The college should consider hiring additional staff to ensure that the institution is properly positioned to implement routine, systematic assessment college-wide with the goal of continually improving the student learning experience. Operational unit review has not been systematically implemented due, in part, to the growing demands on the limited staff responsible for oversight of assessment at RCBC.
- Given that efforts to implement routine, systematic unit review have been delayed due to fiscal constraints and resultant staffing issues, the college should consider review of the cost/benefit analysis of the existing practice of hiring external consultants to perform unit assessments. If volunteer external peer reviewers were sought in lieu of hiring consultants, this could eliminate the financial barrier to systematic unit review.
- As a measure of successfully preparing students to enter the workforce, the college should consider tracking employment data for all graduates, using the best practices established by the Health Sciences programs for data collection.
- Moving forward, the college should establish a plan for periodic evaluation of effectiveness of assessment processes.
- The college should consider expanding the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to include representation from students and faculty.

### **Requirements:**

- The college should implement a process of administrative unit review that is organized, systematized and sustainable. The lack of administrative unit reviews demonstrates a lack of a systemic assessment, planning and resource allocation continuum leading to improvements in institutional effectiveness.

## **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

**The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.**

In the team's judgment, the institution *appears to not meet* this standard.

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with the staff and faculty, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- RCBC has a strategic plan for 2016-2020 that contains four pillars: Access, Affordability, Quality and Effectiveness, and Student Success. The college utilized a collaborative process involving a broad team of college and county officials to develop the strategic plan and to review and revise the college's mission and goals. The new mission statement and specific goals are clearly linked to and representative of the mission: Transform Lives; Innovative; High Quality; Affordable; Accessible; and Diverse.
- Prior to Board of Trustees approval, the strategic plan, mission and goals were presented in an open forum with representatives of all four senates (faculty, students, staff, administrators) in attendance: as well as members of the community. The strategic plan, mission statement, and institutional goals were approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 15, 2016. The new mission statement and strategic plan were announced to the local community through several media such as social media, emails to College employees, the College's website and a press release.
- Using the RCBC 2020 Strategic Plan as a guide, individual departments have created unit plans to guide their resource allocation. Examples of departments that have adopted plans are the Office of Strategic Marketing and Communications, Workforce Development Institute's Business Engagement Division and the Office of Information Technology.
- There is evidence that the College has a clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement process that provides for constituent participation, and incorporates the use of assessment results. Periodic assessment of ongoing efforts to meet the college's strategic plan are in place. At the institutional level, the Strategic Plan Implementation Matrix is used to track progress towards the accomplishment of institutional goals. The matrix includes for each pillar and each initiative within the pillar, it's goals, objectives, action plans, responsible party, timeframe, budget and status/progress. At the unit level, the college's Institutional Effectiveness Plans provide a framework for the assessment of departmental goals and objectives as well as action plans for continuous improvement. However, there is little evidence of an ongoing, systematic approach to unit or department review. There is an eight-year unit review calendar for unit assessment for non-academic departments; however there was insufficient evidence to verify that a routine and systematic non-academic unit review system exists at RCBC.

- Independent audit reports were provided for fiscal years 2016 through 2018. In both the 2017 and 2018 fiscal year audit reports the auditors stated the following: “In all material respects, the respective financial position of the business-type activities of RCBC College at Burlington County and the College’s discretely presented component unit as of June 30, 2018 and 2017, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows for the fiscal years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.” The auditors thus verified that they did not identify any material weaknesses pertaining to internal controls over financial reporting for 2017 and 2018.
  
