

Cuyahoga Community College

HLC ID 1901

OPEN PATHWAY: Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

Review Date: 6/13/2022

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

6/13/2022

Review Type:

Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

Scope of Review

- Assurance Review
- 2021–22 COVID-19 Response Form

Institutional Context

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) was previously an AQIP pathway institution rated highly by the HLC peer review team in 2018. The summary of that team report states:

"The CE Team recommends Reaffirmation of Accreditation for Cuyahoga Community College. The College demonstrated its commitment to CI principles and has a strong shared governance structure to involve all levels of personnel in meeting its strategic goals. Tri-C is an integral part of the Cleveland area community it serves and is looked to by that community for leadership and support of community business, industry, commercial, social, and health activities. The College has a multitude of exemplary programs and services that epitomize what a community college dedicated to improvement can do for the community it serves. The Tri-C faculty exuded a collegial approach to its processes and involvement as part of the College's approach to shared governance and exhibited a high level of understanding of CI principles. Tri-C's continued involvement in the Assessment Academy will continue to pay dividends in its assessment approaches to the institutional level, the program level, and the course level."

Tri-C was given the choice of what accreditation pathway to pursue subsequently. Tri-C administration chose HLC's Open Pathway process. The current HLC peer review is the fourth-year assurance open pathways review. The review is performed virtually, and no Federal Compliance Review is required at this time.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted operations at Tri-C between 2020 and the present. The College took appropriate measure to ensure the safety of its students, faculty and staff. While enrollment has been adversely affected, anticipation and mitigation of the downturn in enrollment has been appropriate.

Tri-C was founded in 1963 as Ohio's first community college and today serves more than 50,000 credit and noncredit students annually with the lowest tuition in Ohio. More than 1,000 credit courses are offered each semester in more than 200 career and technical programs. Tri-C also grants short-term certificates, certificates of proficiency and post-degree professional certificates along with more than 600 noncredit workforce and professional development courses each year. More than 700 courses are offered online or in a hybrid format.

Collegewide operations include more than 3.4 million square feet of building space and 540 acres of grounds distributed between its four traditional campuses — Eastern Campus, Western Campus, Metropolitan (Metro)

Campus and Westshore Campus. Numerous off-campus facilities including two Corporate College® locations, Brunswick University Center, Manufacturing Technology Center, Advanced Technology Training Center, Hospitality Management Center, District Administrative Services, Jerry Sue Thornton Center, Gill and Tommy LiPuma Center for Creative Arts, Transportation Innovation Center, KeyBank Public Safety Training Center, a Mobile Training Unit and other sites are part of the Tri-C system.

Tri-C employs approximately 400 full-time faculty members and 800 adjunct instructors. Full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members, including instructional faculty, counselors and librarians, are represented by the American Association of University Professors. Faculty turnover is low, and recent surveys indicate strong satisfaction and morale. The student to full-time faculty ratio is 20:1. Tri-C also employs more than 1,600 non-teaching professionals with an average of nine years of service. The majority (nearly 1,300) are non-unionized. More than 850 are full-time staff.

A nine-member Board of Trustees governs the College in all policy matters requiring attention or action. Six trustees are appointed by the county executive. Three are appointed by the governor of Ohio for five-year terms or the remainder of vacated terms.

The President's Cabinet consists of the President; three executive vice presidents; chief of staff; four campus presidents; and vice presidents of government relations and community outreach, development, integrated communications and legal services.

Recent accolades include:

In 2021, for the second straight time, Tri-C was named to the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence Top 150 list.

Tri-C was named one of the nation's top higher-ed workplaces on ModernThink's 2021 list of Great Colleges to Work For.®.

For the ninth consecutive year, Tri-C received a 2021 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine.

In 2021, Tri-C was one of four institutions selected for an Achieving the Dream (ATD) project.

In 2021, Tri-C earned its 12th consecutive Military Friendly® School designation in recognition of its commitment to serving veterans and active military students, as well as their families.

Tri-C was designated as a Top 10 school in the large community college category for the fourth consecutive year.

Interactions with Constituencies

There are no interactions.

Additional Documents

There are no additional documents reviewed.

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) has a clear mission statement that is communicated throughout the college and community. The mission, vision, and values are consistent with programmatic and student support offerings and reflect the needs of the community. The strategic plan and tactical plan are tied to the mission and form the foundation of the work of the College.

Tri-C's first mission statement was adopted in 1975. The narrative states that the College's mission, vision and values are reviewed each May by the Board of Trustees and that the latest review occurred in May 2021. However, there was no evidence presented to validate the annual review of the mission at Board meetings. The College is encouraged to include an explicit agenda item on Board meeting agendas to show their efforts to reaffirm the mission statement annually. The College's most recent Strategic Plan was developed for 2018-2022, and contains five main strategic focus areas which align with the College's mission: student experience, brand/image, community, workforce, and affordability. The plan also outlines three foundational principles for the College's strategic priorities: access, equity, and success. The plan mentions that over 1,800 individuals from the College and community provided input into the latest strategic plan, including student focus groups, community strategic planning forums, and feedback sessions. Documents mention a "Transformation Plan", but further details about this plan were not provided.

Tri-C's commitment to its mission is demonstrated through its transfer degrees, short-term certificates, certificates of proficiency, and post-degree professional certificates. A variety of student groups, including high school, adult, and noncredit students, are served through the College's offerings. Its 39 partnerships with colleges and universities highlight the aspect of its mission to provide university transfer. Tri-C is committed to the "multicultural community" aspect of its mission and its value of diversity through its work with its Stand for Racial Justice, which works to create programming and opportunities for dialogue between the College and community in conflict resolution and social justice. The College offers the lowest tuition in the state, as evidenced by a table showing comparative community college undergraduate tuition and fees and offered more than \$15 million in scholarships to its students over the last five years, thus highlighting its connection to the affordability aspect of its mission.

