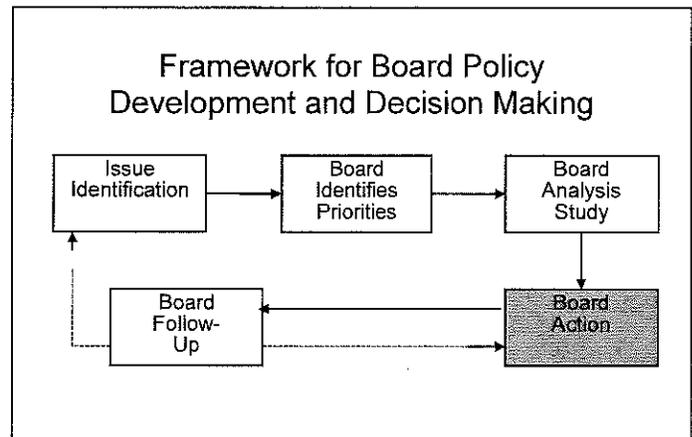


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

January 19, 2017



Agenda Item: Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) Interim Accreditation Report—Fiscal Year 2017

Iowa Goal: Individuals will pursue postsecondary education in order to drive economic success.

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.

Presenters: Jeremy Varner, Administrator
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

Barbara Burrows, Chief
Bureau of Community Colleges

Attachments: One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board grant continued accreditation for ICCC. A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation will be conducted in fiscal year 2022.

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of ICCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The department conducted the on-site portion of the evaluation on November 14-15, 2016. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team's interim review of ICCC.

ICCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a commission of the North Central Association. The state accreditation process reviews state requirements, but does not duplicate the HLC process. HLC documentation is reviewed during the visit to identify any follow up that may be required. State standards are reviewed through a structured process by department staff and community college peer reviewers.

***Accreditation Report
Interim State Evaluation
for
Iowa Central Community College***

November 14-15, 2016

FY 2017



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

**State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146**

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Iowa Central Community College
Interim Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2017**

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Iowa Central Community College

Interim State Accreditation Evaluation

FY 2017 - Conducted November 14-15, 2016

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled interim accreditation evaluation of Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) by the Iowa Department of Education (DE) as mandated by Iowa Code, Section 260C.47. The accreditation evaluation was conducted on Monday, November 14, and Tuesday, November 15, 2016, at the main campus of ICCC in Ft. Dodge, Iowa.

Institutional Overview

College History¹

Iowa Central Community College (ICCC), organized 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 included 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 community college programs.

Iowa Central is a comprehensive, associate degree-granting institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The 8,077 students enrolled at Iowa Central in academic year (AY) 2015-16 were drawn primarily from within the college's service area; however, the 28 collegiate athletic teams, and the cultural and international activities have attracted students from across Iowa, as well as approximately 500 out-of-state and 80 international students.

Institutional Profile²

Iowa Central has a proud history of service and has established close working relationships with local and statewide businesses and industry. ICCC 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 70 career and technical education (CTE) programs resulting in associate of applied science (AAS), associate of applied arts (AAA), or associate of professional studies (APS) degrees, diplomas, or certificates. Approximately 70 percent of ICCC students enroll in credit coursework to prepare for transfer to a four-year institution (i.e., college parallel) and about 30 percent enroll in career and technical education programs intended to prepare them for the workforce.

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 2015-16, courses were offered at three primary locations with 3,001 students enrolled at the Fort Dodge campus, 237 at the Storm Lake center, 92 at the Webster City Center, and numerous off-campus sites such as area high schools where 2,513 students enrolled in concurrent enrollment classes. To accommodate their main campus students, ICCC has 15 apartment-style facilities to house 1,180 students in Fort Dodge.

Some of these on-campus students also contributed to the growing number of students taking advantage of distance learning opportunities online or through the Triton Network (Polycom system). In AY 2015-16, 4,296 students took at least one online credit course at ICCC. Additionally, the college provided over 560,000 contact hours of non-credit education.

As a strong community steward, ICCC has created many partnerships to serve the needs of their communities' public and private sectors. Recently, the college has partnered with a charter school, (Storm Lake, Iowa Central, and Buena Vista Charter School), to offer all CTE program options housed at the Ft. Dodge campus to those students by providing transportation. Additionally, the ICCC Fuel Testing Laboratory provides affordable and timely testing for motor vehicle fuels and home heating oils for the regional fuel industry.

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

²Information reported in this section was acquired from the 2016-17 ICCC General Catalog and ICCC staff.

