

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

January 20, 2022



Agenda Item: Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) Comprehensive Accreditation Report—Fiscal Year 2022

State Board Priority: Preparing Learners for Tomorrow’s Workforce
Ensuring Equity in Education

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code section 260C.47(3) grants authority to that State Board of Education to determine whether the programs of a community college shall remain accredited.

Presenter(s): Amy Gieseke, Chief
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Attachment(s): One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board grant continued accreditation for Iowa Central Community College.

Background: Attached is a report of the evaluation of ICCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The Department of Education conducted the interview portion of the evaluation on October 6-7, 2021. This report reflects the review team’s observations and determinations made during ICCC’s visit. As mandated by Iowa Code section 260C.47, the accreditation team, including two external peer reviewers, assessed ICCC compliance with eight Iowa State

Accreditation Standards via a structured process of document review and interviews. The team also reviewed the most recent Higher Learning Commission (HLC) regional accreditation report to ensure that any findings have been addressed. Iowa's process has been designed not to duplicate the HLC accreditation process.

Accreditation Report Comprehensive State Evaluation

Iowa Central Community College

October 6-7, 2021



COMMUNITY COLLEGES &
WORKFORCE PREPARATION

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Comprehensive Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2022 (Academic Year 2021-2022)

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Iowa Central Community College
Comprehensive State Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2022 – Conducted October 6-7, 2021

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled accreditation evaluation of Iowa Central Community College by the Iowa Department of Education (Department) as mandated by Iowa Code Section 260C.47. The accreditation evaluation was conducted on Wednesday, October 6 and Thursday, October 7, 2021 at the main campus of Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge, Iowa.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

College History:

Iowa Central Community College (ICCC), founded in 1966, is a comprehensive two-year community college located in north central Iowa. The college was formed as a result of the Area School Act passed by the 61st Iowa General Assembly. ICCC's service region includes the nine counties that make up Merged Area V: Buena Vista, Calhoun, Green, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Sac, Webster and Wright. The college was built on the foundation of three public junior colleges established in the 1920s by local school systems in Fort Dodge, Webster City and Eagle Grove (closed in 2004) and has maintained campuses in these areas. A Storm Lake center was added in 1971 and later expanded to provide a full range of over 100 community college programs. Students can attend classes at one of ICCC's five campus locations in Fort Dodge, Storm Lake or Webster City or through ICCC's flexible distance-learning opportunities.

Iowa Central is a comprehensive, associate degree-granting institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The 6,451 students enrolled at Iowa Central in Academic Year (AY) 2019-20 were drawn primarily from within the college's service area; however, the over 30 collegiate athletic teams, multiple musical and theatrical ensembles, as well as cultural and international activities have attracted students from across Iowa, 592 out-of-state students and 100 international students.

Iowa Central has a proud history of service and many close working relationships with local and statewide business and industry. As a strong community steward, ICCC has created many partnerships to serve the needs of their communities' public and private sectors. A \$29.5 million bond referendum, passed in 2018, allowed Iowa Central to remodel facilities, increase classroom space and increase career academy offerings to local students in their ongoing efforts to meet the needs of their students and communities. The positive impact of this bond initiative was evident during the Department's visit, with beautiful, modern, student-centered facilities evident throughout the campus tour. The bond initiative also funded major improvements in campus safety and security systems.

Institutional Profile:

Iowa Central offers two-year associate of arts and associate of science degrees, providing students with college parallel offerings in liberal arts and sciences toward the completion of the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. The curriculum also includes over 50 career and technical education (CTE) programs resulting in associate of applied science, associate of applied arts or associate of professional studies degrees, diplomas or certificates. Much of the college's significant growth, both in service to students and campus aesthetics, began in the mid-1990s. During this time, the college's enrollment more than doubled, resulting in the expansion of ICCC's programs and facilities over recent years. In AY

2019-20, the college served approximately 6,500 students at three locations, including the main campus in Fort Dodge, the Storm Lake center and the Webster City center, as well as numerous off-campus sites such as area high schools where 2,320 students enrolled in concurrent enrollment classes. In AY 2019-20, 3,475 students took at least one online course. Additionally, the college provided over 260,000 contact hours of noncredit education. To accommodate their students, Iowa Central has 15 apartment-style facilities housing 1,140 students on the Fort Dodge campus. For AY20, ICCC was seventh for both noncredit enrollment and number of credit awards issued. The college was first in credit penetration rate, which indicates the number of students enrolled divided by the area's college area population of those 16 years of age or older.