The mission of Tri-C supports its intended constituents, as specified by its original 1963 plan. The mission and related documents, such as the strategic plan and tactical plan, outline the programs and services the College provides to meet the needs of its intended audience. Tri-C offers an array of programming and services consistent with its stated mission. In addition to transfer and career offerings, the College offers programs for adult returning students to supports its mission of "lifelong learning programs". Tri-C is committed to workforce development through its development of its Centers of Excellence that provide programming that integrate credit and noncredit offerings to align with labor market needs of Northeast Ohio. Examples of disciplines that are offered through these Centers of Excellence include Nursing, Hospitality Management, and Public Safety. The Office of Student Affairs provides student support services, such as counseling, tutoring, and supports for various student groups such as Veterans and students who have accessibility needs. Evidence shows a number of online tools, such as online library and online student workshops, presumably developed as a response to the pandemic to continue to support students in a remote environment.

Tri-C's mission is aligned with other documents that articulate its purpose, such as the vision, values, strategic and tactical plans. The mission, vision, and values are posted on Tri-C's website. The mission and vision are also articulated in documents such as the College's catalog and financial reports. The College's commitment to its mission is apparent through various communication tools, such as its Employee Resource Guide and Tri-C Times magazine. Per the narrative, evidence from New Employee Orientation, such as agendas or presentations, would be helpful to ascertain the inclusion of the mission and purpose of the institution during the onboarding process for new employees.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Tri-C is driven by its mission of serving the needs of its community. The College serves students at myriad locations, including four traditional campuses and other off-campus sites focused on particular workforce opportunities, such as the Manufacturing Technology Center and Hospitality Management Center. The College also offers over 700 courses in an online or hybrid format to serve a wider range of its community. Various documents, such as College's budget book and strategic plan, showcase the institution's commitment to its educational responsibilities. Budgetary allocations and decisions underscore the College's commitment to serving the public good. As a response to COVID-19, the College allocated federal stimulus monies towards various student supports and the College's Foundation created an initiative to help students receive laptops or hotspot devices. It is unclear from the evidence how budgeting decisions are made with the strategic focus areas in mind, per the narrative.

Tri-C has engaged its external constituencies closely in its operations. Consistent with its mission, Tri-C offers workforce development trainings in several industries. The College has established various advisory committees, such as the Business Advisory Committee, and IT Center of Excellence Committee, and recognized them recently at a virtual ceremony. Of note is the College's Institute for Community Engagement and Development which focuses on meeting people in their communities to remove barriers to higher education access and facilitate community outreach. The three components of this work include Access Centers, Central Community Partners, and Community Training and Job Hubs. This work is led by the College's Vice President for Access and Community Connections. While the goals of this work were shared through the narrative and website, a description of accomplishments and how some of these objectives were met would have been helpful for reviewers to show how specific needs of the community are being met. The Tri-C Council for Community Access and Development is an example of the College partnering with corporate and civic leaders in the community to respond to workforce access needs. It seems that this council also provides leadership with the College's Institute for Community Engagement and Development, specifically through the work on its Access Centers.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Tri-C offers its students opportunities to engage in activities that will prepare them for informed citizenship and workplace success. Through the Mandel Scholars Academy, Tri-C offers students the opportunity to apply and be part of a program that provides them with unique academic and extracurricular opportunities through guided work in the humanities with a special focus on leadership. They also receive mentorship and financial support as part of their participation in this Academy. Students must show competency in Civic Responsibility, one of the College's Essential Learning Outcomes, to graduate from the program. Tri-C also engages students in civic engagement through programs such as voter campaigns, student government and the Democracy Fellows. "We the People" campus conversations provide a venue for students to come together and engage in dialogue about topics related to "race, politics, and other important social issues". It is unclear from the evidence and website how many of these sessions have been held and examples of topics that have been discussed at these sessions. Career Services provide students with opportunities for workplace success through job shadowing, career exploration, and a Career Center Library, which provides a robust set of resources for students about topics like resume writing, guide to cover letters, and interview advice.

Tri-C mentions that various demographic data are analyzed, such as retention and graduation rates, which are used to identify gaps and then analyzed further. However, no specific examples were provided about how these data are reviewed and analyzed and subsequently, what action was taken as a result of gaps that were determined. A review of the documents in the Assurance Argument and the website provide evidence that Tri-C is working toward proactively fostering a climate of respect among employees and students of diverse backgrounds. Efforts toward inclusive treatment for Tri-C's population are highlighted in its 2021 Diversity Report through examples such as women's summit, common reading program, SafeZone training and employee resource groups. The amount of work that Tri-C is doing in this area is commendable and the report presents a good summary of highlights for the work across various areas of the College in advancing inclusive and equitable treatments of diverse populations.

Tri-C has created policies that work to foster a climate of respect among students, faculty and staff from a range of backgrounds and perspectives. These policies contain language on affirmative action, inclusive excellence, communication, and respect. Statements have also been drafted by various groups across campus, including the Board of Trustees and various offices and councils, to underscore the importance of equity and respect. Examples elsewhere in the narrative highlight work being done by the College's Office of Diversity and Inclusion to proactively work on efforts toward equity and inclusivity.

Tri-C has conducted a climate survey with employees in 2021 to gauge employee satisfaction and engagement in areas such as communication, diversity, inclusion and belonging, and job satisfaction. Evidence shows that items related to diversity, inclusion and belonging on the survey were responded to favorably by participants, with an average score of 86. There was a 92% favorable rating on the statement, "In my department, we welcome diversity in all its forms". Tri-C is encouraged to review results of this survey to make improvements in areas that show lower percentages of staff and faculty engagement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Rationale

The mission and vision documents clearly articulate the purpose of Tri-C as providing high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services to improve life in a multicultural community. The process of updating the strategic plan is inclusive of stakeholders within and outside of the College. However, there was no evidence presented to validate the annual review of the mission at Board meetings. The College is encouraged to include an explicit agenda item on Board meeting agendas to show their efforts to reaffirm the mission statement annually. Tri-C's mission and related statements align with its offerings and services, through its various academic offerings, support services, lifelong learning opportunities, and workforce development. Numerous examples demonstrate how Tri-C is working towards proactively fostering a climate of respect among employees and students of diverse backgrounds. Tri-C is encouraged to continue examining engagement data, and other relevant data, to make improvements. The mission, vision, and strategic planning documents are articulated on the College's website and in documents provided to students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders. Per the narrative, evidence from New Employee Orientation, such as agendas or presentations, would be helpful to ascertain the inclusion of the mission and purpose of the institution during the onboarding process for new employees.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The Tri-C states that its Board of Trustees and administration reviews its mission, values, and vision statements annually. The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving any changes to these policy statements according to Tri-C's policy #3354:1-11-02.1 Rulemaking procedure. The mission statement was last reviewed May 27, 2021, although evidence in the form of an agenda item or discussion of this topic was lacking in the link provided.

