

June 7, 2019

Dr. Terry Murrell
President
Western Iowa Tech Community College
P.O. Box 5199
Sioux City, IA 51102

Dear President Murrell:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Western Iowa Tech Community College by the Institutional Actions Council of the Higher Learning Commission at its meeting on June 4, 2019. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with HLC.

Action with Interim Monitoring. IAC continued the accreditation of Western Iowa Tech Community College with the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2028-29. In conjunction with this action, IAC required the following interim monitoring:

Embedded Monitoring. An Embedded Report in the Year 4 Assurance Review to address the issue of how the institution works systematically to improve its performance. The report should include:

- Evidence that the institution has well-defined processes for regularly evaluating its departments and programs (administrative as well as academic)
- Evidence that these processes are guided by clear expectations for each program expressed in terms of rubrics, metrics, benchmarks, or other such definitions
- Evidence that there are established mechanisms that ensure that the learning from these programs are used to make improvements in operations and inform budgeting and other resource allocation
- Examples of improvements made over the years 2019-2023 in response to the learning from these processes.

After careful review of the Assurance report, the evidentiary information, the institutional response and a discussion with the institution's HLC staff liaison, IAC voted to change the team's evaluation of Criteria 1.C, 3.D, 3.E and 4.A from "Met with Concerns" to "Met," with the following evidence:

1C: The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

- The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
- The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

After further review of this criterion, IAC verified the following:

- Evidence demonstrated that the institution ranked second in the State of Iowa in student racial/ethnic minorities at 28.6%--the state average is 21%;
- The alignment of diversity opportunities aligns with the institution's mission and is defined clearly in all supporting documents such as guiding principles, general education goal and the academic vision. The institution serves the underserved with accessibility and affordability;
- The institution offers programs and events to align with the institutional outcomes and is vetted through the co-curricular assessment process at the conclusion of the activity and/or event;

The review of all supporting documents, the institution's website and the institutional response, IAC determined that based on the region, the population served, the verification of data on diversity related activities and programs that this criterion is "Met".

3D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

- The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
- 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.
- The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
- 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, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
- The institution provides to students' guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

After further review of this criterion, IAC verified the following:

- Evidence indicated that there is sufficient support staff in the areas of advising and admissions. Data from the CCSSE revealed that the institution consistently out-performed the national norms on academic advising and student financial aid for the previous two testing cycles—2013 and 2017.
- Due to the responses during these two assessment years, the institution learned that they under-performed on job placement and created a career services center;
- During 2018, the institution implemented a career services survey to determine the success of the center. Responses were overwhelmingly positive as they related to the career services improvement.

The review of all supporting documents, the institution's website and the institutional response, IAC determined that based on the region, the population served, the verification of data on diversity related activities and programs that this criterion is "Met".

3E: The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

- Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
- The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Although there were questions about the co-curricular learning achievement data and how it is used, evidence is gathered each semester. The process for this is in the early-stages but continuous improvement in this area is being documented as the institution interprets and reviews the information. With an institution in the early stages of transitioning from AQIP, it is evidenced that this is a new process for them in the assessment of co-curricular learning. The institution is still working to develop assessments for individual event outcomes, to be followed by steps to analyze the results in aggregate to effectuate future programming improvements to enhance student learning. After reviewing this data, it was determined that assessment to determine the quality of student learning in the activities is still to be determined by the institution. However, the assessment is being conducted and the process is there for future decision-making.

The review of all supporting documents, the institution's website and the institutional response, IAC determined that based on the region, the population served, the verification of data on diversity related activities and programs that this criterion is "Met".

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

- The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
- 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.
- The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
- 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 assures 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.
- The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
- The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs 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, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Although the team report indicated that the institution did not have a regular cycle of program reviews, evidence determined that the institution does practice regular program reviews. Based on the accreditation of career and technical programs, the institution aligns with accreditation standards for technical programs and is following assessment and program reviews for the AA and AS on a regular basis.

The review of all supporting documents, the institution's website and the institutional response, IAC determined that based on the region, the population served, the verification of data on diversity related activities and programs that this criterion is "Met".

5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

- The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
- The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

After review of the assurance report, the Institutional Response and the Evidence, the IAC determined the following:

- Submission of an Embedded Monitoring in the Year 4 Assurance Review to address the issue of how the institution works systematically to improve its performance. The report should include:
 1. Evidence that the institution has well-defined processes for regularly evaluating its departments and programs (administrative as well as academic)
 2. Evidence that these processes are guided by clear expectations for each program expressed in terms of rubrics, metrics, benchmarks, or other such definitions
 3. Evidence that there are established mechanisms that ensure that the learning from these programs are used to make improvements in operations and inform budgeting and other resource allocation
 4. Examples of improvements made over the years 2019-2023 in response to the learning from these processes.

In two weeks, this action will be added to the *Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report*, a resource for Accreditation Liaison Officers to review and manage information regarding the institution's accreditation relationship. Accreditation Liaison Officers may request the ISR Report on HLC's website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/isr-request>.

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Within the next 30 days, HLC will also publish information about this action on its website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/recent-actions.html>.

If you have any questions about these documents after viewing them, please contact the institution's staff liaison John Marr. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley".

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

CC: ALO