¹ Information reported in this section was found on the Iowa Central Community College website at: <https://www.iowacentral.edu/about> and from ICCC staff.

² Information for this section was obtained from the ICCC Website and the Community College Profile Report.

SPECIAL TOPIC SUMMARY- Serving Undecided Students

As part of the comprehensive accreditation review process, colleges select a continuous improvement topic that aligns with an area of growth and/or interest for the college. The Department then facilitates a conversation on this topic during the visit. For its topic, ICCC selected serving undecided students. As is the case for many community colleges in the state, undecided students are one of the most difficult groups of students to retain at ICCC. Joining ICCC in a discussion about how to best support and serve undecided students was Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) and Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC).

During the special topics discussion, NICC shared about their use of College and Career Coaches to connect high school students to work-based learning opportunities, helping students explore careers at a younger age so that they are able to sooner decide on a career and academic pathway when they enter college. They also shared how they are working to embed career development into their campus culture by making career development and work-based learning required elements of their curriculum. One strategy they have employed is the use of a passport/points system that allows students to earn points for engaging in career development and work-based learning activities. They are also using undecided visit days and allowing students to apply as undecided but within a particular disciplinary pathway, which helps students focus in on a particular pathway early on.

NIACC shared a unique model in which they will be requiring all students to select a meta major at the time of application, thus eliminating the undecided student population entirely. NIACC cited research showing that students are more successful if they are on a pathway, any pathway, versus being undecided. This was a major impetus to implement this change as part of their guided pathways work. They have also designed the curriculum so that the first year of most meta major programs is similar in coursework so that if a student does change programs after the first year, they will not lose credits. NIACC is also working to require a career assessment as a part of the admissions process.

Finally, EICC shared about how their College and Career Transition Counselor (CCTC) program is helping the college serve its undecided student population. CCTCs serve both high schools and EICC, and support students to work through career and academic exploration, helping students arrive on a chosen career and academic pathway. EICC wants all undecided students to have access to one-on-one career and academic selection support. These shared CCTC positions also teach an introductory career and college exploration course.

ASSURANCE SUMMARY STATE STANDARDS

The college's previous accreditation report from 2017 required the college to follow up on four key findings. First, in regard to faculty qualifications, the Department found at its FY17 interim visit that six faculty lacked the required qualifications. In December 2017, the Department accreditation team formally conducted another review of the faculty members in question, as well as additional randomly selected faculty, to ensure the college was in compliance with Iowa Code.

Second, a desk review and onsite visit indicated that the nondiscrimination statement was missing from several college publications. The Department accreditation team conducted a follow-up review of ICCC's website and publication for compliance in December 2017.

Third, the FY2017 review team found that there were CTE programs missing from the review schedule provided and that no programs were reviewed in 2014-15. Additionally, two of the five randomly selected programs requested for the desk review had not been completed. ICCC was asked to provide a complete review schedule consisting of all approved CTE programs to ensure that at least 20 percent are reviewed annually.

Finally, at the FY2017 interim visit, the review team found that ICCC's Quality Faculty Plan (QFP) committee membership list did not indicate the college roles and academic divisions of each member, nor the member's gender to confirm the required balances. In addition, a statement regarding the process for appointing faculty to the QFP committee was missing. As a follow-up to the visit, ICCC was required to provide the Department with evidence of compliance, including a revised QFP.

During the FY22 comprehensive visit, ICCC had made noticeable improvements in all four of these areas. While the team did have continuous improvement recommendations in each area, there were no findings for any of the above standards. This level of responsiveness to findings and recommendations shows ICCC's commitment to continuous improvement, which was also evident during the team's visit.

Compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria

The Iowa Department of Education's state accreditation team reviewed the most recent report and information available from HLC. ICCC's most recent HLC accreditation letter provided adequate evidence that the college has continued accreditation, with next reaffirmation of accreditation in 2030-2031. An embedded interim report is to be included in the year four assurance review in 2025. The embedded report should demonstrate the link between assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations and strategic planning to drive continuous improvement and accomplishment of the strategic plan goals.

As a result of the HLC Assessment Academy and with the use of Weave software, ICCC has made a great deal of progress with assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness since the last HLC evaluation. The leadership at ICCC recognizes that their strategies and initiatives are not done simply for compliance, but based on a purposeful, meaningful exercise to improve the lives of their students. Additionally, ICCC has a model of shared governance that develops a great deal of collaboration between faculty and staff and that demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement. There is an opportunity for ICCC to continue to use Weave software to capture this continuous improvement; support assessment processes; document how decisions are made based on data; and connect

individual unit goals, institutional goals and mission/vision. The college has affirmed that they plan to continue to work on a “plan of plans” and look for ways to connect plans, goals and initiatives as recommended by HLC. During the next state accreditation visit, the Department of Education would like ICCC to include the embedded HLC report in the evidence file. It is also recommended that ICCC replace “North Central Accreditation” to “HLC” in their documentation.

Compliance with Iowa State Accreditation Standards

Faculty Qualifications

All community college-employed instructors who are under contract as of July 1, 2011 and who teach in career and technical education (CTE) or arts and sciences (including adjuncts) are required to meet minimum faculty standards (Iowa Code, Section 260C.48). The Department accreditation team reviewed a random sample of faculty personnel files provided by the human resources office to ensure compliance with this standard.

The Department team provided ICCC with a random list of 30 faculty members who taught credit courses in the previous year. ICCC then provided personnel files for these faculty regarding qualifications, including supporting documentation such as college transcripts, employment applications to illustrate related work experience and third-party licensure/certification, if applicable. Members of the Department team then examined the files to determine whether the qualifications of each faculty member complied with current Iowa Code faculty standards for the courses they taught during FY 2020 (i.e., fall 2019 and spring 2020).

Following a thorough review of the 30 random faculty personnel files, members of the Department team met with the ICCC Vice President of Instruction to learn about the college’s faculty qualification review process and to discuss a few concerns raised during the review. Overall, most faculty appear to be well-qualified for the courses being taught. There were a few examples where faculty were teaching a course/prefix for which they were not qualified. In those cases, the instructor will not be teaching the course in future terms. There were also a few examples where instructors were teaching courses for which they were qualified, but the qualifying rationale was not documented on the official qualification form.

The team **recommends** that the college:

- Regularly and thoroughly review and maintain the faculty qualification forms with course assignment updates and how the person is qualified (either with credentials or experience) (e.g. adding WBL, SDV or additional prefixes the instructor is now teaching).
- Develop a definition of recent and relevant work experience for key disciplines to use in evaluating faculty applications within those prefixes.
- List the prefixes (or individual courses in some cases) on the faculty qualification sheets for which an instructor has qualifications. The form should also indicate whether the work experience and/or degree combinations are being used to obtain those prefix qualifications.
- Document in the faculty file any up-to-date skills obtained by the instructor more recently if work experience is being used to qualify a faculty member hired several years ago.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Faculty Teaching Load

The teaching loads of full-time instructors must not exceed the faculty load limits set forth in Iowa Code. This is the case for CTE instructors, as well as for college parallel (arts and sciences) instructors (Iowa Code, Section 260C.48). To check compliance with this standard, the Department accreditation team reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of AY2020 teaching loads for 30 faculty members. A discussion with the Vice President of Instruction and the three college deans about load processes clarified the steps that the college takes to load both arts and science and CTE faculty. ICCC's load reports for faculty all appear to be within the arts and science guidelines. They do not use contact hour load (CTE) and they have a mutually agreed upon overload process with sign-off from faculty. They take load discussion items regularly to the bargaining group for review.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Special Needs

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

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

During the onsite visit, the Department team saw evidence of numerous collegewide efforts to create a welcoming environment for all students and provide accommodations for students with special needs. Some of these observed efforts include the following:

- Creation of the Greehey Family Student Success Center as a one-stop shop for serving the needs of students throughout their time at ICCC. The building was open, welcoming and all services/departments were clearly identified.