The integrity of Tri-C's financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions is maintained through policies and procedures that have been established by the College and by external governing bodies in accordance with Ohio Ethics Laws and its Employee Code of Conduct that have been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Tri-C's budgets are tracked annually, by term and more frequently as needed to ensure adherence to the College's mission and a recently adopted procedure on access and success. Tri-C budget documents are reviewed by the Government Finance Officers Association. Tri-C's bond ratings are evidence of the College's healthy financial status.

Because annual performance-based stipends at Tri-C are linked to performance reviews for administrative employees, integrity of personnel decisions and conduct is promoted. The same is true for other negotiated processes such as faculty and staff union contracts.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Tri-C maintains communication transparency with its internal and external stakeholders through its use of its public website, community relations efforts, media relations, social media and other publications.

Internet resources allow easy access to pertinent College information including applications, costs, registration, accreditation, program information, success rates and safety reports. Such information is also available in hard-copy format through the College.

The Integrated Communications department continually monitors the College's Facebook and Twitter accounts, working with other departments across the College to address issues and questions posted by faculty, staff, students, potential students and community members in a timely and accurate manner.

Tri-C's Office of Evidence and Inquiry (OEI) collects and organizes data pertinent to student success, retention and completion metrics. Collected data is aggregated in My Tri-C SMART, a comprehensive data storage and retrieval system that provides easy and instant access to real-time and historical information for users to pull and manipulate based on their individual needs. This data is shared publicly through the College's website. Public information includes outcomes such as degrees and certificates awarded, employment outcomes, graduate survey results, licensure and transfer rates, and fall-to-fall and fall-to-spring persistence. The OEI publishes an At-a-Glance brochure, updated annually, providing graphic illustrations of Tri-C's student body, community and leadership.

A student consumer website maintained by Tri-C provides links to additional data such as institutional and programmatic accreditation status, facilities and services for students with disabilities, transfer credit policies and more.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Of the nine trustees that serve on Tri-C's Board, three are appointed by the governor with the remainder appointed by the Cuyahoga County executive. Upon appointment to a five-year term, each Trustee receives information through a Trustee Orientation regarding their role and responsibilities as well as an overview of the institution, its mission and its culture. New trustees also are paired with an experienced mentor who provides guidance and instruction. Each Trustee is expected to attend an annual Board retreat and to participate in various state and national conferences and seminars as their schedules allow. Additional training is provided at the annual Association of Community College Trustees Leadership Congress. As reflected in their minutes, the broad experience that the Trustees helps ensure that its deliberations reflect priorities of the community the institution serves. A Student Scholar, elected by the student body as a non-voting Board member, communicates student interests to the trustees.

During the pandemic, the State of Ohio granted the ability for Trustee meetings to be hosted virtually with rotating campus presidents hosting the meetings.

Tri-C's conflict of interest policy (3354:1-11-04) describes how Trustees should proceed when faced with a qualifying circumstance. Ethics training is also required of all College employees and Trustees. The institution has appropriate expectations regarding personal conduct, relationships and community standing outside of the College, and fiscal disclosure and legal responsibilities.

Section D.10 of the Board of Trustees Bylaws (3354:1-10-01) states: "Pursuant to Board bylaws and Ohio statute, the Board holds authority to operate the College but delegates some of this authority to the president through policies. The policies themselves are generally recommended through college administration or governance committees before being considered by the appropriate committee and

subject to Board approval. Implementation of these policies and procedures is delegated to the president and administration in close partnership with faculty. The College's shared governance structure facilitates this implementation process. This delegation of authority helps ensure that Trustees remain policy- and strategy-oriented, delegating the day-to-day management of the institution to administration and academic leadership to faculty.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Academic freedom and freedom of expression is spelled out for Tri-C faculty in Article 27 of the contractual agreement between the American Association of University Professors and Tri-C administration. Faculty have the right to engage in the search for truth and its exposition within their academic discipline without fear of institutional censorship. Ethical behavior of students is also encouraged and described in Tri-C's Student Handbook.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

While the amount of formal research conducted by students and faculty is smaller than that conducted at many four-year institutions, scholarly research is encouraged that aligns with Tri-C's overall mission of teaching, learning and student success. Tri-C has established a formal process of institutional review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that research activity is conducted in a manner that does not harm participants. Faculty and staff may engage in such research but must do so in a manner that is consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

The Student Conduct Code details what is considered academic dishonesty including cheating, plagiarism, the furnishing of false information, forgery, alteration or misuse of any College record or document or the resubmitting of a portion of one's own prior work and a learning outcome of College Composition I (ENG-1010), is for students to "Recognize and define plagiarism in order to ethically cite in an academic setting." The application Safe Assign, a tool within the learning management system, helps identify and prevent plagiarism.