Assurance Summary State Standards

Compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria

The state accreditation team reviewed the most recent report and information from the HLC available at the time of the evaluation. Iowa Central Community College's (ICCC) HLC accreditation letter was reviewed to determine that ICCC has continuing regional accreditation. While ICCC has demonstrated that it "has met the five identified criteria and their respective core components" for regional accreditation, HLC has documented concerns regarding ICCC's strategic planning, learning assessment, and institutional effectiveness processes.

In the HLC Report of their November 2010 comprehensive evaluation visit, the review team stated that ICCC needed organizational attention to assessment and institutional effectiveness. Particularly, they required the college "to complete a progress report on institutional effectiveness and the assessment of student learning, due December 1, 2013." They further stated, "...we require a description of a full implementation of the institutional effectiveness plan, with demonstrable examples of how the institution's efforts have been used to inform the institution's planning processes and enhance institutional quality" (2010 HLC Report, page 26).

Upon review of ICCC's 2013 Progress Report, a second team of HLC reviewers determined that the report "failed in several respects to respond to the concerns of the comprehensive visit team" (February 10, 2014, Staff Analysis of Institutional Report, page 5). As a result, ICCC was directed to submit a follow-up report, due December 1, 2016, that would address the following:

- full implementation of the assessment plan;
- full implementation of the institutional effectiveness plan;
- evidence of approval of these plans by faculty and president;
- how the new assessment program has been effective in narrowing/eliminating the data feedback gap and providing evidence that the data is accessible, meaningful, and used by the appropriate stakeholders to influence decisions; and
- how the institutional effectiveness plan has been used to inform the institution's planning processes and enhance institutional quality.

The DE state accreditation review team had the opportunity to scan a draft of this December 2016 follow-up report. They provided some feedback for improvement based on their document review and on-site discussions regarding the assessment and institutional effectiveness processes.

Iowa Administrative Code 281-24.4(260C) states:

In order to be accredited by the state board of education and maintain accreditation status, a community college must meet the accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission and additional state standards. Documents and materials provided in accordance with the accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission shall also be provided to the department for the state accreditation process.

To meet this criteria, the ICCC accreditation liaison provided a copy of their December 1, 2016, follow-up report (received 01/09/2017) and will send a copy of the official HLC review of that report when received by ICCC.

Compliance with Additional State Standards

Faculty Qualifications

All community college-employed instructors who are 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 accreditation team reviewed a random sample of faculty personnel files provided by the human resources office to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE provided a random list of 20 faculty members who taught credit courses in the previous year for whom ICCC provided personnel files regarding their faculty qualifications, with supporting documentation such as college transcripts, employment applications to illustrate related work experience, and third-party licensure/certification, if applicable. The DE review team then perused the files to determine whether each faculty member complied with current Iowa Code faculty standards for the courses he or she taught during FY 2016 (i.e., fall term 2015 and spring 2016).

The DE visiting team appreciated that ICCC showed evidence of using the faculty qualification review material that the statewide Faculty Standards Task Force provided to establish consistency with this process. The 20 files were organized and complete with transcripts and professional development action plans; however it was not always clear who had made the final determination regarding qualifications. With new academic leadership at ICCC, we expect this review process will become more uniform and comprehensive, with evidence that the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) has reviewed and participated in the development of hiring rationale and subsequent action plans, when necessary.

Finding: Based on the DE team's initial review of randomly selected faculty members' qualifications, it was determined that six instructors did not meet state minimum faculty standards for some of the courses they taught in FY 2016.

Details of each of these findings were shared with ICCC's CAO and accreditation liaison for further review of internal documentation. On December 2, 2016, the DE review team received follow-up communication from the CAO regarding the six instructors. Sufficient documentation was provided to resolve the concerns regarding one instructor. Additionally, it was stated that three of the instructors will no longer teach the courses in which qualifications were not documented. The remaining two concerns, dealing with instructors who teach both CTE and transfer courses, have not been sufficiently resolved and will require follow-up communication between the DE accreditation team and ICCC academic administration.

To address these issues, ICCC will: (1) communicate with the DE by March 15, 2017, regarding the two unresolved faculty members; (2) submit a plan to the DE by June 1, 2017, outlining procedural changes to their faculty qualifications review process to ensure these instances of non-compliance do not occur in the future; and (3) participate in a one-day follow-up DE visit in November 2017, to review the personnel files of a randomly selected set of 15 faculty members to ensure the college is following their plan and sufficiently documenting evidence of compliance with this Iowa Code regarding faculty qualifications. At that time, the DE representative(s) will employ the new HLC and state criteria of 18 graduate semester hours in the instructional field for faculty teaching Liberal Arts and Sciences (transfer) courses.