- Providing multiple options to support the various needs of students through departments such as the Academic Support Center, Student Resource Center, PACE, TRiO, ELL, Military/Veteran Center, Corrections Education, in addition to programs such as Books for Bucks, Food Pantry, Triton Closet, Second Chance Pell, housing over breaks for International students, device checkout (laptops and hot spots) and a DART bus partnership. Students were well-informed and appreciative of all of these various efforts.
- Using the term accommodation instead of disability for all services, resources and staff titles which helps to remove any stigma that could be associated with having a disability. Also, having an accommodations director that travels among all campuses and academies, and provides on-demand presentations to inform students of the accommodation process and educate faculty on accommodation needs and implementation so students feel supported and valued.
- Utilizing Ally software and Read Speaker in Canvas to provide accessibility to all course materials for students.
- Supporting and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) by: having a college-wide Diversity Committee; offering DEI professional development opportunities for faculty and staff; creating and holding a diversity summit for the greater ICCC community; recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday; offering affinity-specific student groups like the multicultural club and a new LGBTQ+ club; and celebrating diversity through activities like the Afro-Latino festival, and Veteran's Day programs. All of these efforts show a dedication to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion and providing a welcoming environment on campus for everyone.
- Requiring all faculty, staff and students to take Title IX (Safe Colleges) training annually.
- Joining Iowa Open Educational Resources (OER) and the Open Education Network (OEN) as a way to expand access and diminish cost to students for textbooks.

The team found that the continuous nondiscrimination statement is consistent and includes all required components and contact information where it was found to be published; however, there are a few instances where the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator was that of the previous person in the role. The team **recommends** that the college consider creating a generic email address for the Title IX Coordinator so the continuous statement will not need to be updated any time there is a new person designated in this role.

The team found that there was confusion among employees and students about who the Title IX and Equity Coordinator contact was for students. Faculty and staff knew these roles were assigned to the Human Resources Director and was their primary contact, but there were mixed responses from employees and students when asked about whom students should contact. The job description for the HR Director indicates the role of Title IX and Equity Coordinator, but Board Policy 233 also mentions that the Vice President of Enrollment is a primary contact for students. The team **recommends** that the college review and clarify who the primary contact(s) is regarding harassment and equity concerns for both employees and students, and update relevant position descriptions, handbooks and policies as necessary.

The team commends ICCC on creating a new student concern form through Triton Pass that connects students to the appropriate contact person that will provide guidance in submitting a grievance or complaint under the correct policy and/or process, and for working to create a public-facing form for receiving feedback from others on campus that do not have access to the Triton Pass system. The team **recommends** continuing to work to define the difference between a complaint and a grievance, and to provide clarity on the various policies and procedures in place that should be used for each specific type of concern.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

CTE Program Evaluations and Timelines

There are a variety of state standards related to the offering of career and technical education (CTE) programs included in Iowa Code, Chapter 258, 281—IAC 46.7(4), and 281—IAC 24.5(4). These standards include numerous requirements related to program and award length, program content, labor market demand, articulation, advisory committees and more. All CTE programs (including new programs and changes to existing programs) must be approved by the Department. Standards for CTE programs are included in the *Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges* and in the *State Accreditation Guide* on the Department website.

