Hagerstown Community College
2025 SELF-STUDY

HAGERSTOWN
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

Spring 2025

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ROA Alignment

Requirement of Affiliation	Ch./Standard
1. The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a postsecondary educational institution and to award postsecondary degrees; it provides written documentation demonstrating both. Authorization or licensure is from an appropriate governmental organization or agency within the Middle States region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), as well as by other agencies as required by each of the jurisdictions, regions, or countries in which the institution operates. Institutions that offer only postsecondary certificates, diplomas, or licenses are not eligible for accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.	**II & VII**
2. The institution is operational, with students actively enrolled in its degree programs.	**III & VI**
3. For institutions pursuing Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, the institution will graduate at least one class before the evaluation team visit for initial accreditation takes place, unless the institution can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the lack of graduates does not compromise its ability to demonstrate that students have achieved appropriate learning outcomes.	**Not applicable**
4. The institution's representatives communicate with the Commission in English, both orally and in writing.	**II**
5. The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) laws and regulations.	**II**
6. The institution complies with applicable Commission, interregional, and inter-institutional policies. These policies can be viewed on the Commission website, **msche.org/policies**.	**II**
7. The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education.	**I, V, & VII**
8. The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.	**III, IV, V & VI**
9. The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.	**III & V**
10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.	**I, V & VI**
11. The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.	**VI**
12. The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution's governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.	**VII**
13. A majority of the institution's governing body's members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflict of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution's district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.	**II & VII**
14. The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.	**II & VII**
15. The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.	**III, VI & VII**

Glossary of Common HCC Acronyms

AA	Academic Affairs	CDRC	Curriculum Development and Review Committee
AA	Associate of Arts degree	CEO	Chief Executive Officer
AAS	Associate of Applied Science degree	CFK	College for Kids
AASP	Academic Affairs Strategic Plan	CHIEF	Hagerstown-Washington County Industrial Foundation
AAT	Associate of Arts degree in Teaching	CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
ABC	Associated Builders and Contractors	CLEP	College Level Examination Program
ABE	Adult Basic Education	CLO	Course Learning Outcome
ACCRAO	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers	CMP	Campus Master Plan
ACCT	Association of Community College Trustees	CODA	Commission on Dental Accreditation
ACEN	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (formerly NLNAC)	COG	Course Outcomes Guide
ACS	American Community Survey	COMAR	Annotated Code of Maryland
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	CPB	Career Programs Building
ADJ	Administration of Justice	CPD	Campus Police Department
AEM	Admissions and Enrollment Management	CTE	Career and Technical Education
AFACCT	Association of Faculty for the Advancement of Community College Teaching	CTL	"Close the Loop"
AFT	American Federation of Teachers	DACUM	Design a Curriculum
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program	DBM	Department of Budget and Management
AP	Advanced Placement	DE	Distance Education
APPR	Annual Planning and Performance Review	DEALS	Developmental Education and Adult Literacy Services Division
APR	Annual Performance Report	DE	Distance Education or Dual Enrollment
ARCC	Athletic, Recreation and Community Center	DIR	Director, Institutional Research
ARPA	American Recovery Program Act	DLLR	Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
ARPDP	Annual Review and Professional Development Plan	DSS	Disability Support Services
AS	Associate of Science degree	ETTC	Energy and Trades Training Center
ASA	Administration and Student Affairs Building	ELL	English Language Learner
ATC	Advanced Technology Center	EMRP	Emergency Management and Response Plan
ATI	Assessment Technologies Institute	ESL	English as a Second Language
AY	Academic Year	FA	Faculty Assembly or Fall Semester
BIT	Behavioral Intervention Team	FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
BOT	Board of Trustees	FARMS	Free and Reduced Meals Student (K-12)
BSH	Behavioral Sciences and Humanities Building	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
BSS	Behavioral and Social Sciences Division	FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
CBES	Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Studies	FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
CCAMPIS	Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools	FM	Facilities Management and Planning
CCSSE	Community College Survey of Student Engagement	FMP	Facilities Master Plan
		FT	Full-Time
CPA	Career Program Achievers	FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
		FY	Fiscal Year

FYE	First Year Experience		PDP	Professional Development Plan
GED	General Educational Development		PEP	Prison Education Program
GPA	Grade Point Average		PIE	Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
GSF	Gross Square Feet		PLO	Program Learning Outcome
HCC	Hagerstown Community College		POG	Program Outcomes Guide
HEGIS	Higher Education General Inventory Survey		PRM	Public Relations and Marketing
HJC	Hagerstown Junior College		PT	Part-Time
HR	Human Resources		PTK	Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society
HS	Health Sciences			
HVAC	Heating, Cooling and Ventilation		QM	Quality Matters
IA	Inclusive Access		SAO	Student Activities Office
IB	International Baccalaureate		SEOF	Student Evaluations of Faculty
IR	Institutional Research		SFAO	Student Financial Aid Office
ILO	Institutional Learning Outcomes		SGA	Student Government Association
LERN	Learning Resources Network		SLOA	Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
LMS	Learning Management System		SLOAR	Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse			
LRC	Learning Resource Center		SOAR	Student Orientation and Registration
LSC	Learning Support Center		SP	Spring Semester
LT	Learning Technology		SSS	Student Support Services (TRiO)
MACC	Maryland Association of Community Colleges		STC	Student Center
			STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math
MHEC	Maryland Higher Education Commission			
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course		STEMM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Med
MPAR	Maryland Performance Accountability Report			
			STMC	STEMM Technical Middle College
MSCHE	Middle States Commission on Higher Education		TSP	Technology Strategic Plan
			UP	Unit Planning
MSDE	Maryland State Department of Education		USM	University System of Maryland
NACEP	National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships		USM-H	University System of Maryland at Hagerstown
			VA	Veterans Administration
NAEYC	National Association of the Education for Young Children		VDI	Virtual Desktop Infrastructure
			VMC	Valley Mall Center
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association		VPAASS	Vice President, Academic Affairs & Student Services
NCLEX	National Council Licensure Examination (for nurses)			
			VPAF	Vice President, Administration and Finance
NILIE	National Institute for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness		WCPS	Washington County Public Schools
			WSCE	Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education
NJCAA	National Junior College Athletic Association			
NLNAC	National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission			
NSO	New Student Orientation			
NSR	Neighbor-State Rate			
PACE	Professional Assessment of the College Environment			
PAR	Committee on Pride and Recognition			

Introduction

Founded on September 10, 1946, Hagerstown Community College is the oldest community college in Maryland. The college was founded in part to educate returning veterans from World War II, and classes were originally offered at Hagerstown High School in the late afternoons and evenings. In 1956, the College moved to a building on the South Hagerstown High School campus, affectionately called "The Cracker Box" because of its unique design and appearance. As the College continued to meet the local needs of the time, the Cracker Box became too small, and the College moved to its present location on Robinwood Drive in 1966. Dr. Norman Shea, HCC's second president, was a prodigious acquirer of real estate. During his leadership, the College greatly expanded its footprint to amass a campus of 319 acres, the largest in Maryland. In 1998, Hagerstown Junior College changed its name to Hagerstown Community College (HCC) to better reflect its comprehensive mission.

Hagerstown Community College principally serves the people of Washington County, Maryland, but many students from West Virginia and Pennsylvania find that HCC's proximity makes it more attractive than designated community colleges in their home community and state. Pennsylvanians alone represent almost fifteen percent of total enrollment at HCC. The College also derives enrollment from its fellow Maryland counties, especially in selective admissions programs within the Nursing and Allied Health areas.

The College enjoys the support of the region in which it serves. During the COVID pandemic, the HCC Foundation set forth an ambitious goal to raise 7.5 million dollars in honor of its 75th Anniversary. The Foundation wildly exceeded its goals; within a year, it had raised over 10 million dollars for its scholarship endowment and another 8 million for capital projects, concluding its campaign at 18.2 million dollars raised. The community impact of this effort is enormous, including allowing the Foundation to double the amount awarded in scholarship assistance to over $800,000 in 2025. The funds raised for capital projects will allow the College to address major needs in skilled trades workforce training with the renovation of a building purchased during the pandemic. The new D.M. Bowman Family Workforce Training Center will allow the College to combine all its off-site training locations to one space. The 45,000 square foot building will be fully occupied by HCC and include training programs previously offered through the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). This innovative effort will greatly increase the number of apprenticeships in our region.

Key Initiatives

In 2019, Maryland adopted legislation known as The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (a.k.a. The Blueprint). This seminal law provides sweeping changes in all areas of education from pre-school to college and career readiness. For Maryland's sixteen community colleges, this means a complete overhaul of dual credit programs and the creation of career training programs in partnership with local school districts. For students who are deemed college-ready at the end of 10th grade and choose a dual credit pathway, all college classes are free. Local school districts will bear 75% of the tuition cost and 100% of the books and fees associated with attendance. The Blueprint was fully implemented in FA23, and in 2024, a Blueprint Advisory Committee developed comprehensive student and faculty guidebooks to effectively communicate expectations and procedures. These resources were developed in alignment with NACEP standards in anticipation of seeking accreditation in 2025. HCC leadership has worked closely with Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) to ensure that the quality of delivery of courses taught in the high schools meets HCC's rigorous standards. While the increase in enrollment will be a financial benefit, HCC remains focused on maintaining the high-quality education promised in the college mission statement.

HCC's dedication to continuous improvement is evident in initiatives like securing a Title III grant. In 2022, the College received a $2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to be administered over five years. This funding is aimed at boosting student persistence, completion, and goal attainment, which in turn enhances institutional fiscal stability. In the first two years of the grant, New Student Orientation underwent a significant transformation, and additional support was provided to at-risk new students through the First-Year Experience (FYE) course. During its pilot year, participation in the FYE course was required for students enrolled in developmental courses during their first semester. This deliberate choice was made to provide maximum support to at-risk students as early in the grant cycle as possible.

HCC at a Glance

- Over 13,000 students were enrolled at HCC in FY24, with 6,275 of those students enrolled in non-credit courses. Almost ¾ of the credit students were from Washington, County and almost ¼ were part of a dual enrollment program.
- HCC employs almost 600 people, including 78 full-time faculty members. The student-faculty ratio is 19:1.
- A 2021 study showed that the College contributed more than $151.4 million to Washington County's economy, supporting — directly and indirectly — more than 2,340 jobs across the county in FYl9.
- Since its founding, HCC has conferred more than 25,000 degrees, with 726 awarded in FY24.
- HCC offers close to 100 certificate- and associate degree programs with additional non-credit options. The College is organized into seven academic divisions, including Health Sciences, Nursing, Behavioral and Social Sciences, English and Humanities, Developmental Education and Adult Literacy Services (DEALS), Mathematics and Science, and Business and Technology. The academic programs represent a mix of transfer and career preparation areas of study. Popular programs include Business, Nursing, Biology, Psychology, and General Studies.

The current mission, vision, and goals of Hagerstown Community College serve to define and direct all components of the college, from the student experience to the relationship with the surrounding community; they are also woven through the 2026 Strategic Plan. During the most recent strategic planning process, HCC's mission was also reviewed and revised. The final strategic plan contains six thematic commitments, which will serve as strategic goals for the self-study: Enrollment, Assessment, Retention, Integration, Partnerships and Community. The process culminated in the Board of Trustees approving the 2026 strategic plan which has been guiding the direction of the institution.

Institutional Priorities to be Addressed in the Self-Study

Following the MSCHE Self-Study Institute in October and November 2022, the Self-Study Steering Committee co-chairs consulted with President James Klauber to discuss the selection of institutional priorities for the self-study. A list of suggested priorities was generated based on the strategic plan commitments and current institutional priorities related to relevant initiatives. Faculty, staff, and students were surveyed to determine their preference based on this list of suggested priorities. The survey also allowed additional suggestions. The survey results suggested a strong commitment to student success and teaching excellence, and an interest in focusing on ways to facilitate student success for HCC's diverse student population and varied educational experiences. Based on these factors, a constituency of the steering committee met and crafted the following institutional priorities:

- Student success, enrollment, and retention: support students, including at-risk and early college students, by implementing first-year experience course; improving scheduling; aligning curriculum and community partnerships with transfer and career pathways; creating opportunities for developmental students; supporting students with academic and non-academic obstacles; and facilitating and promoting completion.
- Student experience: foster a welcoming, inclusive campus and classroom environment for all students by examining and improving efforts to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and in different learning environments; providing extra-curricular activities and events; and improving orientation and advising.
- Teaching excellence and curriculum development: evaluate curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote inclusive practices and teaching excellence by supporting professional development; facilitating peer sharing of best practices; using student evaluations and feedback to improve instruction; evaluating and improving online course offerings; developing new developmental, ELL, and early college pathways; designing FYE course; and providing support to adjunct instructors both on and off-site.