- The college’s 2018 audited financial statements reflect the following:
  - A negative Unrestricted Net Position of \$26.5 million as of June 30, 2018. The Unrestricted Net Position has increased over \$6 million in the past three years.
  - A Loss Before Capital Grants and Contributions of \$28.8 million from 2016 through 2018.
  - The 2018 Management Discussion and Analysis includes language that speaks to the impact of GASB 68 and 71 implementation indicating a negative Net Position Effect of \$28.3 Million.
  - A positive Total Net Position of \$113.2 Million.
  - A significant financial obligation impacting the annual operating budget of the College is the long-term debt service owed to Burlington County for construction costs associated with the new Mount Laurel Campus. The current debt service obligation to Burlington County for 2019 through 2021 is \$14.4 Million.
  - The Senior Administration is currently exploring ways to refinance the long-term debt service over the next 20 years. However, the proposed plan will require annual debt service payments ranging from \$3.6 million to \$5.0 million over the first fifteen years of the twenty-year loan period.
  - Given current GASB requirements and the long-term debt service as well as the current financial trends of the college, there may be significant financial challenges going forward that hinder attainment of the goal of providing the necessary resources required to support the institutions’ mission and goals.
  
- The college’s county sponsor, Burlington County, plays an integral role in the college’s budget process. Over the past decade or so, funding from the county has been inconsistent ranging from \$12 million in 2007 through 2009 to \$0.5 million in 2012. Funding from the County for 2017 and 2018 was \$4 million and \$4.15 million respectively. In recent years the County has been more consistent with its sponsorship amount and has included increments.
  
- The college has initiated a number of steps to alleviate some of the financial strain on the its future finances, such as:

- Seeking to sell the Pemberton campus. The proceeds would be used to reduce the principal debt owed to Burlington County.
  - Closing the swimming pool at the Pemberton campus, scheduled for August 2019, a relatively expensive facility and one not critical to the college
  - Sale of the Radio Station at the Pemberton campus
  - Planned annual tuition increases to provide revenue
  - Advocating with Burlington County to develop a more consistent financial level of sponsorship support.
  - Discussions with Burlington County to refinance the debt service owed to the county for the Mount Laurel campus.
  - A unit by unit review by the CFO to identify efficiencies that will result in savings for the college
  - Discontinuation of 13 academic programs that were no longer viable
- There was no evidence that the college has developed a five-year financial forecast to enable it to strategically plan for the fiscal resources necessary to support its operations and debt service going forward.
  - The College has a healthy grant program valued at \$4.14 million. The four largest grants are from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Talent’s Development Center for \$1.2 million; The National Science Foundation FY 2017 Grant for \$0.77 million; the New Jersey Department of Education’s Perkins FY 2019 grant for \$481,000; and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2018 grant for \$400,000.
  - The college has a comprehensive planning process for facilities infrastructure and technology that includes sustainability and deferred maintenance which is linked to the college’s strategic and financial planning process. Existing planning and supporting documents provided were:
    - Information Technology Masterplan
    - Short term/Long term Plans for Facilities
    - Facilities Evaluation Masterplan
    - 2015 – 2018 Major Capital Projects report

All of the above documents utilized by the institution are linked to the College’s strategic and financial planning processes.
  - The college has a process in place to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support its mission and goals. In 2016 – 2017 a Program Viability Process was implemented that included a review of 72 academic programs which resulted in 13 programs being recommended for discontinuation and 11 programs being placed on further review. This process involved quantitative and qualitative data assembled into a program analysis spreadsheet which included enrollment statistics, graduation results, fall-to-fall retention rates, number of

courses offered, whether courses are a part of the general education requirements, employment trends, median annual wages, labor costs, and recommendations made by external program reviewers. The 13 programs recommended for discontinuation were formally eliminated by action of the Board of Trustees at its May 16, 2017 meeting.