ENG-1010 also teaches students how to find and use research; evaluate sources based on credibility, authority, currency and objectivity; and properly quote, paraphrase and cite source material. Library Services, the Tutoring Center and the Writing Center, in addition to classroom resources help students learn and practice their ethical research skills. Faculty librarians provide detailed presentations on academic research along with numerous electronic resources. On the Tri-C Student Resources webpage is a link to StudentLingo, a library of virtual, on-demand workshops on topics like information literacy, academic integrity and research. Faculty syllabi must include a statement on academic dishonesty that refers students directly to the Student Conduct Code and the consequences if found guilty through the Student Judicial System.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

It is clear to the Peer Review Team that Tri-C “Meets” all the expectations of the Core Components of Criterion Two at this point in its reaffirmation process. Tri-C has established policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior of all its employees and Board of Trustees. The College is forthright in its public disclosures, using a website and the internet to ensure that information is timely and accurate. The Tri-C Board of Trustees is kept informed regarding its autonomous role and reserves its independence free of conflicts of interest. Day to day operations and management of the College are delegated to the administration and faculty to oversee academic matters. Tri-C is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning and supports basic and applied research to a high professional standard while devoting most of its resources toward teaching versus research endeavors. Tri C enforces its policies on academic honesty and integrity.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Rating

Met

Rationale

Tri-C's *Curriculum Development and Learning Outcomes Assessment Procedures Manual* guides its practices in keeping courses and programs current. Effective since November 2020, this manual encompasses the procedures for curriculum development and review, learning outcomes assessment, program outcomes assessment, and new course and new program creation. The document also ensures that *Essential Learning Outcomes* (ELOs) are embedded in its courses and programs and are adequately assessed.

Tri-C articulates its learning goals, the ELOs, on its website and in its *Student ELO Guide*. It also enforces a syllabus checklist to include course ELO information in all its syllabi. Tri-C distinguishes its learning goals between different level of course work (1000-, 2000- or honors-level courses) and programs (certificate programs and associate degrees). The learning goals for these courses and programs are documented in the *College Catalog*.

Regardless of the modality and the location, all courses and programs at Tri-C have the same quality requirement and go through the same process for creation and review, following the College's *Curriculum Development and Learning Outcomes Assessment Procedures Manual*. This consistency is applied to Tri-C's online programs and *College Credit Plus*, a program for eligible 7-12 students to earn high school and college credits at the same time.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College's Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) align its general education with its mission, vision, and values, and they also align with state guidelines. ELOs are published in the College Catalog, on a dedicated ELO webpage and in the syllabi. Close to 70% of all non-trade courses currently map to at least one ELO.

All degrees at Tri-C require a subset of general education courses known as the Ohio Transfer 36 (OT36). The general education courses are structured into five categories: Communication, Mathematics and Data Analysis, Arts and Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural and Physical Sciences.

Tri-C recognizes human and cultural diversity in its *Cultural Sensitivity ELO*, which is included in seventy-eight percent of the College's degree programs. In spring 2021, the College released a new set of diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes for incorporation into general education requirements. The College provides students with a variety of co-curricular activities towards lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

The College's Information Literacy ELO states that students will be able to acquire, evaluate and use information from credible sources for a specific research purpose.

Tri-C addresses the area of scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge with its *Information Literacy ELO*, which states that students will be able to acquire, evaluate and use

information from credible sources for a specific research purpose. The College engages students with its *Common Reading Program*, the Robert L. Lewis Academy of Scholars, and the Tri-C Student Success Symposium. The College supports the faculty's scholarship of teaching and learning through its *Faculty Learning Communities*, *Professional Improvement Leaves*, grants and stipends, workshops, and mentoring.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Tri-C incorporates a comprehensive *Recruitment and Selection Procedure* for its vacancy search. The hiring managers, search committees and interview teams reflect a wide range of diversity and are given mandatory diversity and inclusion training.

Tri-C's faculty roster included 358 full-time tenure-track faculty, 35 full-time lecturers and 860 adjunct faculty (December 2021). Its student-to-faculty ratio was 14:1 (Spring 2021). The College views campus-level needs annually, based on program/discipline growth or decline, program-level accreditations, and faculty retention.

Tri-C's *Faculty and Instructor Credential Qualifications Procedure* requires all its for-credit faculty and instructors to hold appropriate credentials. This procedure is implemented through standard hiring practices. It is administered and monitored by HR.

All Tri-C instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with the institution's *Policy on Faculty Evaluation* (effective 2014) and *Faculty Evaluation Procedure* (effective 2006).

Tri-C's *Office of Academic Professional Development* offers faculty professional development, such as the tenure-track faculty on-boarding, the annual Faculty Colloquium, faculty learning

communities (FLCs), and the Adjunct Faculty Professional Development program. The College's *Office of Online Learning and Academic Technology* (OLAT) and the *Centers for Learning Excellence* (CLEs) support faculty in instructional technologies, instructional design, and best practices.

Tri-C's faculty are available to students for a minimum of 10 hours per week, as stated in Section 6.09 of the AAUP Faculty Contract.

Tri-C's recruiting and hiring processes ensure that student support staff members meet appropriate qualifications. Its *Organizational Development* provides staff training in areas such as administrative systems and processes, professional development, supervisor and leadership development, and coaching. The College hosts an annual half-day Support Staff Conference. Two leadership development programs are also available: the Mandel Leadership Academy and the Leadership Integration for Tomorrow (LIFT). Evidence of appropriate qualifications, affiliations and training are provided for tutors, student life advisors, student engagement directors, and financial aid advisors.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Rating

Met

Rationale

Student support services are delivered in-person and online. Tri-C provides New Student Orientation (NSO) to incoming students, and First Year Success Seminar and New Student Convocation to first-year students. The College's Student Financial Aid and Scholarships Office supports students with financial aid and scholarships, and Project GO! helps address student basic needs. Tri-C's Veteran Services Centers supports veterans and other military-affiliated individuals. The College also offers support through its Student Support Services, the Say Yes Scholar Program, Student Accessibility Services, the Black American Council, and the Hispanic Council.

The College's Office of Student Affairs assists in retention efforts through its Success Centers, Transfer Centers, Enrollment Centers, and Student Engagement offices. The academic support services include the Writing Center, Tutoring Services for 17 subjects, Math Coaching for developmental mathematics, Smarthinking online tutoring 24/7, and the technical assistance with Blackboard platform. Tri-C also provides comprehensive Career Services to help students explore, define, and pursue their employment goals.