The following crosswalk tables illustrate the alignment between the College's institutional priorities and strategic goals and between institutional priorities and MSCHE's Standards for Accreditation.

Table 1

Alignment of Strategic Goals with Institutional Priorities

Strategic Goals	Priority 1 - Student Success, Enrollment, & Retention	Priority 2 - Student Experience	Priority 3 - Teaching Excellence & Curriculum Development
Enrollment	✓		
Assessment			✓
Retention	✓	✓	
Integration		✓	✓
Partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Community		✓	

Table 2

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with MSCHE Standards

MSCHE Standards	Priority 1 - Student Success, Enrollment, & Retention	Priority 2 - Student Experience	Priority 3 - Teaching Excellence & Curriculum Development
Mission & Goals			✓
Ethics & Integrity		✓	
Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	✓		✓
Support of the Student Experience	✓	✓	
Educational Effectiveness Assessment		✓	✓
Planning, Resources, & Institutional Improvement	✓		
Governance, Leadership, and Administration		✓	✓

MISSION & GOALS

Chapter I: Standard I - Mission and Goals

Executive Summary:
Standard I provides the genesis and evolution of the mission, vision, and goals of HCC. The current strategic plan, approved in 2022, aligns with the mission and vision and directs decision-making about curriculum, student services, resource allocation, and outcome development. The chapter provides a detailed description of the development and revision of the institutional learning outcomes, and illustrates the alignment of the mission, vision, strategic plan, and ILOs. Finally, the chapter notes HCC's strength in developing, promoting, and integrating the mission, vision, and goals in everyday operations, while noting future opportunity for growth in communication related to the Blueprint and in the development of the next Strategic Plan.

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.
HCC's first college catalog in 1947 listed the following long-term goal: "To offer all deserving high school graduates of Washington County two years of post-high school education." In the intervening decades, the college's mission and vision developed to reflect important changes in both the community and in higher education: first, by vastly broadening the potential demographic of the community college, and second, by challenging the notion of "deserving" by opening their doors to all students interested in continuing their education. As reflected in the vision statement, HCC is committed not just to academic excellence, but to greater inclusivity and innovation for their students and the larger community.

The current mission, vision, and goals of Hagerstown Community College serve to define and direct all components of the college, from the student experience to the relationship with the surrounding community. Widespread collaboration on the revision of the mission statement and the 2026 Strategic Plan has resulted in a comprehensive framework that is deeply rooted in the process of goal-setting, assessment strategies, and procedural improvement. Most importantly, these guiding documents reflect the student- and community-centered philosophy that position HCC as an essential part of Hagerstown and the surrounding areas.

Mission Statement:
HCC ensures equitable access to affordable, high-quality educational programs, while fostering workforce development and cultural vitality in the region.

Vision Statement:
HCC will be the college of choice through demonstration of inclusive educational excellence, transformative growth, and community enrichment.

Values:
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Stewardship
- Civic Engagement
- Student Centered

Institutional Learning Outcomes: The following attributes are goals of the full HCC experience, designed to impart students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that go beyond the classroom and equip them with tools for lifelong success. These outcomes include:

- Personal and Social Responsibility
- Globalization and Diversity
- Critical Thinking and Communication
- Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
- Information Literacy and Technology
- Professionalism

Strategic Plan:

- Commitment 1 (Enrollment): Ensure HCC's dedication to enrollment through excellent recruitment, outreach, and marketing strategies, guiding students to an affordable, high-quality education.
- Commitment 2 (Assessment): Design, promote, and deliver best practices of assessment and continuous improvement that are systematic, coordinated, and campus-wide.
- Commitment 3 (Retention): Develop, strengthen, and implement focused retention strategies that foster completion and success.
- Commitment 4 (Integration): Initiate the comprehensive integration of Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education into the culture, administration, services, and procedures of the college.
- Commitment 5 (Partnerships): Develop and strengthen community partnerships to meet institutional needs and improve the economy of the region.
- Commitment 6 (Community): Strengthen the internal culture to enhance the campus community.

Criteria 1a: Clearly defined mission and goals that are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement (ROA 4, 7, 10)

Criteria 1g: Clearly defined mission and goals are periodically evaluated

Since the last MSCHE self-study, HCC has developed a 2018 Strategic Plan, a 2022 Strategic Plan, and the most current plan. The Strategic Plan is designed by a collaborative team with representatives from all areas of the college, including faculty, staff, and administration. This team, called the Strategic Planning Council, uses evidence from the previous Strategic Plan, current Department of Labor statistics, and the HCC Fact Book, as well as meeting minutes from community sessions held with different stakeholder groups who are specifically targeted for this process in order to develop and draft the new Strategic Plan. For example, during the development of the 2026 Strategic Plan, research was conducted through community sessions with Alumni, Community Members, Students, Faculty, Staff, Administration, and Trustees. The Strategic Planning Council makes revisions based on feedback before approving the draft and sending it to the Board of Trustees for approval. (STDI.C1g.01– Strategic Planning Council Retreat Minutes)

When the new President at HCC arrived in 2018, he believed that the existing plan was too prescriptive in nature. The new strategic plan, approved in 2022, allows units of the College greater flexibility in achieving the six commitments of the plan and greatly elevates the importance of the unit planning process. During the most recent process, HCC's mission was also reviewed and revised. The 2026 Strategic Plan was developed in the FA21 and was approved and published in January of 2022. The revised mission statement was drafted and sent to the Board of Trustees for approval on 6/21/2022. (STDI.C1g.02– BoT Minutes June 2022)

Once the 2026 Strategic Plan was approved, an implementation team identified key initiatives, which are regularly reviewed to evaluate the success of the plan. The current Strategic Plan includes the ongoing maintenance of goals from previous Strategic Plans. For instance, once the 2015 Self-Study Middle States reviewers reported that HCC was deemed in full compliance with all areas of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), the 2018 and 2022 Strategic Plans included efforts to maintain that alignment. (STDI.C1g.03– 2018 HCC Strategic Plan; STDI.C1g.04- 2022 HCC Strategic Plan)

Criteria 1b: Clearly defined mission and goals that address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies

HCC's mission statement addresses the needs of both internal and external constituents, including students, faculty, staff, administration, employers, alumni, and community members. For example:

- HCC ensures equitable access for students through both its open admission and a variety of resources and services. Further information can be found in Standard II and Standard IV.

- HCC provides affordable, high-quality educational programs by offering the lowest-cost college education in Washington County at $123 per credit, which is offset by national grants (including Title III, TRIO SSS, and CCAMPIS) and as of FA24, over $800,000 of scholarship money through the HCC Foundation. (STDI.C1b.01– Foundation Report) As of FA23, Washington County graduates made up 74% of HCC's student population. (STDI.C1b.02 - 2024 HCC MPAR) More information can be found in Standard II and Standard IV.

- HCC fosters workforce development by providing the county and surrounding areas with educated, prepared employees. The EMSI Burning Glass Employment data from FY19 reveals that thousands of former HCC students are employed in Washington County. As a result of their HCC educations, these students receive higher earnings and increase the productivity of the businesses that employ them, HCC alumni generated $116.4 million in added income for the county economy, which is equivalent to supporting 1,665 jobs. (STDI.C1b.03– EMSI Report; STDI.C1b.04- Lightcast Report)

- According to EMSI Burning Glass Employment data in 2021 "one out of every 35 jobs in Washington County is supported by the activities of HCC and its students," illustrating that the college impacts its community positively, both economically and socially, and that it will continue to enlarge "the economic base within the community and support development through better prepared alumni with job skills." (STDI.C1b.03– EMSI Report)

- HCC contributes to the cultural vitality of the region by offering a variety of community events, including concerts, shows, speakers, and clubs. In FY23, HCC hosted 45 public events in the Kepler Theater, with more than 12,000 people in attendance. (STDI.C1b.05– Kepler and ARCC Events)

- Student participation in extracurricular activities on campus helps foster HCC's internal campus community. Over 40 student organizations offer students a chance to develop their leadership skills, participate in community service, and develop a stronger sense of professional identity. More about extracurricular activities can be found in Standard IV. (STDI.C1b.06– HCC Student Clubs)

The outpouring of community support during the 75th Anniversary Campaign for "HCC: A Gem for Generations" stands as a testament to the place that HCC holds in the community. Raising $10.5 million for scholarships, the campaign exceeded the original goal of raising $7.5 million when it wrapped up in 2022.

Criteria 1c: Clearly defined mission and goals that are approved and supported by the governing body

In 2021, HCC was emerging from the COVID pandemic, and several key administrators were fairly new to the campus. These factors, in conjunction with the new campus initiatives they sparked, influenced the new Strategic Plan and inspired a revision of the mission statement. The new mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees on June 21, 2022. (STDI.C1c.01– BoT Minutes June 2022; STDI.C1c.02 Policy 2020)

The mission and vision have been and continue to be supported by governing bodies at HCC. For example, as part of the onboarding process, new trustees attend an orientation meeting in a day-long event that introduces new board members to their relationship with county and state officials, fundraising, advocacy, the HCC organizational chart, state groups (USM, MHEC, etc.), external partnerships, public information procedures, government relations, Human Resources, and Continuing Education. The Board Chair and the College President review board meetings, annual board goals, campus governance system, annual evaluation of the president, and assessment of orientation. This orientation process underscores the centrality of the mission statement and the position of HCC as an integral part of the Hagerstown community. (STDI.C1c.03 – BoT Policy Manual; STDI.C1c.04 BoT Orientation Schedule) For more information about HCC's governance structure and alignment with mission and goals, see Standard VII.

The mission and goals influence governance and decision-making in various organizational bodies, including the following (STDI.C1c.05– Guide to Shared Governance 2024):

- Board of Trustees: The Board of Trustees is the chief governing body of the College. Comprised of seven members appointed by the governor, the Board has full legal authority and responsibility for the College's programs and services.
- President's Office: The President is the chief executive officer who carries out the Board's policies and special initiatives.
- President's Cabinet: The President's Cabinet is an advisory group that addresses day-to-day operational matters. The Cabinet consists of all vice-presidents and deans, the Faculty Assembly chair, the Executive Director of Human Resources, the Senior Director of Public Information and Marketing, the Senior Director of Information Technology, and the Senior Director of College Advancement.
- Faculty Assembly: The Faculty Assembly is the central faculty governance body through which faculty express their ideas regarding academic policy, student success, and matters related to teaching and learning.
- Staff Council: The Staff Council is the representative body for non-exempt and exempt staff (up to and including the coordinator level).
- Academic Council: The Academic Council addresses day-to-day operations of the divisions, academic scheduling, and curricula. Membership includes the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services (VPAASS), all division directors, the Faculty Assembly chair, the Dean of Academic Innovation and Instructional Technology, the Dean of Instruction, the Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and the Director of Early College Programs.
- Enrollment and Student Services Council (ESSC): The Enrollment and Student Services Council addresses the day-to-day operations related to enrollment, recruitment, and retention. Membership includes the Dean of Student Affairs, the VPAASS, the VP of Administration and Finance, all division

directors, the Faculty Assembly chair, the Dean of Academic Innovation and Instruction Technology, the Dean of Instruction, the Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, appropriate members of Student Affairs, and other campus representatives as assigned.

- Student Government Association: The Student Government Association (SGA) is the representative body for students. The SGA represents concerns of all students to the College's administration, ensures student involvement at all levels of the institution, maintains positive communication and understanding between and within all members of the College community, and collaborates with the Office of Student Activities to plan a program of activities for all students.

Criteria 1d: Clearly defined mission and goals that guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes

(This section aligns with Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

HCC's mission and vision provide the framework for the strategic plan, which provides goals for recruitment, the development of program and course offerings, retention, community activities and programs, the expansion of facilities, and fundraising and scholarship initiatives. These goals enhance accountability and foster meaningful strategic thinking and short- and long-term planning to maintain adaptability in changing circumstances. But the mission and vision do more than provide a structural framework; they function to establish a shared identity among faculty, staff, and stakeholders, who take pride in their meaningful work to bring affordable academic excellence to Washington County. This shared identity is exemplified by accomplishments like the awarding of a competitive National Endowment for the Humanities grant titled "Bridging the Antietam," which provided funding for the development of place-based learning modules that brought local history and folklore into college classes. The NEH grant was also used to develop a free summer bridge program for developmental students to prepare them for college-level writing classes. (STDI.C1d.01– NEH grant) HCC's mission and vision drive curriculum development and teaching excellence across all programs and divisions, from the syllabus to the course design to the course outcomes and assessments. Instructors and division directors work together to develop inclusive, well-designed, academically rigorous courses so that student success is both achievable and meaningful. (This section supports Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.) More about this process can be found in Standard III. Finally, the mission, vision, and strategic plan highlight HCC's position as a leader in addressing community needs in innovative ways. (STDI.C1d.02 - 2026 Strategic Plan)

Each year the College completes an annual planning, budgeting, and evaluation cycle called Unit Planning that leads to documentation that is published as part of the college's HCC's Annual Plan and Budget. The Annual Plan and Budget links each of the annual institutional planning priorities to one of the commitments in the current Strategic Plan, integrating the mission and goals into key processes, such as strategic planning, budgeting, curriculum development, and resource allocation. The mission and goals enhance accountability by providing a benchmark for evaluating progress and success; the process of constant measurement and planning cultivates a culture of continuous improvement and innovation by setting ambitious targets and aspirations. More about this process and examples of alignment between budget allocations and strategic planning goals can be found in Standard VI.

