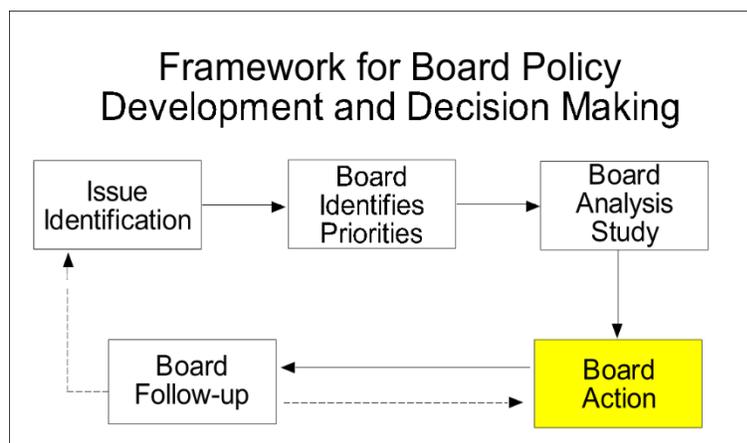


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

March 28, 2019



- Agenda Item:** Iowa Lakes Community College Comprehensive Accreditation Report—Fiscal Year 2019
- State Board Priority:** Increasing Accessibility of Career and Technical Education, Work-Based Learning, and Community College Credit
- State Board Role/Authority:** Iowa Code section 260C.47(3) grants authority to the State Board of Education to determine whether the programs of a community college shall remain accredited.
- Presenter(s):** Chris Russell, Consultant
Bureau of Community Colleges
- Attachment(s):** One
- Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board grant continued accreditation for Iowa Lakes Community College. A state interim accreditation evaluation will be conducted in fiscal year 2024.
- Background:** This is a report of the evaluation of Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC) for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The Department of Education conducted the on-site portion of the evaluation on November 5-6, 2018. This report reflects the review team's observations and determinations made during ILCC's comprehensive desk and site reviews.
- As mandated by Iowa Code sections 260C.47, the accreditation team, including two external peer reviewers, assessed ILCC's compliance with eight Iowa State Accreditation Standards via a structured process of document review and on-site interviews.

Accreditation Report
Comprehensive State Evaluation

Iowa Lakes Community College

November 5-6, 2018

FY 2019



**COMMUNITY COLLEGES &
WORKFORCE PREPARATION**
PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION

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Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146**

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Comprehensive Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2019 (Academic Year 2018-2019)**

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**Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC)
Comprehensive State Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2019 – Conducted November 5-6, 2018**

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled accreditation evaluation of Iowa Lakes Community College by the Iowa Department of Education as mandated by Iowa Code Section 260C.47.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

College History¹

Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC) was officially recognized by the Iowa Department of Education on October 28, 1966. The college was organized in January of 1967, when the first board of directors (Board) met to begin planning the organization and development of the college.

The Iowa Legislature passed legislation that established the Merged Area III district as a part of a statewide plan. This area included all or parts of the counties of Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, and Palo Alto, which, at the time, encompassed 26 community school districts and two parochial school systems. In 1968, the Board approved the merger of Estherville Junior College and its facilities into the new district. The college had been operated by the Estherville public schools since its founding in 1924.

In 1970, the Board approved the merger of Emmetsburg Junior College, which gave Iowa Lakes two major campuses in the area. The Emmetsburg College had been operated by the Emmetsburg public schools since its founding in 1930. ILCC's two major campuses are now supplemented with additional enrollment centers in Spencer, Spirit Lake, and Algona. Liberal arts and career and technical programs are offered at all of these sites.

The Spencer Campus began operating in the mid-1970s. It provides facilities for day, evening, and weekend college liberal arts courses, allied health and office programs, a computer lab, community education services, a learning resource center, and houses the area's Small Business Development Center.

The Spirit Lake Campus opened in 1984, and in 1995 moved into new facilities. The campus provides day, evening, and weekend liberal arts courses, leadership management courses, community and continuing education services, a computer lab, and a Student Success Center. The Spirit Lake Campus also has an Iowa Communication Network (ICN) room and two TV classrooms, which can receive or originate courses; however, they are incorporating new technology to better serve distance/online students.

A facility in Algona was purchased in late 1986 and has been developed into a college campus with facilities for day and evening liberal arts courses, community and education services, a learning resource center, and the main offices of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. The Algona Campus is located just north of the city on Highway 169.