- The college has a well-defined decision-making process that provides clear assignment of authority and accountability starting with the Board of Trustees, then to the President, then to the Vice Presidents and to their respective divisions and the units that make up those divisions.
- The college has a new financial planning and budgeting process for the 2019 – 2020 fiscal year that is aligned with the institution’s mission and goals, and is evidence based and clearly linked to the college’s strategic plan goals. The process, as outlined in the self-study and supporting documentation, involves input from all of the respective divisions and units to identify specific operational budget needs. Budget managers are responsible to develop a written report that contains an overview of their unit including the mission and function of the unit, organizational structure and number of employees. Also required is a summary of their customers and trends including a three-year expense forecast and any anticipated program demand changes. The budget process also allows for capital requests as well as personnel change requests each year. All budget requests must be in support of the college’s strategic plan and goals. A public campus forum is held prior to the start of the budget development process, and individual meetings are held with budget managers to review the draft budget before it goes to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- The College has implemented a number of strategic initiatives to positively impact enrollment which will help to provide additional revenue to the College:
  - Expanded 3+1 Program Offerings - The 3+1 programs have had a significant impact on the number of students who remain at RCBC for a third year of study. The 3+1 program currently has over 1,100 students enrolled.
  - Strengthened Health Science Programs through strategic partnership with Virtua Health. RCBC has strengthened its partnership with Virtua Health by offering improved Paramedic Science and Emergency Medical Technician programs, and by entering into an agreement for clinical placements for Health Science students.
  - Increased persistence through Student Success initiatives. Student Success continues to implement business process and customer service improvements to support the persistence of RCBC’s students. Strengthened opportunities for high school students to earn college credit: RCBC regularly pursues dual admission opportunities for high school students and consistently strives to deliver effective messages to high school students and their parents regarding the educational pathways to a college degree.

- Expanded marketing efforts: RCBC continues to create targeted and effective marketing messages related to the high value of students pursuing higher education including 3+1 programs.
- Expanded Workforce Development Institute’s impact on recruitment of partner employees in for-credit pursuits. The WDI’s efforts involve corporate and professional training as well as emerging partnerships where the college will be the sole-source provider of higher education for large corporations.
- Modernization of the Mount Laurel Campus which now houses a state-of-the-art Student Success Center, Health Sciences building, and upgraded STEM and Liberal Arts division offices and facilities.

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College does not meet the Requirements of Affiliation 8 as further discussed above in the section on Standard V.*

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College meets the Requirements of Affiliation 10.*

*Based on information provided the team determined that the College does not meet the Requirements of Affiliation 11 as discussed above in this section on standard VI.*

**Commendations:**

- The College is commended for the Workforce Development Institute’s extensive efforts in developing and expanding new auxiliary funding opportunities and contributing to meeting workforce needs in the region. Twenty-seven new programs have been created since its inception in July 2015 generating \$1.5 Million in auxiliary revenue in 2018.
- The College is commended for the newly developed budgeting process that has been implemented for the 2019–2020 fiscal year that will assist the College in meeting its future budgetary challenges.

**Suggestions:**

- Develop multi-year enrollment forecast documents to assist with annual budget development.
- Advocate with the county sponsor to adopt a minimum maintenance of effort amount so that the college can develop and plan its annual budget accordingly.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop a multi–year financial plan that enables the college to strategically plan for the fiscal resources to support its operations and debt service.

**Requirements:**

- The institution must provide documentation of the necessary financial resources and funding base, including those from any related entities, and develop plans for financial sustainability adequate to support its educational purposes and programs for the future.

## Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

**The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.**

In the team's judgment the institution *appears to meet* this standard.

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, administrators and community members, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

- RCBC is governed by a clearly defined structure that involves the Board of Trustees, President and senior administration, and four Senates. Board membership is diverse and appears to be representative of the public served by the college. The Board has extensive oversight of the college under the leadership of its longtime Chair, George Nyikita. It fulfills its fiduciary responsibility through a detailed set of bylaws and holds approval authority for an extensive array of personnel, budgeting, purchasing and travel proposals. These approvals provide deep insight to the Board into the operations of the college.
- The Office of President, in spite of having undergone five transitions since the retirement in 2012 of its 25-year President Robert Messina, seems to have sustained effective functioning. In Dr. Michael Cioce, who was appointed President on a continuing basis in May 2018, the college appears to have stable leadership with the qualifications, credentials and experience to carry the institution into the future. He brings to the office experience with the institution gained while serving as Vice President, and he has with alacrity proposed a vision and marshaled a qualified senior administration that should provide the leadership needed for the institution's advancement.
- The model of governance within the college, with its four Senates (Faculty, Students, Administration, Support Staff) has the potential to serve the essential function of shared governance in the broadest scope within the institution. Each unit serves its constituency through its own bylaws, and governance meetings of all four units are convened three times per semester by the President. A clear distinction is made by Board policy between the roles of governance and collective bargaining. The college conducted a survey in the Spring of 2018 to assess the perceived effectiveness of the governance system, and the overall results revealed confidence in the system—with some indicators of areas for future improvement.