The Department uses a web-based platform (STICS) for its CTE program approval process and maintains a database of approved programs and courses. This platform performs compliance checks on all CTE programs offered by each college. The Department accreditation team reviewed this compliance check for ICCC's CTE programs to ensure compliance with the state program standards. For the standards regarding program advisory committees' composition, roles and responsibilities, the Department team reviewed a random sample of CTE advisory committee membership lists and meeting minutes to ensure compliance.

Additionally, community colleges are required to review at least 20 percent of their CTE programs annually, standards for which are provided in the aforementioned program approval guideline on the Department website. The DE team reviewed ICCC's CTE program review process, schedule and a random sample of recent CTE program reviews to ensure compliance with the CTE program review standards. For its program review process, ICCC recently adopted a tool called Weave that appears to have created consistency and efficiency, as well as a more robust review process for the campus. Arts and sciences programs follow the same review process as CTE programs, and all courses are in the Weave system, which helps with consistency in the review process. Prior to the implementation of Weave, the college defined key terminology to ensure consistency and alignment, to improve communication and to aid with the mapping of course-level outcomes to program- and institutional-level outcomes in Weave. Programs can use Weave to pull reports to show achievement of program learning outcomes during program review. The team found that while Weave is still a relatively new tool for the college, it has been implemented in an intentional and deliberate fashion, and there is widespread understanding and use of the tool. The review team also found that ICCC's use of a self-study team works very well, especially for the college's smaller departments. Another practice that works well is having faculty approaching their five-year review serve on the program review committee the year prior for training purposes.

The team found additional promising practices. Starting this year, program instructors are presenting a summary of their discipline's program review to the Board of Trustees. Presentations to the board are short and typically student-focused. These presentations help ensure open communication and accountability. ICCC is also in the process of developing a rubric to assess program viability, which will be an excellent resource for the college. The review process also appears to be faculty-led.

The team identified a few opportunities for continuous improvement, and **recommends** that ICCC:

- Use disaggregated program demographic data to create strategic recruitment plans for underrepresented students in a collaborative fashion with program coordinators, admissions/recruitment staff and marketing. While the data appears to exist, it was not evident from interviews with staff and faculty that this information was used to inform recruitment strategies.
- Continue to look for opportunities to diversify program advisory boards by race and gender.
- Explore additional ways to close the loop with program action plans using a more in-depth focus on program improvement. It may be beneficial to focus less on items like program review grammar and missing documents and emphasize the development of more robust action plans and action plan implementation/follow-up.
- Consider making SDV 108 The College Experience course a requirement for all students, including CTE students, as it appears to be a very valuable resource for students and an excellent mechanism for spreading awareness about key campus resources. Another option might be to consider embedding key learning outcomes from the SDV 108 course into other CTE courses.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Catalog/STICS Review

The Department program quality consultant conducted a manual comparison of ICCC's approved CTE programs in the state's database with those provided in their college catalog. During this comparison, it was found that the college has seven programs that do not match the state curriculum system and the college is making the changes needed to align those programs with STICS. There are two programs listed in the catalog (Coaching Authorization Certificate and Emergency Medical Certificate) that will be removed from the catalog as they are not given awards by the college for completion of these programs.

The college uses Acalog for the catalog, and an internal curriculum approval process is moving from a paper-based process to Curriculog. With Acalog and Curriculog being owned by the same company, there is "communication" from Curriculog to Acalog so that any changes that occur as part of the curriculum approval process can be reflected in the catalog (Acalog). Minor program compliance issues are also being corrected with regard to the number of weeks listed for a program and the number of general education credits identified for a few programs.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Strategic Planning

Community colleges are required to update their strategic plans at least every five years as a guide for the community and its decision-making (Iowa Code section 256.31(4)(a)). The Department accreditation team reviewed ICCC's most recent strategic plan and interviewed selected staff to ensure compliance with this standard. Iowa Central is in the middle of a strategic plan that started in 2020 and runs through 2023. The plan was approved by the board in August 2020. Both the previous plan and current plan meet compliance requirements with clear goals, objectives and metrics in place. The plan appears to have been developed with input from both internal and external stakeholders. The team noted that the strategic plan was built using the college's shared governance system, a SWOT analysis and multiple iterations of feedback from internal stakeholders.