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). The DE accreditation team reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of faculty to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE provided a random list of 20 faculty members for whom ICCC provided documentation of their FY 2016 teaching loads. ICCC provided documentation of the teaching loads under review for compliance with the maximum teaching loads established in Iowa Code, Section 260C.48.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Special Needs

Community colleges are required to maintain equal access in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with disabilities. These students must be given access to the full range of course offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations. The DE accreditation team reviewed ICCC's nondiscrimination statement in marketing and recruitment publications, the college catalog and website, and information on the college's Americans' with Disabilities Act policies and reports. They also conducted interviews with staff associated with disability services to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE accreditation 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 observations included:

- students' positive comments about staff associated with disability services and the newly established Triton Enrichment Center;
- students' examples of faculty being very cooperative with classroom accommodations;
- disability services' development of an "Intake Questionnaire" that staff use with students in a holistic manner to discuss all aspects of what the college can do to accommodate their needs;
- disability services' acquisition of a cloud-based software (Accommodate) to automate the generation of letters to both students and instructors regarding approved accommodations that eliminates the need for students to physically obtain instructors' signatures and return the forms to disability services;
- the layout of ICCC's Title IX pamphlet with pictures of staff that students should contact with concerns or reports of harassment or sexual misconduct; and
- the full-time presence of an on-site nurse and mental health counselor.

During discussions with staff associated with the above efforts, the DE team made the following **recommendations** for continuous improvement:

- In various student material, such as the "Title IX at Iowa Central" pamphlet, use titles that students will understand and recognize, such as "Sexual Misconduct Procedures".
- Provide more consistent formal training for students regarding their rights, the college's procedures regarding filing grievances, reporting sexual misconduct, and reacting to active shooters or other emergencies, etc.

Additionally, the DE team discussed issues raised in ICCC's 2010 DE "Educational Equity Review" with the ICCC leadership team. In that review, conducted on November 9-11, 2009, the DE equity consultants noted the following item of noncompliance related to special needs:

A number of college publications, course catalogs, and program recruitment brochures did not include the notice of the nondiscrimination policy, the identity of the equity coordinators, and information about the grievance procedure.

The DE accreditation team found that this remains an area in need of attention by ICCC. A review of submitted documentation and material provided at the on-site visit, as well as observed during the campus tour, indicate that the nondiscrimination statement is still missing from several college publications, including but not limited to the Application for Room and Board; the Nursing Student Handbook (2015-16); TRiO, Academic Resource Center, Title IX, and ICCC Triton Athletic brochures; and some of the course syllabi submitted for review. The team also found inconsistencies in some nondiscrimination statements and the absence of the equity coordinator and Office for Civil Rights (OCR) contact information.

Additionally, ICCC needs to make their annual and continuous notices of nondiscrimination more prominent and accurately titled on the college's website and in publications. For example, it was accessible on the website via a link entitled "Annual ADA Statement" under a "Features" section. After discussion, it was changed to "Annual ADA/Nondiscrimination Statement," but this is still not accurate as these should be two separate statements. The "Nondiscrimination Statement" does not serve as the ADA accommodation statement, so "ADA" should not be in the title. The true "ADA" statement is what ICCC rightfully refers to as "Special Assistance" on the syllabus.

The DE accreditation team **strongly recommends** that ICCC staff review the 2010 DE "Educational Equity Review" in preparation for their next equity review, which will be conducted in tandem with their FY 2022 comprehensive accreditation review. Focus should be paid to the sections on Annual and Continuous Notice of Nondiscrimination, and the facility's ADA compliance issues listed in the report.

Finding: The annual and continuous nondiscrimination statements need to be prominent, complete, and consistent on the website and in all major publications, including handbooks, flyers, brochures, and all academic, housing, and athletic material directed at students and the community. Both the nondiscrimination and the ADA Special Assistance statement should be on all course syllabi, with contact information for both the equity and the disability services (academic assistance or accommodations) coordinators. ICCC is encouraged to use the DE's "Nondiscrimination Statement Guidance" provided to all community colleges in fall 2014 (updated Sept. 2016) and included with their SharePoint accreditation guidance.

To ensure resolution of this finding, the DE accreditation team will review ICCC's website and publications for compliance in November 2017, or sooner upon ICCC's request.