### **Commendations:**

- The Team commends the Board of Trustees and Administration for sustaining effective institutional functioning during the transitions over the past six years in the President's Office.
- The President is commended for his vigorous start as a visible and firm institutional leader, and for promptly espousing a clear vision for the college.
- The shared governance system has a structure and apparent functioning that conveys strength and unification on behalf of fulfillment of the college's mission.
- Commendation is due to the Board for its policy that facilitates both effective governance and collective bargaining by defining their respective roles.

### **Suggestions:**

- An examination of the level of Board approvals of administrative functions – such as personnel appointments, academic program changes, purchasing, and travel – while providing the Board great insight, might be relaxed to relieve the Board of such detail, thereby conveying to the President responsibility for a broader range of administrative actions.
- The team concurs with the suggestion in the self-study that the Board is encouraged to establish a system for regularly evaluating the performance of the President and that foreshadows a future period of years for evaluation. The Board should also encourage and support the President in establishing performance programs and regular reviews of the senior administration.
- The team concurs with the suggestion in the Self-Study that the college devise a system of regular assessment of the functioning of the governance system, and based on results of the assessment instruments establish standards of accountability.

*In the team's judgment, the institution meets Requirements of Affiliation 12 and 13.*

## Section D: Verification of Compliance

### I. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, and the Verification of Compliance conducted for the self-study by a work group, the team *affirms* that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation with the exception of three requirements. The team *cannot affirm* that *Requirement 5* concerning compliance with government laws and regulations is met (this is addressed further in the section on standard 2), and *Requirements 8* (systematic evaluation of programs and public access) *and 11* (documentation of financial resources) which are further addressed in the sections on standards 5 and 6.

### II. Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations

The team *does not affirm* that the institution meets all relevant federal and state regulations based on interviews and the self-study. The institution lacks full implementation of Title IX as further addressed above under standard 2.

## Section E: Verification of Data and Student Achievement

### I. Verification of Data and Self-Study Information

As each standard was evaluated, data as provided by the institution were verified, including in the self-study, the Institutional Federal Compliance report, and numerous documents supporting each of the standards provided in the documentation roadmap.

### II. Student Achievement

After interviewing institutional stakeholders and visiting the institution's student achievement information available at its website, the team confirms that the institution's approach to its student achievement goals is effective, consonant with higher education expectations, and consistent with the institution's mission and that the student achievement information data available at its website is reasonably valid and accurate in light of other data and information reviewed by the team.

Student achievement data on graduation and retention supplied to the team for the purposes of this evaluation are as follows.

Graduation Rates (entering cohorts)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	21%	22%	23%
Retention Rates	Fall 2015 to Fall 2016	Fall 2016 to Fall 2017	Fall 2017 to Fall 2018
	52%	66%	67%

The college has a unit of Compliance, Assessment and Research consisting of three staff who carry out a robust program of assessment, data collection and interaction with constituent units to promote and sustain the program.

## **Section F: Third-Party Comments (none received)**

## **Section G: Conclusion**

The team again thanks the institution, and we hope that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review.

As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

1. The institution replies to the team report in a formal written Institutional Response addressed to the Commission.
2. The team Chair submits a Confidential Brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action.
3. The Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully reviews the institutional self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institutional formal response, and the Chair's Confidential Brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission.
4. The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.