Tri-C's multiple-measure placement approach aligns with Ohio's Statewide Uniform Remediation-Free Standards, using ACT/SAT scores and a variety of other placement exams for math and English. Virtual and in-person tutoring is available in English, math and several other disciplines. Tri-C students can also access Smarthinking, which offers 24/7 tutoring services in accounting, biology, chemistry, information technology, economics, finance, math, nursing, physics, statistics, and Spanish. The College also has Writing Centers to provide one-on-one help to writers in all disciplines.

Tri-C requires all new students to attend New Student Orientation (NSO). As part of the First Year Experience program, all new students must meet with a counselor to update their academic plan. Counseling services are available virtually, by phone and in person. In addition to providing

academic, personal and career counseling, Tri-C counselors can help students in areas such as developing schedules or interpreting academic policies.

Tri-C's Capital, Construction and Facilities department builds and maintains its facilities. The College is in the second phase of its Facilities Master Plan, and it also has a Sustainability Implementation Plan.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

Tri-C uses its Curriculum Development and Learning Outcomes Assessment Procedures Manual to keep its courses and programs current. Its courses are reviewed on three-year cycles and programs on four-year cycles. The procedure also ensures that all courses and programs at Tri-C have the same quality requirement regardless of the modality or the location. The College Catalog articulates the learning goals and distinguishes them between different level of course work and programs.

All degrees at Tri-C meet the general education requirement of the Ohio Transfer 36. The College's Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) align its general education with the mission, vision and values of the College, and with the state guidelines. The ELOs include civic responsibility, critical/creative thinking, cultural sensitivity, information literacy, oral communication, written communication and quantitative reasoning.

Tri-C's faculty roster included 358 full-time tenure-track faculty, 35 full-time lecturers and 860 adjunct faculty (December 2021). Its student-to-faculty ratio was 14:1 (Spring 2021). Its hiring practice ensures there is continuity of faculty in providing classroom and non-classroom responsibilities. Tri-C's policies and procedures ensure all its for-credit faculty and instructors hold appropriate credentials and continue to receive training and evaluation on a regular basis.

Tri-C provides a variety of services to its students to meet their individual academic, personal and career needs. It also offers comprehensive placement and tutoring in developmental math and English.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College has a defined and regular program review process for technical programs. Particularly strong elements of this process include the connection of the process to the college's strategic plan, the "kick off" event for those faculty whose programs are up for review, and the annual snapshot reviews for those not up for review. By their own admission, the college is still developing a process for non-technical programs, which one would expect them to be further along.

The incoming transfer credit review is robust (including all types of credit for prior learning options). Particularly impressive is the resources available to students describing the options and processes.

The curricular review process is also well defined and regular. It is a bit confusing why this process

is three years vs. four years for curricular review. Perhaps a bit more description may have provided the rationale. The requirement of 70% approval of faculty seems a bit cumbersome. It would have also been helpful for a description of what happens when no changes on the metrics are recommended. It would also have been helpful for more extensive data on the prerequisite process (using student success metrics). It would have been interesting to know why ENG and MATH were chosen when evaluating the POL course.

The College's faculty qualifications process seems robust and well defined. And the college is accredited by a variety of program-specific bodies. Some description on the process of how the college selects accreditations to seek would have been helpful.

The College collects a very significant amount of data concerning graduates and completers. While a lot of data are collected, it is unclear how these data are used. More examples of data usage would have been useful.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College has made strides in increasing assessment participation rates as well as establishment of standard rubrics and processes. This was aided by participation in the HLC Academy. Great efforts have also been made to share assessment data more widely with the campus community. While the interplay of course, program and degree assessment is still a bit muddy, the college is clearly making strides to improve their process. The expansion of this process into cocurricular areas is particularly laudable. Some additional data would have strengthened this section. The college claims this process has been "successful," but there is no data to support this.

The College has made some significant changes to enhance students learning across course, program, and institutional learning outcomes. These changes seemed appropriate and based on solid data. However, this would have been stronger with the inclusion of some outcome data to support these changes.

The College has clearly made significant strides in improving assessment processes and has raised participation rates substantially. While there is still work to be done in these areas, the college is to be commended for their recent progress.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College has put strong emphasis on retaining their students. In the information provided, not all graphics contained targets. It would also have been helpful if more information was included on what targets were set and the rationale used to determine those targets. Many are on the downward slide, for example, the IPEDS 3-Year graduation rate include rather low targets, a stretch goal, and the actual rate that occurred. There is no discussion as to how any of the targets were arrived at or how the actual data would be subsequently used. There is also some conflicting data when it comes to part-time student graduation rates that show a decline in numbers included in the cohort, yet an increase in overall graduation rates. A discussion of how these data led to a plan to address these trends and encourage the aspirational goals of the College would have been helpful.

While the College collects significant amounts of data, there is very little discussion on how the plan has been refined. In fact, the discussion of a specific retention plan is limited other than mention of it as part of the strategic plan. The inclusion of discussion of the actual plan as opposed to just targets is an opportunity for improvement.

The improvements to developmental ENG, MATH, and FYE have led to some substantial improvements in course completion. Implementation of new placement processes for MATH and ENG is also laudable, but it is unclear if this has led to any increase in retention. Significant data are collected, but it is less clear how the campuses use these data. The College appears to be doing a lot of "things," but lacks demonstration of a comprehensive retention plan.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Rationale

The College has engaged in substantial work to improve processes for program reviews, assessment, and data gathering. These processes have resulted in significant gains in participation from the faculty and has spread into co-curricular areas as well. The College has also created multiple resources for both internal and external stakeholders that on the surface would seem to be very helpful. There is still much work to be done but engaging in the HLC academy appears to have created momentum and moved the college in a good direction.