Figure 1
Unit Planning and Budget Cycle
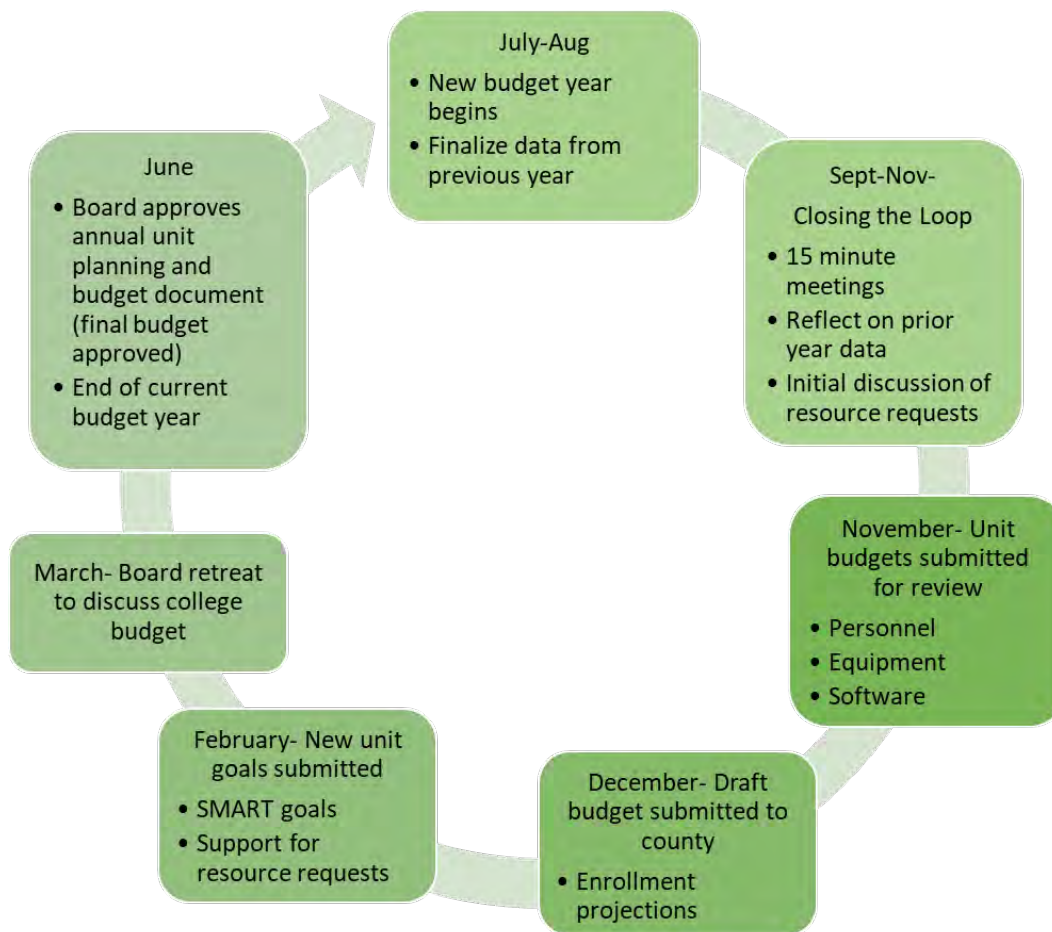
Source: Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

In 2021, the Blueprint was passed by the MD General Assembly, with the purpose of ensuring that all students – especially those who have historically been underserved – have equal opportunity for a quality education by providing college courses at no cost to the student. Prior to the adoption of the Blueprint, roughly 20 percent of HCC students were dual-enrolled. Since its implementation, that number is nearly 50 percent. As the scope of instruction expands through the Blueprint, HCC will need to consider the mission, vision, and goals in light of new student populations and educational partners like Washington County Public Schools (WCPS). HCC will need to establish and maintain strong communication channels with WCPS.

Criteria 1e: Clearly defined mission and goals that include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution.

HCC is committed to professional accomplishment and supports creative pursuits for its existing employees. In 2022, the Board of Trustees doubled the budgetary allocation for tuition reimbursement and expanded the number of credit hours allowed per year for employees to seek advanced degrees. As part of the same policy revision, employees who are interested in moving in new directions at the college are now able to pursue broader paths of study. (STDI.C1e.01– Policy 5091) Additionally, sabbaticals are available for faculty to pursue professional goals. (STDI.C1e.02– Faculty Guidebook)

Diverse course offerings and high-quality course design provide students with scholarly opportunities. For example, as a member of the Maryland Online consortium, HCC has adopted best practices from the Quality Matters (QM) organization. The QM program is internationally recognized and designed for quality assurance in online and hybrid courses and programs, and ensures that online and hybrid students have consistent, supported online experiences. HCC utilizes QM resources and their peer-review process to ensure excellent course design. (STDI.C1e.03- Distance Learning Guidebook) See Standard III for more information about course design and delivery. Additionally, HCC is seeking accreditation by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), a national organization that recognizes and supports quality dual-enrollment programs nationwide and will submit the application for accreditation in 2025. (STDI.C1e.04- HCC 2024 Annual Report)

Criteria 1f: Clearly defined mission and goals are publicized and widely known by the institution's internal stakeholders

The college mission and goals are evident and expressed through many venues on campus, including posted statements of Mission and Vision in every building on campus, a Mission and Vision section in the Annual Report and the Strategic Plan, the Faculty Guidebooks, and the Student Handbook.

Additionally, HCC communicates its mission and goals to internal and external audiences through the following:

- HCC website (www.hagerstowncc.edu)
- PR and Marketing Office – strategic communications and targeted advertising campaigns (www.hagerstowncc.edu/prm)
- Video and visual media to convey mission and impact, such as the college Flickr account; short videos that increase exposure to student experiences at the college; longer videos, such as those shown at Tribute, Donor Rec, etc., which highlight how well the college has achieved its mission; student testimonials, etc. (www.flickr.com/photos/hagerstowncc) (www.youtube.com/user/hagerstowncedu)
- One-on-one meetings between the President and leading stakeholders within Washington County, where the President shares the annual report and reviews strategic initiatives to promote the mission and values of the college
- Peer-to-peer sharing, such as by donors, community representatives, and policymakers about impact of college in the community, including Chamber of Commerce Business awards, groundbreaking ceremonies, and in Hagerstown magazine (STDI.C1f.01- Incubator article)
- HCC Foundation and Alumni Association events (www.hagerstowncc.edu/advancement)
- Targeted advertising – particularly for workforce development – such as pre-movie ads, billboards, and truck ads (STDI.C1f.02- Examples of Advertising)
- Postcards, newsletters (The Advisor, Hawk Happenings), email blasts and publications such as the Annual Report, Strategic Plan, Employee Handbook, Faculty Guidebook, Student Handbook
- Grants reports - particularly those with formal evaluation that provide an opportunity to share learning outcomes with external groups, including policy makers
- Campus events and activities (STDI.C1f.03- Examples of Campus Events)
- Advancement proposals, such as for planned giving donors, and campaign donors (STDI.C1f.04- Examples of Advancement Proposals)

Criteria 2: Institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission

Criteria 3: Goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission
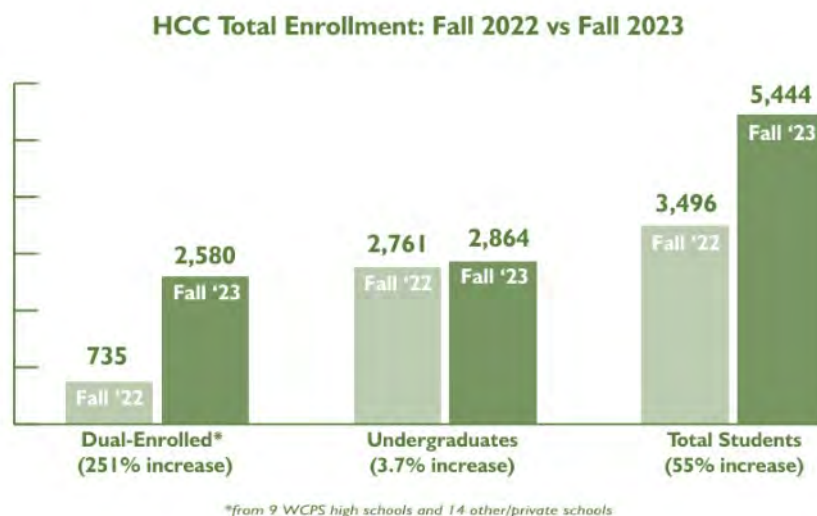
The Strategic Plan

HCC's Strategic Plan lays out six major commitments along with goals and initiatives for each one. These goals dovetail with the mission statement and inform the Institutional Learning Outcomes. The commitments are reviewed regularly to ensure milestones are being reached.

Commitment One: Enrollment

Recruitment and outreach programs, in conjunction with better publicization of financial aid resources, have positively impacted enrollment, even outside of Blueprint-related dual enrollment. For more about recruitment, outreach, and financial aid opportunities, see Standard II.

Figure 2

Enrollment Comparison, FA22 and FA23

HCC Total Enrollment: Fall 2022 vs Fall 2023

- Dual-Enrolled* (251% increase): Fall '22 – 735, Fall '23 – 2,580
- Undergraduates (3.7% increase): Fall '22 – 2,761, Fall '23 – 2,864
- Total Students (55% increase): Fall '22 – 3,496, Fall '23 – 5,444

*from 9 WCPS high schools and 14 other/private schools

Source: HCC 2024 Annual Report

Commitment Two: Assessment

At HCC, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) process is viewed as a continuous cycle; SLOA consists of an interrelated system of assessment in which course learning outcomes (CLOs) are aligned with program learning outcomes (PLOs), which are, in turn, aligned with Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The Annual Plan and Budget, including Unit Planning documents, link each of the annual institutional planning priorities to one of the commitments in the current Strategic Plan, integrating the mission and goals into key processes, such as strategic planning, budgeting, curriculum development, and resource allocation. More about Assessment is covered in greater detail in Standard V. More about unit planning and budget allocations can be found in Standard VI.

Commitment Three: Retention

The College embodies its retention strategies through a strong system of student support services. The process begins with an effective onboarding system, new student orientation, proper registration and advising, and a newly developed First Year Experience course. Once classes have started, students have a full range of services at their disposal to enhance student success. The Learning Support Center (LSC) offers students tutoring options from individualized service, to group tutoring, or even online tutoring services. As a result of strong student support programs and a caring involved Faculty, the College has seen growth in its retention numbers over the past five years. More about retention efforts and student support can be found in Standard IV.

Commitment Four: Integration

HCC's fourth commitment stresses the importance of greater flexibility in how students access education, aiming to provide seamless transitions between short-term workforce training programs and longer, credit-bearing degree pathways. By reducing traditional barriers between credit and noncredit courses, HCC can better support diverse learners seeking different career goals without committing to a full degree program from the start. Additionally, aligning these programs helps the college respond more effectively to local workforce needs, as students can quickly gain industry-recognized credentials and later apply those skills toward further education. This approach ensures that HCC remains responsive to evolving labor market demands, while also fostering student success across multiple learning formats. This can occur through intentional advising based on student interest and finding ways to offer credit for prior learning.

Work towards integration between credit and non-credit programs includes integrating ELL and PALS programs to create career pathways that can accommodate credit and non-credit programs (nursing assistant, phlebotomy, etc.) and combining credit and non-credit business students in some of the same classes to facilitate learning and opportunities for growth.

Commitment Five: Partnerships

Partnerships with the surrounding community are essential to the mission of HCC, and the college remains an integral part of the workforce culture in Washington County. For example, at the D.M. Bowman Center, students who complete the electrician apprenticeship program will be able apply their training toward an associate degree at HCC. Plans are underway to expand that to include plumbing, HVAC, and construction, with a long-term goal of having these credits transfer to a bachelor's degree program at a regional university. HCC has also provided several non-credit trainings at Brooke's House, a local non-profit organization that provides treatment and recovery services to women suffering from addiction. As part of this ongoing relationship, Brooke's House has helped to secure scholarships for their residents who want to attend HCC. (STDI.C3.01- Scholarship List) HCC also partners with Washington County Public Schools to provide college courses to high school students as part of the Blueprint.