In addition to its campus offerings, an instructional television system began offering courses to ILCC's service area in 1983. Beginning with two channels, six sites and four courses, the system now has four channels and televises 35 to 40 live college courses per semester to 12 receiving sites.

Institutional Profile²

Iowa Lakes Community College is a public, two-year, non-profit institution which offers over 100 academic programs of study, business and industry certifications, secondary programs for regional high schools, and adult education and literacy. Consistent with ILCC's mission, classes are flexibly scheduled and offered in various modalities to meet students' needs. This flexibility and variety of delivery modes bring programming directly or within a short drive of any potential student in the somewhat remote counties served by Iowa Lakes. The college's five-county service region encompasses 2,900 square miles with just over 67,600 residents. Its five campuses include 30 facilities, occupying 555 acres of land.

ILCC's total enrollment in fall 2018 was 2,117 students - 43 percent of which were high school students in joint enrollment programs, 29 percent were enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) programs, and 28 percent in arts and science transfer programs. While ILCC is 13th in total enrollment in the state, they ranked 9th in the number of credit student awards according to their 2017 Community College Profile Report published by the Iowa Department of Education. Additionally, the college was 4th in the proportion of joint enrollment students served and 7th in the proportion of distance learning enrollment.

Iowa Lakes employs 81 full-time faculty and 70 part-time faculty, and boasts a faculty-to-student ratio of 1 to 15. This low rate allows for more teacher/student engagement, which no doubt has contributed to the fact that ILCC has ranked 6th in the state for graduation and 4th in the state for student transfer.

ILCC houses its distance education courses on their Canvas learning management system. Four academic programs are offered completely online, as well as coursework for four additional programs. The college also utilizes the Iowa Communication Network (ICN), which allows them to share courses amongst campuses and with other colleges in Iowa via a state-of-the-art fiber optic system. Two classrooms at each of the five campuses is equipped for two-way television and audio.

The continuing education offices, with headquarters at the Estherville campus, uses classroom facilities at college-owned sites and in Area III school districts to deliver instruction and services to local residents. ILCC staff work diligently with adults in the area to help them complete their high school equivalency diploma, improve English language skills, and develop career plans that start with education and training provided at Iowa Lakes Community College.

¹ Information for this section was obtained primarily from the ILCC website: <https://www.iowalakes.edu/about-us/history/>

² Information for this section was obtained from the ILCC 2016 AQIP Systems Portfolio and the 2017 Community College Profile Report.

SPECIAL TOPIC SUMMARY – Co-Curricular Assessment

Iowa Lakes Community College offers a wide variety of co-curricular activities to support and enhance learning outside of the classroom and contribute to the overall educational experience. These activities are designed to align with pre-professional areas, student interests, and the college's strategic priorities. In addition, students can engage in leadership development activities through Student Senate and Student Ambassadors, or participate in any one of ILCC's 38 approved and funded student clubs and organizations that provide opportunities for pre-professional, special interest, social and community service. An example is the Music Club in which students and community members perform at fall and spring "Coffee House" events each year. In addition, they perform in a musical production every other year.

Any group wishing to form a club at ILCC must request approval by providing an explanation of the club's intended function, goals and objectives, tentative budget, equipment and facility needs, and a brief explanation of how the club will further the education of its members. These requests are submitted to the Student Senate Advisor, the Executive Dean of Students, and to the college President for final approval. Once approved, each club is assigned a full-time employee to serve as its advisor. This approval request and process aligns with the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Criteria 3E, which states that *co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students*. Additionally, Criteria 4B states that *the institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for curricular and co-curricular programs*.

To meet these criteria better, ILCC wants to learn more about appropriate methods of tracking/assessing co-curricular activities, including how to obtain student feedback to increase institutional effectiveness. They plan to pilot three co-curricular assessments this year, so for their Special Topic, they requested a presentation on how other colleges are tracking and assessing co-curricular activities. To fulfill this request, the Department arranged for several colleges to share their co-curricular programming processes. Indian Hills (IHCC), North Iowa Area (NIACC), and Southwestern (SWCC) community college representatives participated in this special topic discussion with about 25 ILCC faculty and staff. Additionally, Northeast Iowa (NICC) and Kirkwood (KCC) community colleges sent materials related to their co-curricular assessment procedures prior to the discussion.