The current strategic plan has several strengths identified by the team. Every strategic plan goal and sub objective has a group assigned to it for implementation, making it clear to the campus community who is responsible for moving items forward. The institution has a centralized web page for institutional effectiveness data, including scorecard data related to the strategic plan. College staff were able to share multiple examples of changes that occurred due to strategic planning, showing that the plan is driving decision-making. The team also noted that ICCC is using their new assessment tool Weave to track strategic plan implementation and progress. Since the college is also using Weave for program assessment, the use of this common tool should help create important linkages between the colleges' various plans and priorities.

During the visit, college staff mentioned that ICCC is close to completing the current strategic plan before the due date. In fact, it was mentioned that the college often completes the strategic plan ahead of time. This may indicate that the plan could be broader and more complex, which could help ensure that all areas of the college are able to connect their work to items within the strategic plan. The team **recommends** the college review its strategic planning process and final document, perhaps with the help of an external consultant, to ensure the process and final plan are robust and detailed enough to truly engage all areas of campus.

College staff stated during the visit that they are working on finding ways to better document how they use data to drive decision-making. They believe they are doing this a great deal, but they do not always take the time to document changes that occur as a result of strategic planning. The team agrees with this assessment and **recommends** that the college continue to use Weave and other college planning tools, including the budgeting process, to better document the specific changes that are implemented as a result of strategic planning. This will help close the loop with continuous improvement processes.

The team also **recommends** that the college consider engaging the campus' excellent system of shared governance committees in strategic plan implementation to more fully engage the entire campus in strategic plan participation, implementation, awareness and ownership of strategic plan goals.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Physical Plant and Facilities

Each community college must present evidence of adequate planning, including a board-approved facilities plan. The community college's plan must meet state and federal requirements as outlined in

the state accreditation guide. The Department accreditation team reviewed ICCC's facilities plan and interviewed the ICCC staff regarding the college's facility planning process and decision-making structure to ensure compliance with this standard.

The ICCC campus tour was highlighted by state-of-the-art, student-centered office and academic buildings. A bond initiative passed in 2018 allowed for significant improvements in the campus facilities, including upgrades for campus safety, security and accessibility. Safety upgrades include an improved camera system, a door-locking system and additional campus lighting. Safety is also clearly a priority on campus. Campus security is available 24/7 and campus safety information is shared in multiple formats (orientation, webpage, faculty/staff professional development, college experience class, programming through health center and discussions at housing meetings). Students are well-informed of who to call for emergencies and have security numbers programmed in their phones. Students also indicated during interviews that they felt safe on campus.

The college has also been updating facilities to be more accessible. For example, bricks are being replaced in sidewalks. If a student with a disability has an issue, they fix the issue and make sure it does not happen again (e.g., modifications made during graduation ceremony). To help identify potential accessibility issues, ICCC's insurance company provides a campus risk-assessment.

Finding: At the time of the site visit, ICCC's Facilities Plan had been presented to the board, but was not formally approved. Within a few days of the team's visit, ICCC leadership had presented the Facilities Plan to the board for vote and approval and the plan was formally approved. The team recommends that ICCC ensure that this approval step is incorporated into their board processes for all major college plans, including the college's facility plan, moving forward.

Quality Faculty Plan

Iowa law establishes the process for community colleges to plan for the hiring and professional development of faculty. Institutional quality faculty plans (QFP) are required to meet the standards of 281-IAC 24.5(5). The Department accreditation team reviewed ICCC's QFP and interviewed members of the QFP Committee to ensure compliance with this standard.

ICCC's QFP is approved by the board annually and the QFP committee meets regularly as evidenced by the committee minutes and activities. Currently, members serve a three-year term and the committee is made up of three CTE faculty and only two arts and science faculty. The team asks that ICCC review and update their faculty membership to show an equal balance, either through the addition of another arts and science faculty member or by choosing a faculty member whose position represents both areas.