While the College appears to collect substantial data, it is somewhat unclear how those data are used in the decision-making process. This is particularly prevalent in terms of student retention and completion. The College has established targets and has utilized some data to address prerequisite issues involved in course progression, but there seemed to be a lack of an overall retention plan driven by the data that are collected. This is an area of potential improvement moving forward. Tri-C needs to tie the data that is collected into a description of its plans to address how targets set for retention, persistence and success will be met in future years.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies - including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students - in the institution's governance. Evidence submitted in the assurance argument includes the college-wide participatory governance policy which reflects eight governance committees composed of faculty, staff, students, administration, and union representatives. These committees focus on curriculum and degree requirements, learning outcomes assessment, enrollment management, technology, planning and institutional effectiveness, human resources and policy, governance monitoring, and safety. These committees receive an annual charge from the President for strategic focus during the academic year. An example of committee membership, purpose, and annual charges is provided in the Argument. Additionally, documentation is included to reflect the memorandum of agreement between Tri-C and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) describing the support for faculty through their bargaining agent. Other opportunities for shared governance at Tri-C include the President's Council composed of faculty senate officers, numerous cross-functional committees for daily academic operations such as academic calendar scheduling and faculty evaluation. A student scholar is chosen each year through the Joint Student Council to serve as an ex-officio member of the full board. The college policy stating this procedure can be found in the sources file.

Tri-C uses data to make informed decisions using a variety of business intelligence tools. The Office

of Evidence and Inquiry has developed an on-demand data system called My Tri-C SMART using an Argos reporting tool. This process allows faculty and staff access to a variety of self-service reports containing data targeting student success. These reports contain historical, as well as, real-time reporting of data that can be disaggregated through parameters and filters, allowing the user to obtain data specific to their need. The argument contains an example of the Daily Access Bulletin, a document created by the Office of Evidence and Inquiry for the executive director containing metrics to share with academic leadership during regularly scheduled meetings. This wide sharing of data ensures the Collegewide Access, Learning, and Success Council has the most pertinent data available for academic decisions throughout the year.

College-wide metrics are determined and reviewed annually, focusing on enrollments, retention rates, persistence ratios, number of occupational degrees and certificates awarded, and various factors that reflect students' success and completion. These metrics include declared academic plans, the percent of students making satisfactory academic progress within 30 credit hours, and additional operational metrics. Performance on these metrics is used to assess and improve performance. These institutional metrics have been intentionally woven into Cuyahoga's strategic planning process as evidenced by Tri-C's strategic plan for 2018-2022 – BUILDING EXCELLENCE through Access, Equity, and Success. The strategic plan was created around five strategic focus areas – student experience, brand/image, community, workforce, and affordability- using these metrics as a foundation for promoting a culture of transparency, accountability, and inclusion. The metrics are reviewed annually by the Office of the Provost for comparison of targets versus attainments with suggestions for revisions made as indicated.

The college has developed a long-range plan (LRP) to aide in the forecasting of spending and revenues. Evidence is submitted for the most current plan that contains three years of budget versus actual history, adjusted budget information, year-to-date spending, prior financial forecasts, and current revenue and spending forecasts. This document serves as a comprehensive tool for resource allocation analysis. The LRP is updated monthly to ensure continued alignment of resource allocations or the need to adjust.

In 2017, the College passed a 25-year capital bond levy, (detailed more in Criterion 5B) and uses a levy long-range plan (LRP) as the analytical tool to forecast longer term revenue and scenario development based on assumptions in the LRP. The argument reflects an example of the current levy LRP, noting tracking of infrastructure maintenance, equipment allocation new project estimations, and other capital items.

Tri-C uses effective collaborative structures to ensure faculty, staff, and students are involved in academic decisions. Included in the shared governance committees referenced earlier are academic-focused committees of Curriculum and Degree Requirements (CADRE) and Learning Outcomes and Assessment (CLOA). The membership of these committees is diverse, composed predominantly of faculty, and includes four student council members, as reflected in the sources file. These committees make recommendations through the shared governance structure on curriculum development/revision and assists with developing student learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, and program learning outcomes for assessment.

The President's Council at Tri-C is a deliberative body focused on student success and completion. Membership includes faculty senate officers and executive management. The council charge is to work with the President to ensure all academics, operations, and new initiatives align with the strategic plan. A sample agenda for the council is included in the sources file containing such agenda items as LMS Review, Covid Cleaning Protocol Updates, and Academic Updates.

Students have an additional opportunity to participate in shared governance at the college through the Board Student Scholar program. One student is selected annually to serve on the Board, representing the student perspective related to needs, suggestions, and concerns. The Board Student Scholar policy is submitted for evidence in the argument.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College has policies and procedures in place for hiring personnel and to ensure all employees are appropriately qualified. The assurance argument describes a layered hiring process to ensure candidates meet at least minimum qualifications. According to the Recruitment and Selection procedure policy, Staffing Advisory Committees (SAC), or interview committees, have the primary function of recommending qualified candidates to the next level of interviews. The SACs are composed of a diverse membership of individuals recommended to the Manager of Talent and Requisition by the Hiring Manager. This process does not apply to the adjunct faculty hiring process, where the hiring manager conducts the interviews. Also included in the policy, all positions must be approved and funded before the recruitment and search processes begin.

Approximately 62% of the college budget is dedicated to personnel, with 69% of that staffing focused on credit instruction, including academic support services. The breakdown of personnel categories is reflected in the *Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Book*. The College follows best practices to ensure faculty hold the appropriate credentials for teaching in transfer or workforce programs. Candidate items reviewed during the hiring process include academic transcripts, licensure or certifications, CV/resume, and documentation of work experience. Tri-C takes a proactive role in employee continuous improvement and in FY 2020 spent approximately \$1.6 million on employee professional development at all levels in the organization. Professional development details are discussed in Criterion 3.C.5 for faculty and Criterion 3.C.7 for staff.