IHCC explained how they created buy-in from staff to create outcomes for their activities; for example, student services staff is focused on the assessment of advising outcomes. NIACC presented on how they tie funding of co-curricular activities to a club's creation of outcomes. As part of their evolving outcomes assessment process, they require each club to share annual results of their goal attainment. SWCC seemed to have the most developed process in place, tying co-curricular assessment to their institutional outcomes. Each of SWCC's departments completes an annual assessment plan, which includes connections to the college's strategic plan and student outcome results related to their general education statement. As an example, Plant Services has an assessment plan in which they require students to write in full sentences when submitting maintenance requests.

Via shared documents, it was discussed how KCC is creating consistency in assessment vocabulary and processes for co-curricular activities and has internally distinguished between co-curricular (i.e., tied to academic programs) and extra-curricular (i.e., not tied to academics). NICC's shared documents illustrated that their co-curricular assessment process includes outcomes, assessments, success thresholds, and action steps resulting from the assessment. All college resources shared how each of them tie co-curricular assessment results back into program improvements.

ILCC stated that the Special Topic discussion was very helpful to their future planning and execution in the areas of co-curricular programming and assessment.

ASSURANCE SUMMARY STATE STANDARDS

Compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria

The Iowa Department of Education's state accreditation team (DE team) reviewed the most recent report and information from the HLC available at the time of this evaluation. ILCC's most recent HLC accreditation letter provided adequate evidence that the college has continuing regional accreditation.

ILCC is an AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Plan) college and underwent its most recent HLC visit in March 2018. The college received a preliminary report from the HLC evaluation team in June 2018 that stated the college has met accreditation criteria, but with some concerns as stated below. ILCC submitted responses to HLC's concerns, but had not received their final status report at the time of the DE's visit. However, since then, HLC has renewed ILCC's regional accreditation through 2023-24.

In the HLC preliminary report, the review team stated that ILCC needed organizational attention in the following four areas:

- Ensuring the consistency of course outcomes across all delivery modes and locations.
- Enhancing the assessment of students learning.
- Reporting of how college learning goals are evident in curriculum review at the program and course levels; including how data is used to improve programs, and how enrollment and completion data is used in program and course review.
- Improving the organization of high school concurrent enrollment instructor files (regarding faculty qualifications) and providing a better explanation of how they utilize and assess "tested experience" in hiring.

A monitoring visit is scheduled for some time before December 2020 to follow up on these concerns.

During onsite interviews, the DE team learned of ILCC's progress in these areas thus far – particularly their efforts to tie their strategic plan, assessment plan, and HLC recommendations together. The college has brought in presenters on assessment procedures and, starting in spring semester 2019, they will implement institutional learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, aligned outcomes for 30+ courses taught by multiple instructors, and plans for the development of annual assessment tools. In addition, the college has reviewed and updated its hiring processes for full-time, high school, and adjunct instructors; reorganized their former Assessment Review Committee into the Assessment of Student Learning and Program Review Committee; and piloted a new program review process with annual program scorecards. College leadership has also invested in assessment by hiring a dedicated institutional researcher who will help tie college processes to the strategic plan and ensure that the college is implementing its assessment strategies efficiently and effectively.

COMPLIANCE WITH IOWA STATE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Faculty Qualifications

All community college-employed instructors who were under contract as of July 1, 2011, 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 DE team reviewed a random sample of faculty personnel files provided by the Human Resources office to ensure compliance with this standard.

The DE team provided a random list of 20 faculty members who taught credit courses in the previous year for whom ILCC provided personnel files regarding qualifications, with supporting documentation such as college transcripts, employment applications to illustrate related work experience, and third-party licensure/certification, if applicable. Members of the DE team then examined the files to determine whether the qualifications of each faculty member complied with current Iowa Code faculty standards for the courses he or she taught during FY 2017 (fall term 2016 and spring 2017).

Following a thorough review of the 20 random faculty personnel files, members of the DE team met with ILCC's Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Human Resources director to learn about the college's faculty qualification review process and to discuss a few concerns raised during the review. They learned that ILCC utilizes a review form for faculty qualifications and organizes their personnel files systematically with faculty transcripts, faculty applications, resumes, and teaching load. In most cases, it was apparent that ILCC utilized a clear process for evaluating the qualifications of the faculty under review and had supportive material for justifying the instructional assignments. In particular, the DE team was very impressed with the organization of the personnel files and the fact that they have established a software process to help prevent instructors from teaching courses for which they are not qualified. The qualification reviewer simply indicates the discipline(s) that an instructor can teach within the software and the system blocks the instructor from being assigned a course with a discipline prefix that has not been approved/indicated. If a faculty can teach some courses within a certain discipline, but not all, those courses are individually listed within the system.