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 DE. Standards for CTE programs are included in the *Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges* 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 also performs a compliance check on each CTE program offered by each college. The DE accreditation team reviewed this compliance check for ICC's CTE programs to ensure compliance with the program standards. For the standards regarding program advisory committees' composition, roles and responsibilities, the DE accreditation team reviewed a random sample of CTE advisory committee membership lists and meeting minutes to ensure compliance with these standards.

Additionally, community colleges are required to review at least 20 percent of their CTE programs annually - standards for which are provided in the program approval guidelines on the DE website. The DE accreditation team reviewed ICC's CTE program review process, schedule, and a random sample of recent CTE program reviews to ensure compliance with the program review standards.

The DE team had vibrant conversations with ICC academic administrators, CTE faculty, and the institutional effectiveness executive director about their program review guidance documents and processes, which are all well-written and easy to follow. They provide a good framework for program coordinators and faculty to follow and place emphasis on a team approach, which is commendable. In addition, the DE team was impressed that they have a guide and schedule for the review of Arts and Sciences, which is not required by the state. The team also commended ICC on the uniqueness of the faculty bio-sketches that they include as a resource in a program review.

Regarding advisory committees, the DE team found evidence of good partnerships with local industries and a concerted effort to obtain a gender mix and to include student participation. It was noted that the Accounting advisory committee had gender diversity and that some programs were making efforts to 'think out of the box' to address diverse representation. For example, they have even tried to extend membership into related occupations, such as including a finance representative on the buildings trades committee. However, they have struggled with retention of these members because most of the discussions are not related to their fields of expertise.

The DE team was also impressed with efforts the CTE program coordinators and faculty are making to attract non-traditional students (i.e., gender and ethnicity). Particularly, their career exploration day in which over 1,500 high school students spend the day at ICC meeting with business representatives and faculty, and the outreach they've made to middle school students to educate them about career planning and training opportunities provided at ICC. Furthermore, CTE students interviewed expressed enthusiasm and praise for their instructors' knowledge and dedication to their success.

During these robust conversations and the exit report, the DE made the following **recommendations**:

- Advisory committee minutes should be more thorough, consistent, and list members in attendance and evidence of their involvement in planning and decision-making.

- Program reviewers should follow ICCC's guidelines more consistently and focus on the analysis of student data to address the question "So What?" – meaning...What are the implications of proposed actions and how will they improve the program and student outcomes?
- Program reviews should show evidence of the assessment of student learning and be aligned with the college's strategic plan and budgeting process, as referenced in the 2010 HLC Report.
- Efforts should be made to tie other annual program reporting requirements into the program review evaluation to create a meaningful and non-duplicative process.
- Efforts should be made to formally incorporate external reviews into the internal program review process to avoid duplication of work, while ensuring that state standards regarding CTE programs are addressed.*
- Terminology needs to be defined and consistent, which is something they are addressing through their assessment project.

** This topic was discussed during the Exit Report-out and DE staff agreed that it is permissible to use external review material for the state program review; however, care must be taken to address the state criteria provided in the DE's Program Approval and State Accreditation guidelines.*

Finding: During ICCC's previous FY 2013 State Comprehensive Review, the DE team reported that "some programs at ICCC are evaluated only at the time of external review/accreditation, which could be as long as eight years" (page 7). With the documentation provided and via on-site interviews, the current DE team found that this finding has not been sufficiently remedied. They noted there were CTE programs missing from the review schedule provided and two of the randomly selected programs requested for the desk review had not been completed due to a misunderstanding regarding whether they required formal program review.

By June 1, 2017, ICCC will provide the DE with a complete review schedule consisting of all approved CTE programs to ensure that at least 20 percent are reviewed annually.

Additionally, the DE team found that a number of ICCC's CTE programs listed in their 2016-17 Catalog did not match the approved Educational Program Reports (AS-28) archived in CurricUNET. Discrepancies included total number of program credits, courses within the programs, and course credit hours. Additionally, some programs had compliance issues regarding program length or other state-required components such as course contact hours, general education credits or categories, and the percentage of technical core courses. All program compliance issues were shared with ICCC's academic administrators in order for them to develop a plan to remedy these program issues within the next 12 months.

By June 1, 2017, ICCC will provide the DE with a plan to remedy these issues.

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 accreditation team reviewed ICCC's most recent strategic plan and interviewed selected staff to ensure compliance with the standard.