Commitment Six: Community

HCC's final commitment aims to strengthen the internal culture and enhance our sense of community. By fostering a more inclusive environment where members feel valued and heard, HCC aims to build stronger interpersonal relationships, improve morale, and increase engagement in campus life. Strengthening the internal culture is essential because it fosters innovation, encourages professional development, and supports a positive work environment, all of which contribute to improved retention and student outcomes. By investing in its internal culture, HCC ensures a foundation where collaboration thrives, and campus constituents feel a sense of belonging and commitment to the college's mission. Efforts to achieve this include enhanced training offerings for faculty and staff, a redesigned employee celebration program, and streamlining of processes and procedures to better establish consistency.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Institutional assessment of student learning is essential both as a manifestation of the mission and vision and as the blueprint for program and course outcome development. Like other higher education institutions, HCC is impacted by the changing experiences of each generation of students and the economic and cultural shifts of the community. Careful assessment of ILOs provides opportunities for the college to nimbly respond to student and community needs. (This section aligns with Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

The previous ILOs:
- Demonstrate personal and social responsibility by practicing responsible citizenship, being open to new ideas, and understanding the value of moral sensitivity and cultural diversity
- Practice intellectual skills such as critical and independent thinking, effective communication, and knowledge acquisition and application
- Demonstrate self-direction, persistence, and lifelong learning

Though these outcomes embodied important aspects of HCC's mission, they needed to be developed and adjusted to reflect a better understanding of important cultural shifts and student and community needs. In 2020, the Dean of Instruction revised the institutional learning outcomes, resulting in better alignment with Code of Maryland (COMAR) and Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) requirements. Before the revised ILOs went to the Board for final approval, shared governance committees, Academic Council, and Faculty Assembly provided feedback on the revisions.

The revised ILOs:

The following attributes are goals of the full HCC experience, designed to impart students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that go beyond the classroom and equip them with tools for lifelong success. These outcomes include:
- Responsibility: Exhibit personal and social responsibility by practicing self-direction, persistence, lifelong learning, and responsible citizenship
- Globalization and Diversity: Explore and analyze new ideas, and understand the value of moral sensitivity and cultural diversity
- Critical Thinking and Communication: Practice intellectual skills such as critical and independent thinking, effective communication, and knowledge acquisition and application.
- Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning: Process, analyze, and synthesize scientific and numerical data, and apply mathematical concepts appropriately
- Information Literacy and Technology: Apply research to access information and use technology to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and use information resourcefully
- Professionalism: Apply the knowledge and skills gained from academic disciplines to complete personal and professional goals

Criteria 4: Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable
ILO assessment is linked to Course and Program Outcome Assessment. Two ILOs are assessed per year, and each ILO is assessed once every three years, according to the schedule below:

Year 1 (AY21/22) - ILOs 2 & 3

Year 2 (AY22/23) - ILOs 4 & 6

Year 3 (AY23/24) - ILOs 1 & 5

More information can be found in Standards V and VII.

The mission and goals are regularly assessed via several different surveys, including the Pace Campus Climate Survey and the Student Satisfaction inventory. According to the 2021 PACE Employee Survey, eighty percent of respondents were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" that the actions of the institution reflect its mission, which is above the PACE Normbase Average. Additionally, HCC's Maryland Performance Accountability Report (MPAR) assesses progress towards the goals of the college. (STDI.C4.01– PACE survey results; STDI.C4.02 2024 HCC MPAR) Other assessments include the Student Satisfaction inventory, Workforce Development and Continuing Education Data, and frequent internal surveys through our Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, Human Resources, and other on-campus stakeholders. (STDI.C4.03– PIE survey inventory)

Strengths

HCC's mission, vision, and strategic plan is bedrock to all facets of the college community, proven through evidence like the institutional learning outcomes, the college-wide knowledge and commitment to the mission, the regular assessment and recommitment to strategic goals, and most importantly, the supportive, student-centered culture of the college.

The Strategic Plan 2026 is another strength. The former Strategic Plan was 22 single-spaced pages, which was too prescriptive and hindered independent decision-making. The current plan is simple and contained in one pamphlet; it creates space for decisions to be made at the entry-level of management. College leaders can use the plan to present fresh ideas that are not prescriptive in nature and lead to better student success.

Opportunities

In 2025, the Strategic Planning Council will begin the process of creating a new strategic plan. The college will use the recommendations from Middle States in coordination with feedback from external stakeholders and environmental scanning to guide the development of the new plan.

While developing the new plan, HCC will reassess its mission, vision, and goals to align with the needs of new student populations and educational partners, such as Washington County Public Schools (WCPS), in partial response to the recent Blueprint legislation. Strong communication channels with WCPS are and continue to be essential. HCC's new Strategic Plan will directly address the dual-enrollment growth and how the diverse needs of these students will be met.

The College is taking steps to attain accreditation by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), an organization that represents and supports quality dual-enrollment programs nationwide. This accreditation will help to ensure the delivery of high-quality academics and comprehensive services for HCC's dual-enrolled students. The College is also working toward its goal that every general education course will be certified by Quality Matters by the FA26.

ETHICS & INTEGRITY

Chapter II: Standard II – Ethics and Integrity

Executive Summary:
Standard two details HCC's commitment to ethics and integrity and how that commitment is manifested in policies, college culture, diversity and recruitment, hiring practices, disciplinary procedures, communication practices, and compliance with federal, state, local, and Commission reporting requirements. Some important evidence includes student demographics, tuition and financial aid reports, and the PACE climate survey. The chapter clearly illustrates how important ethical practices are to the college and the successful efforts to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of the college community.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

(This standard supports Institutional Priority #2: Student Experience.)

The transformative growth that HCC strives to provide for students and the surrounding community is rooted in fostering a space where critical thought is valued, where openness to new ideas is seen as an essential skill for both academic achievement and meaningful citizenship. HCC's motto "Stay Close, Go Far" works not just as a reminder of how students can achieve their goals without needing to travel long distances; it also highlights the horizon-expanding experience of a high-quality education. From the ethical curation of important policies that protect free speech and expression to the broad array of cultural clubs available to students, HCC continually demonstrates its core values of excellence, integrity, diversity and inclusion, stewardship, civic engagement, and student focus.

Criteria 1: commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights

HCC's commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights are all codified through various board-approved policies, including the Discrimination, Hate Crimes, and Biased Incident Reporting Policy (#5032), the Expressive Activity Policy (#8068), and the Intellectual Property Policy (#5095). (STDII.C1.01- BoT Policy Manual) The faculty handbook further defines academic freedom (STDII.C1.02– Faculty Handbook p. 44) and the Student Code of Conduct contains the Student Bill of Rights, which includes protections for students' freedom of expression, inquiry, and assembly. (STDII.C1.03– Student Code of Conduct)

Criteria 2: A climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives

Student recruitment, curriculum, and activities

(This section supports Institutional Priority #2: Student Experience.)

HCC is continuously working to diversify the campus community. The HCC Mission statement articulates the importance of equitable access to education, and the values include diversity and inclusion. A position in the Admissions office is dedicated to outreach and recruitment of underrepresented populations. This recruiter visits all local high schools, including English Language Learner (ELL) classes, and hosts information sessions targeting prospective underrepresented students at local venues like the Hagerstown Housing Authority.

(STDII.C2.01 - Job Description) These recruitment efforts have yielded a growth in diverse student populations at HCC. From 2018 to 2022, HCC has seen the proportion of Students of Color grow from 24.7% to 31.1%. (STDII.C2.02– IPEDs 12M Enrollment) Though Washington County became more racially and ethnically diverse over the last decade, it is still predominantly white and non-Hispanic, with Black or African American residents comprising the largest minority group and Hispanic residents comprising the fastest-growing ethnic group in the county. (STDII.C2.03 - Cultural Diversity Report) While demographics in Washington County reflect a growth of all minorities in the community, HCC has surpassed those local population increases in terms of overall enrollment growth.

Table 3

	Washington County		HCC	
	#	%	#	%
Total Population	**155,813**	**100%**	**7,091**	**100%**
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity	13,148	8.4%	810	11.4%
Black/African American, Asian, other/multiple races (Non-white alone, not Hispanic or Latino)	29,077	18.7%	1,579	22.3%
White alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	113,588	72.9%	4,099	57.8%
Unspecified Race/Ethnicity	--	--	603	8.5%

Demographic Comparison: Washington County, MD and HCC Student Population
Source: United States Census Bureau, 2023 ACS. www.census.gov; IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment, FY24

In the classroom, Diversity General Education courses ensure that all degree-seeking students take at least one three-credit course pertaining to multiculturalism and diversity; for example, Cultural Anthropology, Latin American History, World Regional Geography, World Religions, Understanding Diversity in the Helping Profession, Diversity in Sports and Athletics, Diversity in a Tech Society, and Race and Ethnic Relations all have the Diversity designation.

Diversity gen ed courses meet the following outcomes:
- Use disciplinary knowledge to evaluate the impact of human and cultural diversity on one or more of the following: the arts, social, political, technological, religious, and/ or economic issues
- Reflect critically on how one's worldview, assumptions, and values are shaped by culture and experience, as well as how one's background affects interactions with diverse groups
- Analyze the impact of physical and/or social (human-made) systems on relationships among groups, such as those that contribute to inequality

Students can also engage in a range of student-life activities that investigate, support, and celebrate culture at HCC. For example, the Student Center main dining room houses informational displays about various cultures in conjunction with Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women's History Month, and Irish American Heritage Month. Clubs like Kpop, which explores Korean culture, and the Black Student Union are popular and active on campus, and events like the One World Festival and the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration bring together the campus with the Hagerstown community to forge connections and honor important cultural touchstones. Some other recent events include the following:

- Students went on trips to the Cultural Trail in downtown Hagerstown to learn about the history and culture of Washington County and to the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC for Native American Heritage Month
- HCC's Black Student Union held the second annual "Conversations for the Soul" event in February where local African-American entrepreneurs talked to students about the obstacles they overcame to become business owners
- Brish Library hosted Douglass Day in February, an annual national event that focused on papers of Mary Ann Shadd Cary and included a walk in downtown Hagerstown to discuss the impact Frederick Douglass had on the city
- The Psychology Club presented a series of talks about gender
- Campus leaders met for a panel discussion and luncheon for Women's History Month in March
- Women's History Month guest speaker Hagerstown Mayor Tekesha Martinez spoke about being a Black woman in politics

In FA24, HCC administered a Student Diversity Survey. The results will provide valuable insights into the demographics, experiences, and needs of our diverse student population. By collecting and analyzing this data, HCC hopes to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all students, including underrepresented groups, and creating an inclusive learning environment. The survey results will inform policies, support services, and strategic initiatives, helping to foster an equitable, supportive campus culture that promotes success for all students.

Faculty, Staff, and Administration:

In the FA21, HCC participated in the PACE survey, a campus climate instrument designed to help community college leaders understand the institutional culture and how employees perceive and experience their work. Several questions were embedded in the survey to examine DEI data. This DEI climate data provided a measure of the real or perceived quality of interactions on campus as well as the level of respect for others. According to the 2021 PACE climate survey, some institutional strengths include valuing diversity (3), while weaknesses include representing diverse populations among faculty and leadership. (STDII.C2.04 - PACE Survey) Human Resources continues to work to increase the diversity of HCC employees, in part through specialized recruiting tactics. A recruiting specialist in the Human Resources department establishes procedures, develops recruiting resources and initiatives, and capitalizes on opportunities to find and hire faculty, staff, and administrators from underrepresented populations. By participating in job fairs like the National Virtual Career Fair for Veterans with RecruitMilitary, the Frederick News Post fall job fair, and Horizon Goodwill's Cut/Cloth/Work job fair, HCC has been able to reach new applicant pools as part of this effort, with some positive results. Recruiters also currently use a recruitment platform called Handshake, which allows HCC to post and share positions with various colleges and universities nationwide that have agreed to accept job postings. Including schools that are identified as historically black universities or colleges helps put HCC's postings in front of a larger diverse applicant pool and increase the recruitment of employees of color. Through a subscription with HigherEdJobs, HCC recruiters can boost some positions through diversity and inclusion email blasts that are sent to candidates interested in work environments that support diversity and inclusion, which helps with the recruitment of employees of color. As a result of these efforts, HCC saw an increase of Employees of Color from 7.9% in 2017 to 10.5% in 2022. (STDII.C2.05 - MHEC EDS)

Criteria 3: A grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably

Criteria 4: The avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents (ROA 13)

HCC has a variety of mechanisms to ensure that grievances are addressed in an effective and timely manner, and that students, staff, and faculty are aware of the procedure to lodge concerns or complaints. Separate grievance policies and procedures exist for students and employees, which are thoroughly outlined in their respective handbooks. (STDII.C4.01 - Student Handbook; (STDII.C4.02 Employee Handbook)

The student handbook provides students with instructions regarding where to direct their concerns. For example, course-specific grade-related concerns should be addressed via the grade appeal process, whereas requests for refund for tuition and fees paid or a late withdrawal for a failing grade should be filed according to the registration appeal process. (STDII.C4.03- Refund policy webpage) The General Grievance Policy and procedure provides a formal method of recourse for students with concerns related to issues like the ethical and professional behavior of employees, the arbitrary application of current College policies by employees, and perceived violations of accepted rights of students. Additionally, HCC provides options for specific grievances, including the General Grievance Procedure for Students with Disabilities. The grievance policies and procedures are found in their respective employee and student handbooks.   The appeals records are available through the respective offices that handle the process. Grade appeal records are available through the Office of Academic Affairs; registration appeal records are available through the Registrar, who oversees registration appeals; and general grievance records are kept with the Office of Student Affairs.