At the onset of the pandemic, a cross-functional task force was formed to evaluate staffing levels and determine essential employees needed to deliver programs for students. This was a transparent process across the college, utilizing town hall meetings to communicate with faculty and staff the reductions that were being implemented. Through this process, 252 employees were identified for being laid off in August 2020. Additionally, two voluntary opportunities were offered to employees for resigning their positions. After targeting reductions in August 2020, a restructure of positions needed for ensuring operations were efficient when students began returning to campus was

conducted. The Argument states many employees that were laid off were reinstated during this realignment process but does not provide a percentage or number of individuals this affected.

Tri-C has sufficient infrastructure to support its operations. The organization maintains 3.4 million square feet of educational facilities that are monitored by the Plant Operations department through a computerized system. Not only does Plant Operations monitor the facilities, but also inspects and plans for preventive maintenance and upkeep on a regular schedule. They prioritize projects based on greatest need and available funding. The *Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Book* reflects \$32 million in maintenance projects currently funded by state and local funds, with greater than \$20 million in unfunded projects identified. The college has set a goal of addressing many of these projects during the next three fiscal years and is committed to keeping the unfunded projects list to less than \$15 million. There is also an established process for funding small projects (less than \$150,000 each) including renovations and small equipment maintenance. These funds are included in the levy LRP to ensure integrity in funding smaller capital priorities.

Tri-C maintains stable bond ratings through Moody's and S&P Global, as evidenced in the sources file. The rating outlook anticipates continued healthy cash flow and strong coverage of debt service requirements.

The College passed an inaugural capital bond levy in 2017 that is a 25-year, 0.5 mill bond levy. The levy is predicted to generate \$227.5 million for repair, improvement, and construction of vital facilities. The *2008 10-Year Academic and Facilities Master Plan* was updated in 2017 to strategically align the levy funding with the College mission, vision, values, and Strategic Plan.

The targeted projects are outlined in *Phase II of the College's 10-Year Academic and Facilities Master Plan* submitted in the Argument. Tri-C has begun planning for the new *10-Year Master Plan* with input from a variety of stakeholders including faculty, students, administration, workforce, board members, and community and business partners. It is anticipated the new plan will be presented to the Board in March/May 2024 for approval.

The goals incorporated into the mission statement and planning documents are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities. Tri-C's strategic plan, *Building Excellence through Access, Equity, and Success*, aligns the institutional goals with five focus areas: affordability, brand and image, community, student experience, and workforce. Annual budget units are developed using goals in the five focus areas, full-time staffing plans, enrollment plans, operating plans, and equipment requests. Budget allocations are then made to each unit based on the budget package submitted and how the package supports Tri-C's mission, vision, and values. Tri-C has demonstrated that departments are given the opportunity to provide reflection, planning, and financial needs as part of the budgeting process.

In the Assurance Argument, Cuyahoga Community College describes a well-developed process for budgeting and monitoring expenses. The Office of Planning, Budget, and Strategic Support has a budgeting and forecasting model it maintains to monitor actuals, approvals, forecasting, and allocations using source data from the county and state. Institutional data used in the model includes student enrollment, student financial assistance, utility forecast, organization unit fund requests, as well as external factors such as treasury activity. Senior leadership receives monthly monitoring reports that analyze full accrual financial statements with the *July 2021 Treasurer Report* submitted in the Argument as an example. Included with the report is an executive summary of variances and explanations when the variances reach a predetermined amount. The College makes adjustment to assumptions in long-term forecasts based on the month-to-month reports.

The institution makes it a priority to allocate financial resources to support educational programs. This concerted effort is evidenced by the current annual budgeting of 63.7% of available resources being dedicated to support student access, learning, and success, including direct instructional expenses. This allocation can be viewed in the *FY 2022 Budget Book* (p 47). The institution's finances are adequate as evidenced by a total Composite Financial Index score of 1.34 (excluding the impact of GASB 68/75) per the 2020-21 Annual Institutional Update.

Given the college's current commitment to strategically allocate its resources, Tri-C has appropriate resources -- human, capital, technological, physical, and financial -- available to support all operations of the College wherever and however programs are delivered. There is no evidence that Tri-C, a public institution, makes any elective resource allocations or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity that detracts from the institutional mission.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As demonstrated in the strategic planning model, Tri-C allocates its resources in alignment with its mission, vision, and values. Allocations are updated annually based on the strategic plan and anticipated changes in costs. One example offered in the Argument was the reallocation of funds based on a change in priorities to support the College's Access Agenda. This included \$50,000 for four Tri-C Access Centers to facilitate connecting perspective students with training and learning opportunities. Other examples of reprioritizing allocations include collegewide reductions for FY 2021 at the onset of the pandemic related to decreased enrollments and the changes in service levels. Many of the reductions were carried over into the current fiscal year. To prepare for returning to full-service levels and increasing enrollment as students returned to campus, the FY 2022 budget allocations included \$5.4 million for stabilization of funds to support staff and operations.

The college provides significant support for assessment of student learning, operational evaluations, planning, and budgeting. The collegewide strategic plan has five areas of focus that are woven in the planning, budgeting, and assessment processes: student experience, brand/image, community, workforce, and affordability. These focus areas and their key performance indicators are also used for the employee performance evaluation process. As demonstrated in the *FY 22 Goals Planning Worksheet*, employees align their personal goals to the five focus areas. Additionally, dashboard metrics are identified for each unit. To ensure alignment with the strategic plan, program and department reviews are conducted annually. Review reports reflect staff associated within the unit, professional development, processes, and performance metrics. A sample review report for the Administration and Finance Department is included for evidence. These reports are peer-reviewed and discussed for continuous quality improvement.

Tri-C seeks both internal and external feedback for strategic planning in various ways including student surveys and community focus groups. A community forum included local business leaders and non-profit organization leaders. Faculty, staff, and administrators attended collegewide planning sessions to help develop the framework and priorities. The final draft was reviewed externally by professional educational organizations including Achieving the Dream, the McPhail Group, and the American Association of Community Colleges. Additional input received from the external review can be found in the sources file. Following the final internal review, *Building Excellence through Access, Equity, and Success* was approved by the Board of Trustees for the strategic plan for 2018-2022. Once the plan was approved, tactical plans were developed to implement actions to achieve established goals. Examples submitted of these two-year work plans include the *Access, Learning, and Success Work Plan 2021-2022*, the *Administration and Finance Work Plan 2021-2022*, and *Workforce, Community*, and the *Economic Development work Plan 2021-2022*.