The DE team had concerns with three instructors' qualifications, so held a follow-up discussion with the CAO and hiring staff. For the sociology instructor in question, the college had since determined the faculty was not qualified to teach certain courses, so they did not re-hire that instructor. For the other two instructors, the college believed that because the courses (math and business) were CTE courses, they could be taught by any instructor possessing a master's degree (even if not in math or business). The DE team explained that CTE instructors need to possess a bachelor's degree or higher in the related field, or a minimum of 6,000 hours of recent and relevant work experience in the content area. While the DE team was satisfied that ILCC's hiring staff have a clear, consistent process for reviewing faculty qualifications and archiving evidential material, the team recommended that they continue to review the state-approved Academic Credentialing Chart (ACC) regarding qualifying fields and minimum standards.

Finding: Concerns regarding three instructors were shared with ILCC's CAO and director of Human Resources. They confirmed that during an internal audit in 2017, it was determined that the Sociology instructor was not qualified under the state's new standard of 18 credit hours of related graduate coursework, so the instructor was not re-hired.

Regarding the other two instructors, college staff now understand the requirements to teach CTE courses, so these instructors will no longer teach the courses in question. They will review the state-approved ACC and reference it when reviewing qualifications.

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 DE team reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of 20 faculty members for whom ILCC provided documentation of their FY 2017 (fall 2016 and spring 2017 terms) teaching loads.

The load materials shared by ILCC addressed all of the DE team's questions regarding overload credits and the actual contact hours and/or credit hours taught by each instructor. No instructors in the random sample exceeded the teaching load requirements set by rule. ILCC seems to have created a sound process for defining and monitoring faculty load. The faculty interviewed seemed content that the process is inclusive and clear.

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 have nondiscrimination statements ensuring 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 DE team conducted a desk review prior to the onsite visit in which they reviewed ILCC'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 DE team saw evidence of numerous collegewide efforts to create a welcoming environment for all students, provide accommodations for students with special needs, and provide opportunities for underrepresented students in particular programs of study. Since this college visit was also an equity visit, the team was supplied with additional evidence of college efforts towards meeting the special needs of students. Some of these documented and observed efforts include the following:

- ILCC employs bilingual staff to help ESL students with advising and access to student services.
- ILCC uses Drop-out Detective and NURO software for early identification of at-risk students so that interventions may be made to help the students finish the semester.
- The college has been designated a military friendly college and has implemented veteran initiatives across campuses, including through diversity club events and efforts.
- The college website and online (CANVAS) courses have been updated to meet accessibility requirements. They use "Ally" software to check instructional documents for ADA compliance.

- The website and CANVAS LMS both include a translator for various languages.
- ILCC has an impressive international students program serving 49 students, and the diversity committee utilizes International speakers to discuss their cultural/ethnic heritage.
- Scholarships average about \$2,300 per student to help meet college expenses, and they use a single application for financial aid and scholarships.
- The college utilizes a different Title IX online training tool each year with staff and students so that they don't get the same training and assessment every year.
- The hiring process affords an extra percentage toward the ranking of minority and veteran candidates.
- On the college application, students can identify gender in more than the typical two categories.
- The TRIO program serves low income, first generation in college, and students with disabilities. Initiatives include the Summer Bridge program, Drop-in Tutoring, and Second Year Mentors.
- The Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) staff reaches out to area businesses and industry with minority employees in need of English language development and has created Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) opportunities in their CNA training program. Their philosophy of getting the students in the door, enhancing their basic skills, and helping them feel comfortable with the college often encourages them into credit programs. In particular, the DE team was impressed with the college policy that anyone who earns an HSED is assisted with filling out an ILCC application and is awarded a \$500 scholarship (\$250/semester). ILCC has also worked out a partnership with some employers who are willing to allow their students to engage in AEL courses while on the clock for 1-2 hours per day (4 days/week).