In 2023, HCC formed an Appeals Committee to process Registrations Appeals specifically for early college classes.   This committee, which mirrors the regular Registration Appeals committee, meets monthly and is chaired by the Director Early College Programs.   The committee reviews and decides on registration change requests for early college classes that could result in refunds, late drops, or late withdrawals. The Director of Early College Programs is in regular communication with Washington County Public Schools about this process and created well-documented procedures related to early college courses. (STDII.C4.04– Blueprint Handbook)

The employee handbook provides guidance for employees, including describing the grievance process in general along with specific procedures for complaints regarding issues like harassment and discrimination. Expectations and guidelines are also included for conflicts of interest. In regard to Board of Trustees and Administration decisions, Board members must disclose possible conflicts of interest, and Policy #2025 further states: "Members of the Board of Trustees of Hagerstown Community College in the performance of their responsibilities on behalf of the college desire to avoid any conflict or appearance of conflict between the interests of Hagerstown Community College and any personal interest of a Board member or officer." (STDII.C4.05- BoT Policy Manual)

HCC is also committed to providing a working and learning environment free from sexual misconduct - including sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. HCC will not tolerate sexual misconduct and has implemented specific measures to strongly encourage and support the reporting of sexual misconduct and to ensure that all allegations of sexual misconduct are investigated and resolved in a timely, discreet, fair, and impartial manner and in accordance with Federal Title IX and Clery Act regulations and Maryland Education Article 11-601. The Title IX Sexual Harassment Guidelines & Grievance Process applies to all members of the College community and to sexual misconduct occurring during Hagerstown Community College educational activities and programs. (STDII.C4.06 Sexual Misconduct Procedures)

In 2024, the biennial Sexual Assault Campus Climate survey indicated that HCC students generally report feeling safe and experiencing a positive campus climate, though student input highlighted the importance of

sharing information and conducting awareness training related to sexual misconduct and relationship violence. This feedback spurred immediate enhanced initiatives to increase awareness about sexual misconduct, reporting procedures, and related policies, including increased signage across campus to attract students' attention, more focused emails on sexual misconduct reporting (twice a semester), improved slide information in the virtual orientations, and enriched campus programming coordinated by the BIT/CARE team and the Student Activities Office. Additionally, the college has worked to provide Title IX-related training to additional college personnel, adding it to Staff Development Week training in SP24. Campus safety questions were added to the faculty and staff survey that was administered in the same semester. (STDII.C4.07- MHEC Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey Report 2024)

Criteria 5: Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees

HCC's status as an equal opportunity employer is codified in Board Policy #5003, which states that "Hagerstown Community College is committed to recruiting, employing, training, and promoting the best qualified applicants and employees in all job classifications and academic rank without regard to race, color, religion, age, gender (except where gender is a bona fide occupational qualification), ancestry, gender identity, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or protected veteran's status, and to creating a workforce that is diverse and reflective of the ability and talent available in the field of higher education." This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training. (STDII.C5.01 HR website; STDII.C5.02 Policy 5003)

HCC's Recruitment Guide provides important information for search committee members, including details about the process of serving on a search committee, checklists for members, and sample interview questions and templates. The Recruitment Guide also states, "The College seeks to hire the best qualified candidate for each position. To support this philosophy and objective, the Human Resource Department provides a process to allow for a comprehensive search of candidates, inclusive of internal and external applicants. The Office of Human Resources recruitment, selection and hiring plan supports the College's mission and vision and embraces its values of excellence, integrity, diversity and inclusion, stewardship, civic engagement and student centeredness." (STDII.C5.03 HR Recruitment Guide)

Detailed information about faculty evaluation can be found in the AA Faculty Guidebook, as well as in Standard III. The process for promotion was updated in 2019 to include a peer review component, and is also explained in the AA Faculty Guidebook, which includes a detailed timeline for faculty who are eligible for promotion. (STDII.C5.04 Faculty Guidebook)

Criteria 6: Honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications

The HCC Public Relations and Marketing office is responsible for all official communications from HCC, including all public relations announcements and official communication with external bodies. All announcements that come from Public Relations are reviewed by the creator and at least one additional person to ensure that all messages are accurate and honest. When statistics or rankings are included in marketing materials or press releases, the Public Information office includes the external source of the information. Internally, HCC employs various strategies to communicate effectively and honestly with all constituents, most notably students. Messaging to students occurs using many modalities, including emails, text messages, and emergency alerts. These communications can come from various offices but typically are sent from areas such as the Office of Student Affairs, which makes students aware of vital information and policies. In addition to the web site, HCC utilizes other software to convey valuable information to students,

including D2L and the Ellucian Portal. The Public Relations and Marketing office also uses social media platforms such Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Helpful guidelines for social media use can be found on their "Social Media at HCC" webpage, which states, "HCC expects its employees to be honest and transparent in their electronic communications as they would be in person and to respect privacy, confidentiality, and copyright laws. Posted content on college social media sites should always be accurate, concise, student-oriented, sensitive to diverse audiences, and respectful to the college, its employees, students, and the community." (STDII.C6.01 Social Media at HCC webpage)

Criteria 7a and b: As appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place to promote affordability and accessibility and to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt

As an affordable, public community college, HCC strives to promote itself as a cost-effective destination for higher education. Cost comparisons between HCC and other higher education options reveal that HCC's affordability far outstrips other 2- and 4-year options for students, and recruiters share the financial advantage of attending HCC with potential students through financial aid events, tuition letters, and HCC's Tuition and Fees webpage. (STDII.C7a.01, STDII.C7b.01-Tuition and Fees webpage) Moreover, HCC's tuition has not significantly increased in several years, helping students to plan for their academic future without fears of tuition hikes. (STDII.C7a.02- NCES webpage)

Table 4

Cost Comparison

	Total Tuition & Fees	Room & Board	Total
Four-year private (not for profit)	$40,713	$13,842	$54,555
Four-year private (for profit)	$18,241	$9,151	$27,392
Four-year public	$9,834	$12,302	$22,136
Two-year private (for profit)	$16,301		$16,301
Hagerstown Community College			
In-county	$4,230		$4,230
In-state	$6,990		$6,990
Out-of-state	$8,850		$8,850

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (based on 2021 table)

The Student Financial Aid webpage provides students with information about the FAFSA and financial aid along with a video featuring advisors who explain the financial aid process. In addition to the tuition calculator, students and potential students can find the Hawkeye Chatbot on the Student Financial Aid website, where they can find answers to their questions about the financial aid process. Community, state, and HCC scholarship information is available on the website as well, and scholarships are available for a wide variety of student types.

With the growth of dual-credit offerings, the College has re-emphasized the importance of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the International College Honors Society. PTK membership opens the doors of opportunities and scholarships for its members, both during their time at HCC and at their transfer institutions. Nationally, PTK is the leading provider of scholarships for community college students.

Thanks to the Blueprint legislation, college-ready high school students can take early college courses at no cost to them. As a result, many HCC classes are being offered in Washington County schools with the hope of reaching students whose circumstances would make accessing higher education very difficult because of

factors ranging from finances to transportation. Early College Degree Program students, who come to campus full-time, are able to earn their associate's degree by the time they graduate high school, paying no tuition and incurring no debt.

The HCC Foundation demonstrates unwavering commitment to fostering access to education and opportunity by providing scholarships for students. Through a highly successful campaign launched in honor of the College's 75th anniversary, the Foundation surpassed its initial fundraising goal, raising over 18 million dollars—a testament to the community's dedication to student success. This remarkable achievement has had a profound impact, significantly increasing the availability of scholarships for HCC students. The Foundation's dedication to building and growing its endowment is evident in its exponential growth, with the endowment value more than doubling from 2018 to 2023, reaching an impressive 22 million dollars by December 2023. This substantial investment in scholarships not only transforms the lives of individual students but also strengthens the foundation of our community by ensuring access to quality education for generations to come." (STDII.C7a.03 HCC Endowment graph) For the 2024-2025 school year, the HCC Foundation is able to award over $800,000 in student scholarships. (STDII.C7a.04- Foundation FY25 budget; STDII.C7a.05- Foundation Presentation)

Other examples of HCC's efforts to promote affordability and accessibility include:
- Workshops for low income, at-risk students that provide information regarding federal and state financial aid programs, borrowing, and important deadlines, offered by the Financial Aid department
- Sources of aid for those who do not qualify for Pell grants or who require financial assistance beyond what is already provided (STDII.C7a.06- Cultural Diversity Report)
- A financial literacy module created by Financial Aid TV, embedded in the First Year Experience Course, part of the Title III grant
- Transportation assistance for students, provided through a partnership with the United Way and their Ride United Network (RUN) Rideshare program
- Adoption of Inclusive Access (IA) for digital textbooks, which has greatly reduced the cost of course materials for students over the last several years; in SP25, 138 IA titles were adopted in a total of 329 course sections (STDII.C7a.07- IA Utilization Data)

More information about financial aid at HCC can be found in Standard IV.

Figure 3

VitalSource Cost Savings over Time
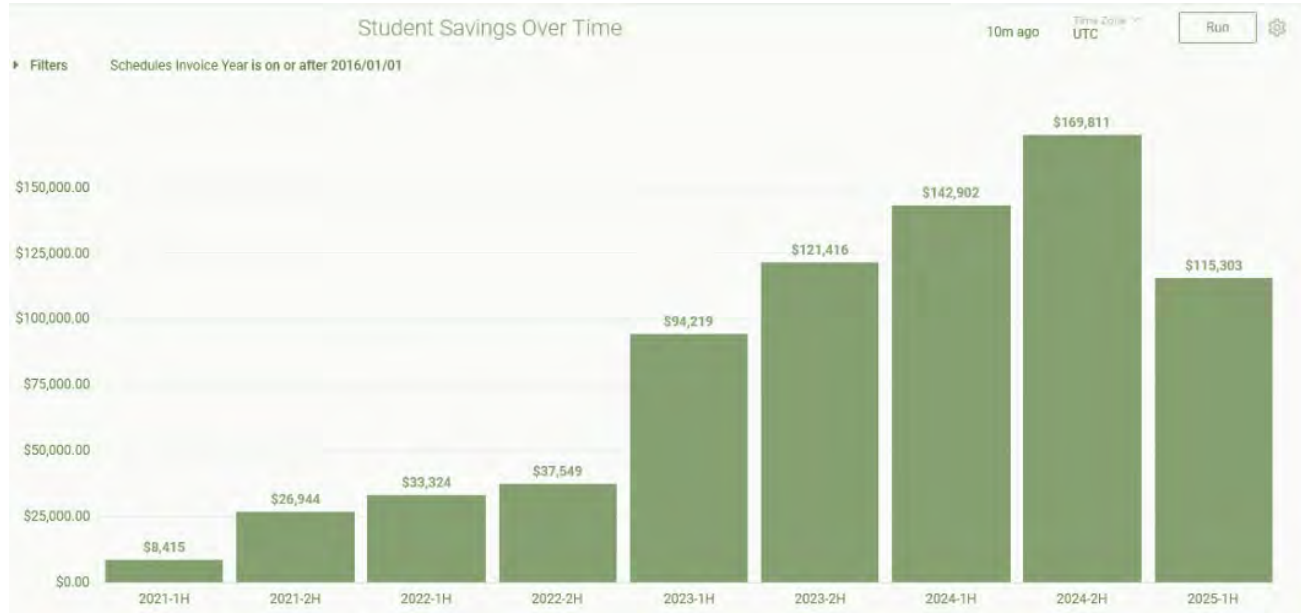
Source: VitalSource Growth Analytics report, SP25

Criteria 8 a-d : compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates; the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation; substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion; the institution's compliance with the Commission's policies (ROA 1, 5, 6, 14)

HCC's Verification of Compliance, along with this self-study, demonstrate alignment with all federal, state, and Commission regulations and requirements. (STDII.C8.01- Verification of Compliance)

Criteria 9: Periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented

Feedback from surveys like the PACE Climate Survey is directly linked to the strategic planning process, and HCC's continued focus on creating an accessible, inclusive, and culturally rich campus community is clearly reflected in Commitment 6 (Community) of the current Strategic Plan, which lists the following as goals:

- Practice ethical and transparent decision making that values employee input.
- Develop and maintain consistent hiring and recruiting practices that promote and value diverse candidate pools.
- Enhance training, mentorship, and onboarding processes to improve retention.
- Provide safe and secure physical and virtual campus environments.
- Create a celebration of success program.
- Create a culture of respect and understanding, to improve communication and align goals across departments.
- Establish consistency in processes.

