



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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July 12, 2017

Dr. Jason Wood, President
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
1800 Bronson Blvd.
Fennimore, WI 53809

Dear President Wood:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (“HLC” or “the Commission”) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (“the College” or “the institution”). At its meeting on June 29, 2017, the Board voted to continue the accreditation of the College and scheduled the institution for monitoring. This action is effective as of the date action was taken. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the College’s most recent comprehensive evaluation, including but not limited to: the Quality Highlights Report the College submitted; the report from the comprehensive evaluation team; the report of the Institutional Actions Council Hearing Committee; the institution’s responses to these reports; and other materials relevant to the evaluation.

The Board required that the College host a focused visit no later than May 31, 2019, specifically providing evidence of the following:

- At least two years of documented evidence of a common pattern across all programs of the use of assessment of student learning data at the course and program levels leading to documented improvements in courses and programs with clear, documented connections to institutional planning;
- An institutional culture of assessment that is systematic and consistent across all programs with ongoing professional development and involvement of faculty and staff across the College;
- Completion and implementation of co-curricular outcomes and an assessment plan for co-curricular programs with evidence of at least one year of data collection and use of data for identifying program improvements; and
- Systematic processes and common understandings of meaningful retention and completion goals set at program and/or institution levels, and use of retention and completion data to support improvements across the College.

The Board placed the College on the Standard Pathway and required that it host its next comprehensive evaluation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2021-22.

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the College:

The College meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

- Ninety-three percent of the College’s programs have recently identified program learning outcomes and the core abilities for reporting into the Wisconsin Technical College Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) program, but the culture of assessment is uneven across programs;
- The College has not completed a cycle of gathering and using the data;

- Assessment of co-curricular programs is in the early stages of development;
- Centralization of assessment data collection is being migrated to a new system;
- The College is beginning to invest resources to assist faculty and staff to support assessment efforts; and
- Use of data at the course and program levels minimally informs planning and budgeting.

The College meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

- Although the College has high retention and graduation rates, limited evidence of defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion was available;
- The College collects information on graduation and retention rates for the broad student population;
- Program-level completion goals have not been set; and
- Systematic processes with metrics, deadlines, and specified outcomes are not regularly followed.

The College has demonstrated that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation and that accreditation-related issues can be effectively addressed through Commission monitoring.

The Board action resulted in changes to the affiliation of the College. These changes are reflected on the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. Some of the information on that document, such as the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

Commission policy COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements, requires that HLC prepare a summary of actions to be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations and published on its website. The summary will include HLC Board action regarding the College.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank you and your associates for your cooperation. Please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Karen Solomon, if you have questions about any of the information in this letter.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
Barb Tucker, Director of College Effectiveness, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
Evaluation team chair
Institutional Actions Council Hearing Committee chair
David Dies, Executive Secretary, Wisconsin Educational Approval Board
Karen Solomon, Vice President for Accreditation Relations and Director of the Standard Pathway,
Higher Learning Commission
Karen Peterson Solinski, Executive Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher
Learning Commission