Regarding the nondiscrimination statement, the DE team found it missing in some student-focused material and identified some inconsistencies in others. They also reminded staff that it should be provided in college recruitment material provided to non-English speakers, such as in businesses as mentioned above, in their native language.

Finding: The DE team found some inconsistency with the nondiscrimination statement and its inclusion in all publications designed for student recruitment, admissions, services, and academic programs. These inconsistencies are probably due to the use of old templates, as it is clear the college has created new document templates with the proper language. The college should find ways to involve the marketing department so that a consistent statement is present in all publications.

The DE team will follow-up with the ILCC Equity Coordinator by July 1, 2019, to ensure that they have developed a process for ensuring the statement is consistent and that the college website contains all of the pertinent information and language required by the state and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that issues equity criteria.

CTE Program Evaluations and Timelines

There are a variety of state standards related to the offering of 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 of Education. Standards for CTE programs are included in the *Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges* and in the *State Accreditation Guide* on the DE website.

The DE utilizes a web-based platform 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 DE accreditation team reviewed this compliance check for ILCC's CTE programs to ensure compliance with the state program standards. For the standards regarding program advisory committees' composition, roles, and responsibilities, the DE 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 DE website. The DE team reviewed ILCC's CTE program review process, schedule, and a random sample of recent CTE program reviews to ensure compliance with the CTE program review standards.

The program review documents that ILCC submitted from the past five years showed that the college follows the required five-year cycle of reviewing all CTE programs. However, the program reviews were not of a consistent quality and some were missing key data elements. During the visit, the DE team learned that the process has been enhanced over the last few years and some procedures have been updated for a fall 2018 pilot. Their new process has a triple focus of strengthening the use of data to evaluate their graduates' success, enhancing their assessment of program and course outcomes, and elevating the evaluative-action nature of the review. The planned process appears to be well developed, consistent across programs, demanding of more documentation, and more reliant on the use of survey data. It includes the utilization of an annual scorecard (i.e., data dashboard) that includes Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), and Perkins data elements that are aligned with the college's new strategic plan and student success measures.

Other improvements to ILCC's program review process include the faculty reviewing all relevant data before working with their deans, and an updated review form with questions that are clearer to the faculty, thus leaving less room for interpretation. Under the new process, course, program, and institution outcomes are aligned and reviewed. A template will be used to direct the program data analysis and tie it to actions and tracking/reporting methods. The Assessment of Student Learning and Program Review Committee will meet to review all documents. Additionally, ILCC has incorporated arts and sciences into their program review schedule, including the developmental education and distance education programs.

ILCC has established valuable advisory committees for many of their CTE programs by utilizing a strong employer network. One example was the inclusion of a former student on the HVAC advisory committee who had required special accommodations when in the program. The student was not only very helpful with identifying student needs, but also served as a strong role model for students. The DE team was also impressed with the OJT (on-the-job-training) options many programs offer as a valuable way for students to learn job skills while connecting with employers and the community. STEM initiatives such as summer camps, college exploration days, and the involvement of industry partners in employer panels and annual "Etiquette Dinner" are also commendable. The only **recommendation** the DE team had regarding the college's advisory committees is that they create a meeting note-taking template for consistency and to keep track of key decisions made and actions taken by the committees.

Since the new program review process is being piloted this year, the DE team requests to review an example in May 2019 to see how well the new strategies are working. They will look for evidence of program staff 'closing the loop' on improvement measures, the process tying in with the strategic planning and budgeting processes, and the use of program and outcomes data to improve CTE programming.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Review of Catalog vs. Approved CTE Programs

The DE quality program consultant conducted a manual comparison of ILCC's approved CTE programs in the state database with those provided in their college catalog. During this comparison, it was found that the college had very few incidents of publicized programs in the catalog or on the website not matching the state-approved program in terms of content, credit, or other compliance criteria. The only issues discovered were two programs with locally updated courses that had not been updated in the state database, resulting in a credit-hour mismatch. There were also a few programs that did not list the same number of elective options in the catalog as in the state database. Additionally, it was determined that a few state-approved programs are no longer active in the college catalog, so they will be deactivated in the future.

Regarding these inconsistencies, ILCC has either completed the corrections or has developed plans to make the corrections in the next few months. As a follow-up, the DE will run another comparison of ILCC's 2019-2020 catalog prior to August, 2019.

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 DE team reviewed ILCC's most recent strategic plan and interviewed staff to ensure compliance with this standard.