Working towards these goals has included an evaluation and revision of the Shared Governance model

(covered in more detail in Standard VII), focusing on increasing diversity among students and staff, providing annual Security Reports (STDII.C9.01- Campus Security webpage), and cultivating an inclusive and respectful community both in and out of the classroom. For example, the Diversity and Inclusion committee, comprised of HCC employees from several different areas, works on various DEI initiatives and reports on programs and events being held on campus. One such initiative was to create a webpage for Gender Identity resources, which includes information about name changes and restrooms on campus. (STDII.C9.02- DEI webpage)

Various committees in HCC's Shared Governance system (described in detail in Standard VII) are responsible for Board Policy review, including all policies related to ethics and integrity. Policies are reviewed every 5 years; the Student Affairs committee, for example, revised Board Policy #5032 (Discrimination, Hate Crimes, and Biased Incident Reporting) to eliminate overlap between it and policy #4042 (Free Speech and Anti-Discrimination). The revision was approved by the Board of Trustees in FA23 and was updated in the Board Policy Manual accordingly. (STDII.C9.03- BoT Policy Manual)

HCC demonstrates an ongoing commitment to ethical practices, including recognizing the essential value of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in creating a healthy, respectful environment for members of the community. Based on evidence like DEI initiatives, relative affordability, and support services, HCC is fulfilling its mission with ethics and integrity.

Strengths
The significant growth in the proportion of Students of Color over the past several years provides evidence of HCC's commitment to serving underrepresented populations.

HCC's continued affordability allows access to high-quality education for a large population of students, paving the way for socio-economic upward mobility and creating a stronger, more vibrant workforce in Washington County and the surrounding areas.

Opportunities
Recruiting employees from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups remains a priority for the College, in accordance with the Mission, Vision, and Commitment 6 of the Strategic Plan.
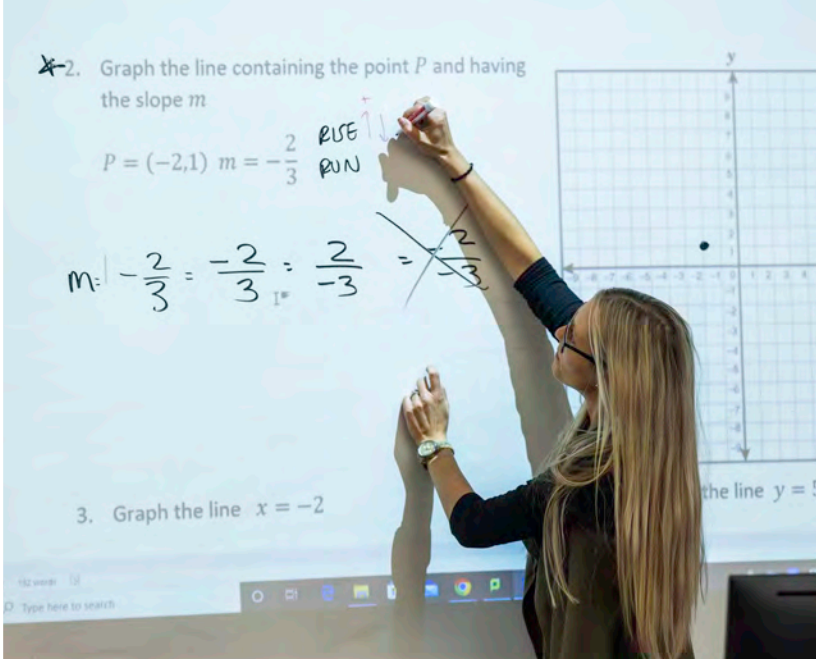
DESIGN & DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Chapter III: Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Executive Summary:
HCC demonstrates commitment to delivering high-quality academic programs that support student success and meet community and workforce needs. Evidence supporting Standard III evaluates the college's effectiveness in designing and delivering these programs, ensuring they align with the institution's mission and the diverse needs of its students.

Faculty at HCC are highly qualified, with appropriate academic credentials and practical experience in their fields. The college fosters continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and training programs to ensure faculty are equipped with the latest pedagogical techniques and subject matter knowledge. Faculty involvement in curriculum development and review is essential, ensuring academic programs remain relevant and responsive to evolving industry standards and student needs.

Through intentional design, dedicated faculty, and a focus on student-centered learning, HCC ensures that its academic programs meet the needs of its students and community.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

(This standard supports Institutional Priority #1: Student Success and Retention and Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

The "equitable access to affordable, high-quality educational programs" delineated in HCC's mission statement is the driving force behind the teaching excellence and innovation found across all programs at HCC. Of the over 100 programs, certifications, and non-credit certification programs, 10 associate's degree programs and 4 certificates are also available entirely online. In accordance with MHEC and MSCHE expectations, these educational options provide students with engaging, rigorous learning experiences led by highly qualified educators.

Over the last decade, HCC has worked to straighten pathways for students to achieve their academic goals, including a redesign of developmental English courses to a co-curricular model and a realignment of math developmental courses. Additionally, as the pandemic underscored the importance of high-quality online education, HCC has provided extensive training and support for online and hybrid course development, including Master Classroom and Quality Matters certification.

In 2021, the Blueprint was passed by the MD General Assembly, with the purpose of ensuring that all students have equal opportunity for a quality education – especially those who have historically been underserved – by providing college courses at no cost to the student. HCC has offered dual enrollment courses for years, but the implementation of the Blueprint in 2023 resulted in dramatically increased numbers of dual enrolled students. HCC's Early College Access Program (ECAP) is designed to give college-ready high school students the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school; HCC courses are offered on campus, online, and in Washington County high schools, which has resulted in a strong partnership with Washington County Public

Schools. ECAP opens the door to college for high school students who never imagined themselves in college, and those students are supported to finish out their program pathway at HCC after high school graduation. The Early College Degree Program (ECDP) allows high school students to attend HCC full time during their junior and senior years. Twenty-five career programs and over thirty transfer programs are available to students in the ECDP. (STDIII.01 – Early College flyer)

In 2022, HCC was awarded a $2.25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Title III, Part A. Title III, created through the Higher Education Act of 1965, provides federal assistance to strengthen and improve the academic quality of institutions of higher education, with an emphasis on assisting low-income students. This highly competitive grant secured funding for the development of the Guided Pathways Approach to Student Success Title III project, which is focused on improving student retention and success. The project plan intentionally engages students, faculty, staff, and the community by developing a strategic orientation, first-year experience, and an early alert system to identify students at risk of dropping out. Implementation strategies aim to increase student engagement and retention and improve teaching and learning. (STDIII.02-Title III Grant Proposal)

These combined efforts to remove unnecessary obstacles to student academic success and achievement highlight HCC's commitment to providing the high-quality educational programs promised in the mission statement.

Criteria 1: Certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning; (ROA 9)

HCC strives to provide a cohesive and coherent academic experience for students, guided by the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan (AASP). (STDIII.C1.01- Academic Affairs Strategic Plan) Program maps, designed by faculty and division directors, align institutional learning outcomes with program outcomes. Program outcomes drive the development of course outcomes, and course offerings are modified to reflect programmatic goals. Program pathways help students navigate their course selection and progression through their chosen program. The Dean of Instruction, along with faculty and division directors, consider articulation agreements with other institutions when they create or modify pathways for transfer students to maximize their coursework at HCC. More on articulation agreements can be found in Standard IV. General education courses provide a shared framework to help students synthesize core concepts and interdisciplinary applications. (STDIII.C1.02- Sample program map) Quality Matters standards for online courses also require alignment of course and unit outcomes at the course level.

Guiding course and program modifications is HCC's curriculum manual, which explains the processes to modify, deactivate, or add courses or programs, and provides reference materials for developing and revising courses and programs. (STDIII.C1.03- Curriculum manual) All substantive changes to courses or programs must be approved by the curriculum committee. (STDIII.C1.04- Sample Curriculum Committee Minutes)

For noncredit courses, many of HCC's workforce development programs are taught to industry standards, i.e. Maryland Board of Nursing, American Welding Society, and Maryland Real Estate Commission. Because students are not pursuing degrees but rather industry certifications, state licenses, or personal enrichment, program managers work with local business and community members for feedback on the courses. Workforce Solutions/Continuing Education monitors enrollment and course evaluations for feedback on the courses and makes necessary adjustments within the parameters set by accrediting bodies and industry standards. (STDIII.C1.05- WSCE Weekly FTE Report; STDIII.C1.06- WSCE Course Evaluation Instrument)

HCC adheres to MSCHE's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation for all curriculum and assessment processes. Additionally, HCC is regulated by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). MHEC is the State of Maryland's higher education coordinating board responsible for establishing statewide policies for Maryland public and private colleges and universities, as well as for-profit career schools. All state agency regulations (including MHEC's) are compiled in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). According to MHEC, standard associate's degrees must be 60 credit hours, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.

Criteria 2: Student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are:
Criteria 2b. qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do;
Criteria 2c. sufficient in number; (ROA 8, 15)

According to the most recent data from the HCC Fact Book 2023 to 2024, HCC has a total of 290 instructional staff (i.e. 75 full-time and 215 part-time faculty members). Teaching load for full-time faculty members is 15 credits or 5 courses per semester with a student-faculty ratio of 19:1. Full-time faculty represented approximately 26% of the instructional staff population in FA23, which was significantly down from 39% in FA22. However, this shift was numerically an insignificant change, dropping only from 76 to 75 individuals. This drop also reflected a similar trend among overall full-time employees, moving from 59% in FA22 to 48% in FA23). (STDIII.C2.01- HCC Fact Book)

Of the 76 full-time faculty members, 20 have terminal degrees (doctoral degrees & MFA degrees), 52 have master's degrees, and 4 faculty members have bachelor's degrees and are working towards finishing a master's degree. Specific degree information is provided in the Office of Academic Affairs: Faculty/Divisions Directory. (STDIII.C2.02- HCC College Catalog) The number of faculty by tenure status can be found in the Fact Book. (STDIII.C2.03- HCC Fact Book)

The Academic Affairs Faculty Guidebook provides guidelines for faculty teaching load, which is 15 credit-hour equivalents, and workload:

Table 5
Faculty Workload

Work Allocation	Percent of Work Hours	Work Hours to be Spent
Teaching and Learning	75%	30 hours per week
Learner support activity (office hours and advising), Class preparation, Student contact hours (15 hours)		
College and Community Service	15%	6 hours per week
Serving on committees, Recruiting students, Presentations to faculty		
Professional Development	10%	4 hours per week
Total	**100%**	**40 hours per week**

Source: Academic Affairs Faculty Guidebook

35

During the program review process and the unit planning process, faculty workload and FTE are evaluated to guide employment decisions that will support effective student learning. The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness tracks and maintains records of faculty work assignments by program. (STDIII.C2.04- Faculty Course Assignments Overview)

In FA24, the number of full-time faculty at each rank is as follows: 15 Instructors, 33 Assistant Professors, 17 Associate Professors, and 11 Professors. All records for faculty qualifications are maintained through the HR department. In Ellucian Colleague, HR maintains the Institutions Attended Summary (IASU) and External Institution Attended (INAT) for each individual faculty member. (STDIII.C2a.01- Catalog Faculty Credentials)

The Blueprint has impacted the number of part-time faculty members because Washington County Public School teachers are teaching HCC courses in the high schools. (STDIII.C2b.01- PT HS Instructors) HR, in accordance with the MOU with the school district, ensures that the adjunct instructors in the high schools meet employment requirements. (STDIII.C2a.02- Blueprint MOU)

Criteria 2d. provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation

(This section supports Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

The Fletcher Faculty Development Center at HCC provides a facility, staff support, and professional development to help the college's faculty members maintain and improve excellence in teaching, as evidenced by the robust numbers of workshops and events listed in the HCC Faculty Development Calendar and past PDF flyers. (STDIII.C2d.01- Fletcher Faculty Development Calendar) Categories of the professional development opportunities offered include course design, assessment, current cultural themes (i.e., Artificial Intelligence, Diversity/ Equity/Inclusion), new technology, and faculty driven initiatives, and participation is tracked and monitored by Human Resources. Some examples of meaningful professional development opportunities include offerings on curriculum and course development, D2L Instructor training, Quality Matters certification, SLOA workshops, and Writing Across the Curriculum. (STDIII.C2d.02- Examples of Offerings)

A number of professional development opportunities are targeted at part-time faculty who are teaching in the high schools. The sharp increase of part-time faculty members in the high schools necessitated training opportunities to ensure consistency in curriculum and assessment. HR processed 91 adjuncts in FA23, when the Blueprint went into effect (by comparison, HR processed 38 in CY24). During the first year, full-time faculty and division directors facilitated meetings and provided resources to the new hires. During the summer of 2024, the Blueprint Planning Committee worked to develop a Dual Enrollment Instructor Handbook, which provides training and assessment expectations and instructions for these instructors. (STDIII.C2d.03- Dual Enrollment Instructor Handbook)

In addition to the other employee development initiatives, in 2022, the Board of Trustees doubled the budgetary allocation and number of credit hours allowed per year for employees seeking advanced degrees. They also expanded the qualifying paths of study to accommodate employees interested in exploring new directions at the college. (STDIII.C2d.04- Policy 5091)

More information about targeted professional development can be found in Standards I, II and IV.