The team saw evidence of consistent professional development options available to both full-time and part-time faculty. The Tools for Teaching (T4T) initiative continues to be an effective method for the college to provide professional development to a significant number of full-time and adjunct faculty, as noted in the interim visit five years ago. The move to align all faculty to the same three-year plan timeline is laudable as it makes communication efforts much more efficient and clear. Quality Faculty Plan goals are aligned to the strategic plan which helps keep focus on those initiatives. The ScienceShare process to give science faculty access to teaching materials across the campus sites may be a best practice to elevate in the instructional division as a whole. Several employees noted it was effective in assisting the orientation of new faculty members and adjunct faculty, in particular.

Faculty are considering developing a professional development committee for added support, and the team **recommends** this addition to faculty planning. ICCC also shared that faculty do not get money for professional development opportunities (e.g., conferences) if they also want to use those opportunities for salary advancement or to meet QFP requirements (with the exception of the HLC conference). Since this practice has not been seen across the institutions visited in the state, the team **recommends** having further discussion with ICCC faculty regarding this practice to confirm the policy is supported and sustainable.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Senior Year Plus Programs

There are a variety of requirements for Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs offered to high school students jointly enrolled in Iowa's community colleges. These requirements are included in Iowa Code chapter 261E. Currently, the Department uses the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships' (NACEP) accreditation process to ensure compliance with many statutory requirements (legislated Postsecondary Course Audit Committee). The Department accreditation team reviewed ICCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed selected staff and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with this standard.

ICCC's concurrent enrollment program is referred to as Project Earlybird and involves partnerships with 19 school districts serving over 1,600 students during Fall 2021. ICCC's concurrent enrollment program primarily provides opportunities for high school students to enroll in postsecondary courses within their designated high school, but also offers students opportunities to enroll in online courses as well as in career and technical education (CTE) career academies, which ICCC refers to as Campus Triton Academies, serving approximately 150 students. Additionally, ICCC's concurrent enrollment program has achieved NACEP accreditation approval through the academic year 2026-27.

The team commends ICCC's Project Earlybird program for a number of observed best practices. First, the team was pleased to see the student handbook provided to concurrently enrolled students clearly indicated and directed students to all available support services offered by ICCC. The faculty liaison handbook is also well-developed and requirements are clearly outlined. The team found within the handbook a strong alignment of the NACEP standards to the role and responsibilities of the faculty liaison. This informs and emphasizes the importance of the faculty liaison role to the NACEP and state accreditation process. It was also noted that during the instructor onboarding process that the use of an orientation feedback system is in place to assess not only the orientation process, but also the faculty liaison. The team commends the program for using this practice to ensure continuous improvement. Finally, reviewers were pleased to hear that ICCC's concurrent enrollment program coordinator has a rotational schedule established with each school district to perform a compliance check to ensure districts are adhering to institutional and Senior Year Plus policies.

The Department team **recommends** that ICCC review all associated Project Earlybird handbooks (student, instructor, faculty liaison) and operational procedures manuals to ensure the institution's Title IX statement and non-discrimination policy are listed consistently within each handbook and appropriately reflect the full statement designated by the institution. While the Title IX statement is listed in the Project Earlybird student handbook, language is slightly different from what is listed on the

ICCC website. Additionally, the non-discrimination policy is not formally stated in any of the program handbooks and/or procedural manuals.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Compliance with Non-Accreditation State or Federal Requirements

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

Evaluation Team Recommendation

Throughout the desk review and site visit, the review team was impressed with ICCC's student-focused culture. It is clear that student safety, well-being and success are a priority for ICCC staff and faculty. Employees appear to be engaged in educational opportunities in and outside of the classroom. The college is proud of the work they do, transparent about areas in need of improvement and very open to suggestions as they are always looking to improve to better serve their students and communities. ICCC is a vibrant and active campus engaged in meaningful work that is transforming student lives.

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

A state interim accreditation evaluation is scheduled for FY 2027 (i.e., Academic Year 2026 -2027).