It was noted in the desk review that the HLC has had lingering concerns regarding ICCC's strategic planning process. In the 2010 report prepared by their review team, it was stated that ICCC's 2010-2013 strategic plan needed "substantial work" due to a lack of congruency with other planning processes, the budget not being tied to objectives, vagueness regarding responsible parties on initiatives, and assessment of student learning. ICCC was required to submit a Progress Report in 2013 that HLC stated "failed in several respects to respond to the concerns of the visit team." As a result, they were asked to submit a second progress report, due December 1, 2016.

During the November 2016 DE accreditation team on-site visit, the ICCC leadership team shared their recent strategic plan development process, which involved campus-wide participation and additional staff input through "Survey Monkey" software. A full-day workshop for staff and faculty was conducted to engage all stakeholders in identifying and prioritizing ideas from the 1000-plus ideas generated. The following ideas resulted from the workshop: development of the Triton Enrichment Center, a review of a 4-day workweek, on-campus college-run daycare, and a "Bring Your Own Device" technology initiative. Of these four initiatives, the Triton Enrichment Center has been established and reported to be a valuable resource by the students interviewed. ICCC leadership stated that the college has progressed about half-way through the goals of their 2015-2020 plan.

The college has incorporated student retention and onboarding initiatives into the strategic plan. For example, data was collected on students in need of developmental education, resulting in the establishment of cohorts to enhance their success in college. In addition, Education Advisory Board consultants were hired to streamline ICCC's new student onboarding process and efforts such as early alert and faculty/administration engagement with students have resulted in improved retention of students. Staff reported that their Learning Improvement Process (LIP) seems to have stalled in connecting assessment with action. However, ICCC is making progress with their assessment processes and has appointed a dedicated institutional effectiveness staff member to lead a team that has attended an assessment academy.

Criteria 1, under this state standard, requires that the college strategic plan include a mission statement. In 2010, the DE Equity Review team made a recommendation that ICCC's mission and vision be more prominently displayed, as they were not consistent on the website or across publications. The 2016 DE accreditation team also found varying mission and vision statements across publications, such as:

- Strategic Plan Mission: "ICCC provides quality educational opportunities in and outside of the classroom."
- Catalog (page 15) Mission: "ICCC provides quality educational opportunities."
- Website and Strategic Plan Vision: "For all we serve, ICCC strives to be the premiere learning community..."
- Catalog/Student Handbook Vision: "Innovation, excellence, and continuous improvement define our college..."
- Quality Faculty Plan Vision: "ICCC is the learning college of choice, meeting the needs of those we serve..."

The differences in these key institutional statements (nondiscrimination, ADA, mission, and vision) across the organization suggest a lack of attention to detail. The DE team **strongly recommends** that ICCC leadership commit to a thorough review of major publications, the website, the catalog, and all internal documentation to align these key statements.

Finding: No direct 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 facilities must meet state and federal requirements as outlined in the state accreditation guide. The DE accreditation team reviewed ICCC's facilities plan and met with the facility director and staff to discuss the college's planning process and decision-making structure to ensure compliance with this standard.

The DE team found that ICCC utilizes a facilities plan approved by their board in 2007. Several pieces of the original plan (Science and Technology Center, Student Learning Resource Center, Geothermal Pond, 5 additional residential units) have been completed. ICCC has implemented a new work order process (My Work Orders) that all staff can easily access and use to report technology, information services, and maintenance needs all in one location. This process is working well for them and allows for ADA requested obligations to be met quickly.

The DE Team expressed concern that there seems to be no formal and regular process for reviewing ADA compliance across the campus. Interviewed staff indicated that they conduct informal campus walk-about to check for ADA compliance issues. The DE team informed ICCC staff that the DE has a pre-audit ADA compliance check process/form that can help to formalize this review process (form was sent on 11/15/16 to the VP of Enrollment Management and the Accommodation Coordinator). Some staff noted that ICCC's insurance company may also provide this review service free of charge. The DE team **recommends** that the college complete a formal ADA audit prior to the FY 2022 Comprehensive Accreditation, which will be conducted in tandem with an OCR-compliant equity review.

In interviews with ICCC students about campus safety, they discussed a messaging process for campus safety, weather, and other key ICCC announcements. Some of these students recommended that they should be able to "opt-out" of this process rather than "opt-in" because several students are not getting those messages. The DE team shared this request with appropriate staff. Various interview groups suggested that ICCC has a clear commitment to campus safety.

The students and staff interviewed shared immense pride in their campus and the student-friendly environment that has been created. The DE team observed this sense of pride and collegiate campus atmosphere throughout their campus tour.

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 ICCC's QFP to ensure compliance with these standards.