Criteria 2a. rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies;

Criteria 2e. reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures

(This section supports Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

HCC's Academic Affairs Faculty Guidebook, which is available to all internal stakeholders under the "Popular Links" section of the Faculty & Staff resource area of the college website, provides expectations for faculty observations; all adjuncts, full time faculty, and WCPS instructors are observed on a rotating basis. A form with feedback is shared with each instructor who is observed, and faculty have the option of providing a written response. (STDIII.C2e.01- Faculty Observation Form) Faculty also use KRONOS to submit their Annual Review Professional Development Plan (ARPDP), which is sent to the VPAASS and President for yearly approval. (STDIII.C2e.02- Faculty Guidebook; STDIII.C2e.03- ARPDP Template) The division director reviews ARPDPs carefully and provides feedback and comments before meeting with each faculty member. Other administrators, including the VPAASS, review the ARPDPs and provide less extensive comments. Plans include narratives on faculty teaching, curriculum development, and assessment of student learning while encouraging faculty to reflect on their contributions to the college and community, set professional goals for themselves, and monitor their progress towards those goals.

The Faculty Guidebook provides detailed information about the promotion and tenure process, including requirements of eligibility, timelines, and the procedure for applying for promotion or tenure.

As a student-centered institution, one of the most valuable forms of feedback at HCC is the Student Evaluation of Faculty (SEOF), which was completely revised and updated in the SP20 by the Faculty Affairs Committee. This revision reflects the faculty's call for constructive, meaningful feedback from students, tailored to the different formats of classes and course materials. Examples of revisions to the evaluation include adding questions that encourage students to reflect on their effort and interest in the course, focused questions about the instructional delivery and materials of the course, and open-ended questions about the specific strengths and weaknesses of the course. (STDIII.C2e.04- SEOF) The SEOF is discussed in faculty ARPDP, reviewed by division directors, and included in faculty promotion portfolios.

Prior to the FA20, SEOF were administered via paper and pencil during class time. Upon moving the SEOF online, HCC has seen the student response rate decline, leading to ongoing faculty discussion and professional development related to encouraging students to complete the evaluation and fostering an environment that welcomes honest, thoughtful feedback. The specific process for SEOF as well as a statement of purpose can be found in the Academic Affairs Faculty Guidebook.

Criteria 3: Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion (ROA 2)

HCC maintains a College Catalog, which is updated annually by the department of Academic Affairs and Student Services and published on the website. (STDIII.C3.01- HCC College Catalog) In the catalog, students can find detailed information about each program, including an overview of potential careers related to that program, a detailed program pathway, and a comprehensive list of the general education and program-specific requirements. First-year students work with Student Support Advisors to discuss their academic plans and learn about the support and resources available to them. Once students have declared their program or major, they are able to monitor their academic progress on their program pathway, including what degree or program requirements they still need to complete, via Self Service. More about the role of Student Support Advisors and the student support offered at HCC can be found in Standard IV. Workforce Solutions and Continuing

Education (WSCE) updates their course offerings and schedule three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer). (STDIII.C3.02- WSCE Course Offerings Webpage)

Table 6
Graduation and Transfer-out Rates

	2016 Cohort		2017 Cohort		2018 Cohort		2019 Cohort		2020 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Students in Cohort	**356**	**100%**	**399**	**100%**	**406**	**100%**	**457**	**100%**	**462**	**100%**
Completers (through 200%)	**127**	**35.7%**	**159**	**39.8%**	**150**	**36.9%**	**176**	**38.5%**	**168**	**36.4%**
100% normal time	*65*	*51.2%*	*99*	*62.3%*	*90*	*60.0%*	*78*	*44.3%*	*108*	*64.3%*
150% normal time	*38*	*29.9%*	*39*	*24.5%*	*43*	*28.7%*	*81*	*46.0%*	*60*	*35.7%*
200% normal time	*24*	*18.9%*	*21*	*13.2%*	*17*	*11.3%*	*17*	*9.7%*	*--*	*--*
Transfer-outs										
150% normal time	*73*	*20.5%*	*80*	*20.1%*	*79*	*19.5%*	*80*	*17.5%*	*80*	*17.3%*

"Cohort" refers to the fall cohort of full-time first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students, as defined by IPEDS. Completions and transfer data follow the academic year (Summer, Fall, Spring). Elapsed time: 100% = 4 semesters (2 years), 150% = 5 semesters (2.5 years), 200% = 6 semesters (3 years). Counts are not cumulative over time. Source: IPEDS Graduation Rates, IPEDS Graduation Rates 200

As part of HCC's commitment to providing comprehensive educational opportunities, a variety of programs tailored to meet the diverse needs of its student population are offered. For example, the Dual Enrollment program grew significantly in FA23 with the implementation of the Blueprint legislation. HCC is taking steps to pursue NACEP accreditation in order to ensure that the high school offerings replicate the high quality of the on-campus course offerings. Additionally, both credit and non-credit classes have previously been offered at the local prison, and HCC is currently filing paperwork to participate in the federal Prison Education Programs (PEP), which will allow the College to offer Pell grants to incarcerated individuals. The plan is to begin by offering 3-credit certificate programs to those students: Horticulture, General Studies, and Welding. Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are in high demand, preparing students for workforce entry in fields such as healthcare and technology, and non-credit programs serve many adult learners and professionals seeking industry certifications, personal enrichment, or other educational experiences. (STDIII.C3.03- Enrollment Summary Report) Finally, ELL programs that support the college's growing population of non-native English speakers has significantly grown, helping them to improve language skills and transition into credit-bearing courses. (STDIII.C3.04- HCC MPAR)

Criteria 4: Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress of all student population

(This section supports Institutional Priority #1: Student Success and Retention and Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

HCC's students can take advantage of many learning opportunities and programs outside of the classroom. The William M. Brish library, Learning Support Center, and Testing Center are all central hubs for student support. HCC's Distance Learning offerings give students online learning options and support as well.

Library
The William M. Brish library is home to an online collection of nearly one million items in addition to its 4,588-item physical collection. (STDIII.C4.01- Library IPEDS Survey FY23) Both collections are steered by the HCC

Collection Development Guide as well as Board or Trustee Policies 7050 and 8076. (STDIII.C4.02- HCC Collection Development Guide; STDIII.C4.03- Policy 7050; STDIII.C4.04- Policy 8076) The library staff also offer bibliographic and information literacy instruction in a variety of modalities and formats to meet student and faculty needs. In the FA17, the library began embedding librarians in course sections to provide targeted support for specific research assignments. Librarians have participated in these courses by responding to discussion forum posts, emailing students relevant resources at key points during the semester, and making themselves available for in-person or virtual consultations. Librarians have been embedded in an average of 9 course sections per year, reaching an average of 200 students. The importance of library services can't be overstated: in the book *The Community College Library: Assessment*, HCC's Coordinator of Library and Learning Support Services, Kendra Perry, co-wrote a chapter titled "Investigating and Communicating Library Instruction's Relationship to Student Retention." The chapter summarized results of a retrospective cohort study conducted in parallel at Hagerstown Community College and Arizona Western College. Among other results, the study concluded that "in most semesters analyzed, students who received LI [Library Instruction] were anywhere from 5 percent to 31 percent more likely to be retained the following semester than students in similar courses who did not receive LI." This shows the value of Library Instruction at HCC.

Learning Support Center
In 2013, HCC consolidated its campus tutoring centers into a single Learning Support Center (LSC) with approximately 200 seats, serving the entire student population. Since then, the LSC has obtained tutor training certification from the CRLA (College Reading & Learning Association), has expanded the LSC website to include new features, and now offers online tutoring in parallel to tutoring on campus. Student surveys report satisfaction with tutoring, consistently rating it at 83% or higher (4.19 on a 5-point scale), with comparable satisfaction among employees. (STDIII.C4.05- LSC Survey Results)

In the fiscal years from FY16-FY19, when all student visitors to the LSC computer lab were tracked, an average of 2,996 unique students visited the LSC a total of 54,847 times per year. In the years from FY20-FY23, when only tutoring visits were tracked (a more meaningful indicator of services provided), an average of 467 unique students received tutoring each year, with a total of 2,367 tutoring interactions per year (including online tutoring).Even in years when the number of tutoring interactions decreased absolutely, it remained approximately proportional to decreases in enrollment (excluding the sharp decrease during COVID). While tutoring interactions decreased during peak COVID years, there was a 93% increase in tutoring interactions from FY22 to FY23, suggesting that tutoring utilization is rebounding. In fact, tutoring interactions increased almost twofold while enrollment remained approximately constant. (STDIII.C4.06- LSC Tutoring Statistics) New website features added in recent years, including an interactive schedule for walk-in tutoring (which can be filtered by course) and a live chat service staffed jointly by the LSC and Library, have likely contributed to an increase of website views; views have consistently numbered above ten thousand, reaching a peak of 18,334 in FY23. (STDIII.C4.07- LSC Webpage)

Testing Center
The Academic Testing Center provides comprehensive and accessible testing services to support student learning. (STDIII.C4.08- Academic Testing Center Webpage) Adhering to National College Testing Association standards, the Academic Testing Center offers a safe, secure, and efficient testing environment across various educational and professional disciplines. Key services include administering placement exams for prospective HCC students, facilitating course testing for HCC students, offering professional exams and certifications, and accommodating individuals with disabilities. By maintaining best practices and standards, the Academic Testing Center ensures high-quality testing services for all students.

Distance Education
Prior to the pandemic, the college had already been strategically offering increasing numbers of online courses to enhance accessibility and the ability to meet workforce requirements and needs. (STDIII.C4.09- HCC MPAR)

This was to help alleviate obstacles such as location, class schedules, transportation, and time. HCC continues to offer a number of degrees and certificates at least partially online, several of which can be completed entirely online. HCC continues to invest in tools to strengthen the quality of online instruction. One example is Quality Matters, a faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses and online components. Blackboard ALLY is a tool to assist faculty with providing accessible materials for students online. In response to COVID, HCC swiftly transitioned to all-online classes in 2020. Like many institutions, some faculty lacked sufficient training or experience in online instruction, with several adjuncts and full-time instructors teaching online for the first time. Complicating the move to online instruction was a transition of the Learning Management System from Moodle to Desire to Learn (D2L), completed in summer 2020, which required intensive training of faculty. Some faculty used D2L for the first time to offer summer 2020 courses, while the College was physically closed, and staff members were working from home.

Both synchronous and asynchronous professional development training and resources were immediately developed and disseminated. (STDIII.C4.10- College email March 26, 2020) Between March 2020 and December 31, 2020, when the College offered most of its courses online, 41 professional development workshops were offered to faculty that covered technology training on products such as Turnitin, Ally, Snagit and YouTube, SoftChalk, and training to increase faculty proficiency with D2L. Design of well-organized, engaging courses was a goal through training on technology that allowed faculty to add videos and organize their classes around QM principles (e.g., a training on "Online Course Design with QM Principles" was offered).

Though no longer in the throes of a global pandemic, HCC continues to demonstrate a commitment to high-quality online learning, an essential commitment given the large number of courses and programs that remain available online and the large number of students enrolled in them. According to IPEDS data from FA22, over 57% of students were participating in online coursework in some way (STDIII.C4.11- IPEDS FA Enrollment), while 10 degree programs and four certificate programs are offered completely online.