ILCC leadership solicited input from staff during their All Employee Day and incorporated cross-functional input into a draft of their 2019-2023 Strategic Plan that was presented to the Student Senate for discussion and feedback before being presented to and approved by the ILCC Board of Trustees. The college reviewed and determined that the current college mission and vision is still relevant and would be retained in this new strategic plan that contains the following four priorities:

- Enhancing Student Learning, Engagement, and Success
- Maximizing Resources
- Creating Powerful Partnerships
- Respecting Culture, Collaboration, and Inclusion

Each of these priorities, in turn, includes four sub-initiatives aligned with planning, facilities, financial, and assessment functions designed to meet the learning and employment needs of students and employees. While ILCC's new plan has not yet been implemented, their current plan led to the recent hiring of an institutional researcher who will help with the alignment of college activities to the new priorities. One such activity is the process the college utilizes for determining technology and equipment needs through a committee structure that ties the proposed requests/needs to both the strategic plan and the college budgeting process. As an example, the college decided to continue the full-time education technology position with earmarked institutional funds after Title III funding ends because they determined the position aligns well with their strategic plan and priorities.

The 2019 plan relies on new ways to utilize various data (Voluntary Framework for Accountability, National Community College Benchmark Project, Perkins, Noel-Levitz, etc.) such as annual shared scorecards and other HLC-recommended strategies. Grant funding will be pursued to aid success in key college initiatives and everything the college does will be "geared to improving the lives of our students." As such, student engagement and the promotion of club participation are a part of the strategic plan, as they align with at least three of the four listed priorities.

During onsite discussions, the DE team expressed a concern that the strategic plan shared in the desk review contained about 40 sub-goals that the college might find difficult to track effectively. With staff that are already performing multiple roles, the team **recommends** that the college consider ways to simplify the plan into a manageable roll-out in 2019. College leadership indicated that the strategic initiatives could be consolidated into perhaps 21 sub-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 DE team reviewed ILCC's facilities plan and interviewed staff regarding the college's facility planning process and decision-making structure to ensure compliance with this standard.

The DE team met with the facilities director and some staff members, and was impressed by the following college facility and safety achievements:

- Title III grant funds helped to enhance instructional technology in some CTE programs and funded an educational technologist to help faculty utilize classroom technology.
- The college performed a complete ADA compliance audit earlier this year and prioritized ADA updates to buildings, sidewalks, and parking lots.
- Faculty and advisory committee feedback is strongly considered when academic buildings are constructed or technology and instructional equipment is upgraded for CTE programs, such as with recent improvements in Graphic Design, Precision Ag, and the Nursing Simulation Lab.
- A \$16 million bond issue was approved in February 2016 to improve all ILCC campuses. They have completed projects such as the Student Services addition at Emmetsburg; a new roof and façade at the Spencer campus; an industrial training lab at the Spirit Lake campus; and an addition at the Algona campus. The Performing Arts Center, with 504 seats on the Estherville campus, will be completed in 2019, along with a few other well-planned projects.
- Students, faculty, and staff all remarked that they feel safe and welcomed in ILCC's small-campus atmosphere. The college has conducted extensive ALICE training and drills for intruder situations. They utilize Iowa Lakes Alert text/email/phone notifications to keep students and staff informed of critical news, and an electronic locking system has been implemented to help with lockdowns and for tracking who enters buildings, when necessary.
- All supervisory positions took basic National Incident Management System (NIMS) training and have clearly defined roles in the college's critical response plan. Leaders and participating staff all know their roles in an emergency, as was demonstrated during a recent severe weather situation.

Although impressed with the facilities staff knowledge of what needs to be done and their responsiveness, the DE team **recommends** that ILCC consider utilizing software to track and document repairs and scheduled maintenance. ILCC is similar to some other small colleges in that maintenance requests are not automated, but many colleges have realized tremendous efficiencies from using software products such as "School Dude" to document activities, schedules, and associated costs.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

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 DE team reviewed ILCC's QFP and interviewed members of the QFP Committee to ensure compliance with this standard.

ILCC's QFP was last approved by their Board of Trustees in September 2018. The QFP is impressively comprehensive, covering everything from the institution's professional development philosophy to expectations for full-time and part-time (adjunct) faculty. Of note are the inclusion of high school concurrent enrollment instructors under the adjunct faculty qualifications; the onboarding process for new full-time faculty that includes an online first-year course that covers the priorities of the institution, curriculum planning, classroom management, assessment, and more; and the statements of instructor competency to guide professional development activities.