The DE team met with members of the QFP committee and discussed mentoring, professional development opportunities, and the documentation of those activities. The team was impressed with the participation of faculty and adjuncts in the "Tools for Teaching" (T4T) all-day learning sessions provided by ICCC, which were mentioned in several interview groups. The discipline-specific sessions were noted to be useful and practical for attending faculty, particularly for adjuncts and concurrent enrollment instructors. The DE team also noted that the QFP committee minutes indicate vibrant

discussion of key faculty and professional development topics, and that changes made to the QFP have been approved by the college's Board of Directors, as required.

During the interview with the QFP committee, the DE team asked for clarification regarding the committee's membership and appointments. Their response evidenced that the state criteria regarding membership is satisfied. Upon request, the ICCC accreditation liaison submitted a document that listed the membership by division (CTE and A&S), their sex, and a statement describing how faculty are appointed.

Lastly, some interviewees noted that the elimination of the "My Learning Plan" third-party software, due to increased costs, has made the documentation of professional development more difficult. The DE team **recommends** that an electronic tracking system be implemented to replace "My Learning Plan" to ensure proper documentation of professional development activities which would enable categorizing and tracking of learning across the organization.

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 a community college. 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 accreditation team reviewed ICCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed selected staff, and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with the standard.

Upon review of the ICCC Project Earlybird program materials and through a vibrant discussion with concurrent enrollment staff from the college, the DE team found that ICCC proactively provides students, faculty, and other stakeholders with comprehensive instructions, guidance, and support materials related to its SYP programming. Materials reviewed indicate ICCC is operating its SYP programs in compliance with statutory requirements and expectations.

The student and faculty handbooks related to Project Earlybird are comprehensive, informative, and provide pertinent policies and procedures of interest to the students. The one-page document summary of key information and policies is helpful for students who may not understand the technical information in the handbook. The college has found ways to annually inform students about broad career options and related local offerings through a career day event on campus. In 2016, over 1,500 high school students attended this event.

The DE team was very impressed with the unique charter school articulation that ICCC has established with the Storm Lake school district in which high school students are able to attend and complete programs of study on ICCC's Ft. Dodge campus. They noted that this represents a successful partnership model right in-line with the state's CTE Redesign efforts. ICCC is seeking a bond referendum to acquire more resources for the college to increase offerings and opportunities such as this to local school districts through new career academies.

The DE team shared one **recommendation** with SYP staff regarding the Earlybird material, stating that the technical components might be revised to be more understandable to students and parents. For

example, in the student handbook, the valuable information on course prerequisites may be lost following a fairly technical narrative on ICCC's assessment of student learning. Per the finding in the Special Needs section of this accreditation report, these handbooks should also be reviewed for inclusion of a consistent nondiscrimination statement, which was missing.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Compliance with Non-Accreditation State or Federal Requirements

The DE accreditation team initially listed the following issue in the CTE Program Evaluation and Timelines section, but since it is not technically a state accreditation compliance violation, decided it fit better in this section.

In their review of the 2010 HLC Report and ICCC's 2016-17 College Catalog, the DE team noted a statement that raised concern that they then discussed with ICCC's academic leadership. Page 27 of the catalog states that there is a 1.8 GPA requirement for CTE diploma and certificate students. This requirement seems to present an equity issue between students with financial aid who are required to maintain a 2.0 GPA as part of their standards for academic progress (page 19) versus students who do not receive financial aid. During interviews, the DE team noted that review of this 1.8 GPA standard was also recommended by the HLC in 2010 (Report of Comprehensive Visit, p.31) with regard to ICCC's Associate of General Studies degree. The HLC team noted that this GPA requirement varies from standard practice at other colleges, as well as from other ICCC degrees.

The DE accreditation team requests that ICCC review this requirement and submit a plan by June 1, 2017, to remedy this equity issue and standardize program requirements.

Evaluation Team Recommendations

The DE accreditation team recommends continued accreditation for Iowa Central Community College (ICCC).

The team will work with ICCC, upon request, to assist in the development of the plans or documentation required to resolve the findings issued in this report. They will also peruse the Higher Learning Commission's review of ICCC's December 2016 follow-up report. Representatives of the DE team will conduct a follow-up visit in November 2017 to ensure that the college is in compliance with the faculty qualifications criteria and review the other material requested in this report.

A state comprehensive accreditation evaluation is scheduled for FY 2022 (i.e., academic year 2021-2022) that will be conducted in tandem with an OCR-focused equity review, including an ADA compliance review of ICCC's facilities.