Tri-C monitors fiscal operations through a variety of data including the long-range plan (LRP) and the levy LRP. The LRP analytical tool is used to forecast major revenue and expenses based on current-year activity and historical trend data. It provides spending-related predictions and a detailed end-of-year fund balance snapshot. The LRP tracks prior-year comparisons and has a resource allocation process that ensures student success initiatives that align with the strategic plan are given priority. The LRP includes three years of budget data and is updated monthly to redirect funds when indicated. The levy LRP forecasts revenue and expenses based on key assumptions such as enrollment, state budget, property taxes, and staffing trends/needs. The levy LRP complements the LRP by providing long-term forecasting in addition to the short-term forecasting by the LRP.

Tri-C anticipates and responds appropriately to evolving external factors. One specific example submitted in the Argument is the formation of a specialized task force assembled to anticipate challenges and changes necessary in response to Covid-19. The team's research revealed an estimation of approximately \$25 million less in revenue for FY21. The task force did an analysis on the current cost structure, identified possible options to reduce operating costs while continuing to meet student needs, and developed a tiered approach for implanting strategies.

A second example of Tri-C's response to the economy and state support is reflected in the argument, as well. With a recent change in state funding for developmental education and a decrease in property tax revenues, Tri-C had to consider additional adjustments in their annual and long-range budget planning process. The FY 22 Budget Development Timeline and the Budget Development Module Instructions in the sources file provide details of their approach.

Tri-C presented adequate evidence to demonstrate the institution has implemented plans for improvement and documented its performance in different aspects of operations. The Office of Evidence and Inquiry is responsible for soliciting metrics that connect to the strategic plan from all departments across the college. Analysis of the various strategic goals relies on data from personnel performance evaluations, program reviews, and strategic initiatives. Other data for consideration include reports on student demographics, student performance, enrollment, persistence, and retention and success.

Analysis of these data sources is used to make improvements to further student success. The President's Cabinet, which includes the executive management team and the president, review this analysis at least monthly to be responsive to progress toward the strategic goals. This data is also available to faculty and staff in daily dashboards.

An example of systemic improvement was supplied as evidence to support the college's Assurance

Argument. A marked increase in IPEDS graduation rates is noted from the Fall 2018 cohort. The previously established goal was 13% graduation rate but since the implementation in collegewide work plans, the graduation rate is now 24%.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Rationale

The evidence presented in the Assurance Argument indicates that Tri-C has sufficient resources, structures, processes, and planning to fulfill its mission, to improve its programs, and to respond to challenges. Internal and external stakeholder input is solicited through formal and informal channels and influences college operational policies and procedures, ensuring community needs are met while providing transparency to faculty and staff. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective governance committees and the President's Council. Student representation is included in many college committees, particularly a student scholar is a member on the Board of Trustees. Student surveys also provide valuable feedback for college operations.

The college has a variety of tactical plans for maintaining and improving the quality of its programs. Tri-C has several established plans that guide planning and aide in monitoring strategic allocation of resources: the strategic plan Building Excellence through Equity, Access, and Success; the long-range plan (LRP), the levy long range plan, and Academic and Facilities Master Plans. The Budget Book provides a transparent detailed narrative of the budgeting process.

The five areas of focus identified in the strategic plan are woven throughout college planning and operations, including teaching and learning areas, and informs decisions made for resource allocations. Collegewide metrics related to these five focus areas are reviewed annually and shared with faculty and staff in personalized dashboards.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

Review Summary

Conclusion

Tri-C, Cuyahoga Community College, has demonstrated its strengths in their fourth-year assurance review statements for the HLC. The peer review team has found that the institution has “Met” all the criteria core component objectives.

Tri-C’s mission and related statements align with its offerings and services, through its various academic offerings, support services, lifelong learning opportunities, and workforce development.

Tri-C has established policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior of all its employees and Board of Trustees. The College is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. Tri-C supports basic and applied research to a high professional standard while devoting most of its resources toward teaching versus research endeavors.

All courses and programs at Tri-C have the same quality requirements regardless of the modality or the location. Its 35 full-time lecturers and 860 adjunct faculty hold appropriate credentials and continue to receive training and evaluation on a regular basis.

The institution is committed to promoting continuous improvement and has processes that are actively engaged in learning outcomes improvement. One area in which the college might improve with regards to continuous improvement is the data driven development of an overall student retention plan.

Tri-C has sufficient resources, structures, processes, and planning to fulfill its mission, to improve its programs, and to respond to challenges. Internal and external stakeholder input is solicited through formal and informal channels influencing college operational policies and procedures. This ensures community needs are met while providing transparency to faculty and staff. A list of accomplishments could illustrate how community needs are met and would be beneficial to include in the assurance argument.

One aspect should be noted in general regarding Tri-C's assurance rational. More effort should be placed on documenting evidence supporting statements that otherwise seem vague including how data or evidence has actually been used. For example, in the rational provided for Criterion 1 and 2, statements are made to the effect that the mission, vision and values statements of the institution are regularly reviewed each May during board meetings. In the link provided as evidence, no agenda item reflects this review. In Criteria 4, a great deal of data has been collected, but how some of that data has actually been used is lacking. Before Tri-C's next comprehensive review, effort should be made to better document evidence for such statements and how data are used. Similar statements, data and links exist in other Criteria.

While Tri-C has collected a great deal of data concerning its students and has set targets that are aspirational in nature, description of plans as to how such targets may be met would strengthen their assurance argument. Along these lines there should be some emphasis as to how distance education is assimilated into the data and used to improve student learning. During the pandemic, many institutions had to resort to distance education modalities and this trend is likely to increase in the future. How distance education figures into improvements needed to address retention, persistence, and graduation rates should be addressed in future assurance arguments.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Eligible to choose

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.