The DE team was impressed that ILCC has created an online "Canvas" learning management system (LMS) course for all new faculty, adjuncts, and concurrent enrollment instructors to complete as part of their QFP. The course includes modules on community college history and mission; outcomes assessment; online teaching best practices; and other current topics related to college initiatives. Adjuncts and concurrent enrollment instructors are not rehired if they do not complete this course requirement in a prescribed timeframe. The college has a commitment to supporting college adjuncts throughout their employment, as evidenced by the fact that they have the same professional development expectations and opportunities as full-time faculty.

ILCC's QFP illustrates the college's commitment to continuous improvement. For example, they have recently increased the rigor of faculty plans by sharing what is expected of and acceptable from faculty regarding professional development activities. They have also provided the academic deans with professional development regarding how to work with faculty on their QFP improvements. The QFP committee reviews 20 percent of the instructors' plans each year to monitor effectiveness and to review the year-end reflection component required of each instructor. Plans are kept in instructors' personnel files and tracked through an Excel document.

While ILCC's QFP is well-written and seemingly dedicated to continuous improvement, the DE team **recommends** that the college take the next step in tying instructors' plans to other college processes. For example, QFP activities would be more relevant if tied to the new strategic plan initiatives such as faculty assessment planning. The team was also a bit concerned that the QFP process is not aligned with faculty and program evaluations. While plans are developed annually between faculty and their supervisors, neither the faculty nor supervisor are tasked with identifying and documenting how a professional development activity supports any given instructional program competency. In discussions with the members of the QFP Committee, the team learned that a comprehensive ILCC year-end report ties all faculty activities to the strategic plan. The committee also indicated that some of these process improvements are being considered.

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 DE utilizes the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership's (NACEP) accreditation process to ensure compliance with many statutory requirements (legislated Postsecondary Course Audit Committee). The DE team reviewed ILCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed select staff, and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with this standard.

ILCC's concurrent enrollment program is called "Career Connect" and is NACEP accredited through 2021. The program is operating according to procedures that appear to be fully aligned and compliant with the accreditation standards. The college works with 11 school districts and has concurrent enrollment participation percentages ranging from 20 to 47 percent, illustrating strong buy-in from and collaboration with the school districts. While ILCC ranks 13th in total enrollment among Iowa's 15 community colleges, they rank 4th in joint enrollment of students (2017 College Profile).

As aforementioned, professional development opportunities for joint enrollment instructors are comprehensive and expectations are high, as evidenced by the requirement for annual discipline-specific training. In addition, all new joint enrollment instructors are required to participate in a "new teacher workshop." In the beginning of each school year, these instructors meet with community college instructors to review SYP program procedures, and in November, there is discipline-specific training where the faculty split between arts and sciences and CTE groups. A general session is held in the first part of this convening, and faculty-led discipline specific sessions are held during the second part. School district superintendents agree to release high school instructors to attend these professional development activities, which illustrates a strong collegial relationship between the high schools and ILCC.

In addition to scheduled events, high school and ILCC faculty communicate regularly and work together to form the common course assessments, discuss materials and textbook needs, and engage in faculty site visits. The high school teachers and ILCC faculty seem to have a genuine mutual respect for one another, as is also apparent between the high school advisors and Career Connect staff at ILCC. In August of each year, an orientation for high school advisors, instructors, students, and parents is conducted by ILCC staff at the high schools during an evening program. They discuss the Career Connect program, college vs. high school level courses, online course expectations, the availability of college support services, and the advantages and possible consequences of taking college-level courses while in high school. They try to ensure that the students and parents know exactly what the students are getting into and things they can do to be successful.

The college reaches out to school districts in other ways as well. They connect students to work-based learning opportunities and personal development activities such as career academy panels, Iowa exploration days, and industry tours. The college also involves middle school students in career exploration events such as manufacturing day and health science projects, with the goal of connecting them with employers and helping them develop guided career pathways.

Based on some student achievement concerns raised during onsite interviews, the DE team encourages the college to review the success of their SYP career academy students across all demographics to see if any trends emerge.

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

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

A state interim accreditation evaluation is scheduled for FY 2024 (i.e., Academic Year 2023-2024).