The Distance Learning department provides much-needed guidance to help faculty navigate the world of online teaching, which includes but extends beyond the design and delivery of course content online. For example, the Distance Learning department offers professional development on a variety of relevant topics, including how to navigate and effectively use D2L Brightspace (HCC's learning management system), best practices for course design, guidelines for common navigation, and accessibility of content. HCC has adopted several tools to improve accessibility within the learning management systems, including Readspeaker for students with visual or language learning limitations, Ally software to track both individual courses and institutional-level accessibility progress (over 80% of courses currently surpass standard accessibility requirements), and Panopto for creating engaging videos with extensive captioning features to accommodate students with auditory challenges. Additionally, the Distance Learning department maintains a guidebook for faculty which provides guidelines and expectations for classroom setup and management. (STDIII.C4.12- Distance Learning Guidebook)

Online instructors are encouraged to have their courses evaluated by Distance Learning for quality assurance, a process called Master Classroom development. At its core, QM course certification is a peer-review process for evaluating course design, and quality in online and hybrid courses. As faculty members move through the QM rubric evaluation, they receive fresh ideas and specific feedback that can help improve course quality and create a more active learning experience for their students. To achieve Master Classroom (MC) status, a course must meet a preset list of standards. Online instructors create MC with assistance from an instructional designer and approval from both the Dean of Academic Innovation and Instructional Technology and the respective division's Director. After moving through this internal process, faculty can attain globally recognized certification through the Quality Matters (QM) organization. (STDIII.C4.13- QM Website) A new institutional timeline regarding QM course certification was set in place by President Klauber during the SP24 all-college

Colloquium: all general education courses that are exclusively taught online will be QM-certified by the end of the FA26 semester. This initiative will put the college in league with top institutions across the country. U.S. News & World Report recently ranked the "Best Online Programs" in this country, with 9 out of the top 10 colleges and universities listed being official members of the QM organization. In order to best support this initiative, HCC has two full-time instructional designers on staff, having hired the first instructional designer in the Summer of 2019. The second position, added in SP23, is currently grant-funded.

> *Based on current QM records, HCC is now #1 among Maryland Community College with regards to the number of QM-certified courses, and #2 overall in the state.*
>
> *The overall rankings for Higher Ed can be found on the QM website (STDIII.C4.14- QM Rankings Webpage)*

Because student engagement is at the heart of successful online education, several tools are built into D2L Brightspace to provide opportunities for interaction with faculty and students: Zoom for live teleconferencing, Virtual Classroom for synchronous lectures, announcement and video note tools, messenger and email features, and discussion boards. These tools are not only useful to connect instructors and students but are important requirements for QM certification. Academic support is built into every course, with direct access to HCC's library and tutoring assistance at the bottom of each home page. Using the "Discover" option on the D2L homepage, students may also self-enroll in the following resource spaces within the learning management system:
- A full "Library & Tutoring" course which provides students with greater details of the options provided by those areas
- A New Student Orientation course, which contains all the content and resources used for the in-person orientation sessions

The navigation bar, available within every course, also outlines various campus support options available to students, such as Disability Support Services, the Testing Center, and TRIO.

Additionally, credit classes have been moving away from using traditional textbooks by incorporating digital textbooks directly within virtual classrooms. As of FA24, over 46% of online and hybrid courses use e-text and online courseware. As a result, the overall cost of student learning materials is significantly reduced and can be covered by financial aid, and students receive access to the course materials on their first day of class. More about measures to reduce textbook costs can be found in Standard II.

Criteria 5: At institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that

Criteria 5a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field

Criteria 5 b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives

COMAR-defined standards and general education course outcomes can be found in HCC's "General Education Course Criteria," which was updated in May of 2023. (STDIII.C5a.01- General Education Course Criteria)

Required general education categories include English composition, Arts and Humanities, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Biological and Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Globalization and Diversity. Except Globalization and Diversity, these categories are COMAR-required. HCC's general education categories are mapped with the ILOs to address the Middle States curricular requirements. In 2022, the Dean of Instruction developed a General Education Curriculum Map, which includes HCC's gen ed outcomes for each category and which courses address COMAR gen ed requirements and which courses align with ILOs. (STDIII.C5b.01- General Education Curriculum Map) e.A., A.S., and A.A.T. degrees must include 28-36 credits of general education courses, per COMAR standards. A.A.S. degrees must include 18 credits of general education courses.

Though COMAR's last revision to the gen ed requirements was August 1, 2017, HCC has continued to revise and improve gen ed course outcomes. Prior to 2021, general education courses had to meet a designated number of outcomes for that category, but in 2021 the outcomes were revised to be fixed in every general education category to improve the consistency of the student experience. Substantial changes made to general education outcomes are reviewed and discussed by academic division Directors, the Dean of Instruction, and the VPAASS before going through the Curriculum Committee for review and approval. General education outcomes are also used to determine whether new or existing courses align with their proposed general education category. A recent list of HCC's approved general education for credit courses can be found in the College Catalog, which is updated and reviewed each year. (STDIII.C5b.02- HCC College Catalog)

A list reflecting changes made to general education course designations from 2019-2024, as approved by the Curriculum Committee, can be found in the evidence inventory. (STDIII.C5a.02- General Education Course Change List)

Criteria 6: in institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula

Criteria 7: adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers

These criteria do not apply to HCC.

Criteria 8: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities

The changing landscape of the student population due to the Blueprint has led to a careful reconsideration of the design and delivery of HCC courses, particularly for courses being offered in the high schools. Robust professional development opportunities for both instructors in the high schools and faculty on campus have been essential in facilitating the transition to the Blueprint. (STDIII.C801- In-Service Schedule; STDIII.C8.02- Faculty Workshop Offerings) A revised MOU was signed in FA24 with WCPS to address some of the difficulties encountered during the first year of full implementation of the Blueprint. (STDIII.C803- Blueprint MOU) HCC is pursuing NACEP accreditation to ensure quality college courses for high school students through recognized national standards. The process for NACEP accreditation takes 2 years, and HCC will be conducting a self-audit and will officially apply for accreditation by December 2025.

The quality of library services provided to our students is assessed through the LibQUAL+ survey. Overall students were mostly satisfied, based on categories of review. (STDIII.C804- LibQUAL+ Survey Results) In response to areas of concern identified, the Library has since implemented a laptop and hotspot lending

program to provide modern equipment for students to access information, redesigned the library website for easier independent use, and continued to develop its student worker training program.

The LSC's primary metric for success is the student utilization of the services provided. This metric informs decisions about staffing as well as the services the LSC offers. For example, low attendance of prescheduled LSC workshops prompted the staff to offer workshops by student request instead, refocusing staff attention on the larger number of walk-in students.

In FA24, some programs were moved to different divisions in an effort to better align program goals and outcomes. For example, the five-year review in Visual Arts completed in the 23-24 academic year served as a catalyst for change in English and Humanities, as the disciplines of Graphic Design, Web/Multimedia Development and Web Site Design moved from the former Technology and Computer Science Division because graphic design and web design programs align well with the art department and will hopefully inspire curriculum development and collaboration in the division. Business, formerly a part of the Behavioral and Social Sciences division, was moved into the newly named Business and Technology division, where it better fits with the career focus of other programs in that division.

A new process for program review was developed in FY23, in collaboration between Academic Affairs and Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, in alignment with Board Policy 4026. The policy states, in part, that "Instructional faculty and academic officers, supported by appropriate administrative offices and College committees, are responsible for review and analysis leading to recommendations that will improve programs of study. The program reviews are to both be part of planning and assessment activities, as well as activated when major program concerns arise. (For example: low enrollments or high costs.)" (STDIII.C805- Policy #4026)

Templates and schedules have been developed for each division (see below). Program reviews follow a set timeline from June to May to align with the academic year, culminating with a report of activities to the Board of Trustees. Divisions are also given requirements to determine suitable program evaluators and parameters for how the evaluation visits should be conducted.

When a program is reviewed, a report is completed that addresses required topics. In the first year, nine programs were reviewed with the remaining programs scheduled to be reviewed across a five-year period. The review process incorporates an analysis of the program's alignment with the mission of the College and the ILOs, an examination of the program's curriculum and experiential learning opportunities, as well as analysis of program outcomes, teaching modalities, completion data for majors, program faculty credentials, financial data (expenses and revenue) and resources, student demographics, articulation agreements, connections with an advisory board (if any), marketing, and assessment results. An outside evaluator reviews the written report and visits the campus to talk with faculty, students, and administrators. The evaluator's report is part of a package shared with the Board of Trustees.

Table 7

Schedule for Program Review

Program Reviews: 5 Year Cycle				
Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**
BSS				
BSS- History and Political Science: AA.HIS, AA.POL	BSS-Human Services: AAS.HST, AS.HSV, LTR.HST, BSS-Substance Abuse Counseling, AAS.SUB, CER.SUB	BSS-Education and Childcare: AAS.ECE, AAT.ECH, AAT.ENE, AAT.ELE, AS.EDU, CER.CCP, LTR.CCP	BSS-Social Sciences: AA.PSY, AA.SOC	BSS- Admin. Of Justice: AA.AMJ, AA.PSC, AAS.ADJ, CER.PSC
BT				
Cycle A -YR 1	**Cycle A -YR 2**	**Cycle A -YR 3**	**Cycle A -YR 4**	**Cycle A -YR 5**
BT-Information Systems: AAS.ISCS, AAS.ISNA, CER.ISNT	BT-Computer Science: AS.CSC	BT-Unmanned Aerial Systems: CER.UAS	BT-Alternative Energy: AAS.AET, CER.AESW	BT-Cybersecurity: AAS.CYB, AAS.ISCF, AS.CYB, CER.CANS
Cycle B -YR 6	**Cycle B -YR 7**	**Cycle B -YR 8**	**Cycle B -YR 9**	**Cycle B -YR 10**
BT-Business: AAS.A&B, AAS.MGT, AAS.MMC, AS.BUS, CER.MGT, LTR.MGT, CER.MMC, LTR.MMC	BT-Mechatronics and Industrial Technology: AAS.AMS, CER.INDT, LTR.IWF	BT-Mechanical Engineering and CAD: AAS.CAD, AAS.MET, CER.CAD, LTR.CAD	BT-Electrical Engineering and DIPC: AAS.EET, AAS.IPC, CER.BELN	BT-Technical Studies: AAS.TECH BT-Commercial Vehicle, AAS.CVT, CER.CVT, CER.TRK
EM				
EM-Environmental Science: AS.ENV	EM-Chemistry: AS.CHM	EM-Biology: AS.BIO	HCC-Arts & Sciences/General Studies: AA.ASC, AS.ASC,AA.GST	EM-Engineering, Physics and Math: AS.EGR,AS.MAT, AS.PHY
HS				
HS-Accredited: As determined by accreditor	HS-Accredited: As determined by accreditor	HS-Accredited: As determined by accreditor	HS-Accredited: As determined by accreditor HS-Exercise Science & Health, AS.CHC, AS.ESH, LTR.FIT	HS-Accredited: As determined by accreditor
HU				
HU-English: AA.ENG	HU-Web, Multimedia, and Design: AAS.WEB, AAS.ISDA, AAS.ISDP CER.WBM, LTR.WBS	HU-Music and Performing Arts: AA.DNC, AA.MUS, AA.TH, CER.CMU	HU-Arts & Sciences: AA.ASC, HU-Foreign Languages, AA.FLA, HU-Visual Arts, AA.VAR	HU-Graphic Design Technology: AA.GDT, AAS.GDT, CER.GDT, LTR.GDC, LTR.GDG
NUR				
NUR-Accredited: As determined by accreditor	NUR-Accredited: As determined by accreditor	NUR-Accredited: As determined by accreditor	NUR-Accredited: As determined by accreditor	NUR-Accredited: As determined by accreditor

Source: Internal [Teams space)](#)

Another form of review applies to programs that undergo a "substantial" modification report that is submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). These reports are presented to justify major program changes. They report data that is traditionally part of a program review. For example, a proposal for removing and adding courses to the AS in Engineering Science addressed market demand and jobs available for graduates, alignment with the College's mission and strategic goals, faculty credentials, faculty development, student learning outcomes, a program evaluation plan, and an analysis of financial, physical and library resources. This process is valuable in that it requires a comprehensive examination and analysis of the program.

More information about assessment and program review can be found in Standard V.

Strengths
Examining HCC's design and delivery of the student experience reveals a committed, qualified faculty who are sensitive to student needs and focused on continuous improvement, as demonstrated through professional development, collaboration, and teaching excellence. For example, the "Master Classroom" course improvement initiative: developing master course templates involves revamping course design, setting baseline accessibility requirements, and promoting a more consistent experience for students.
Over the last year there has been a significant increase in faculty support, and the college currently has over 50 approved master templates, which were all guided by Quality Matters (QM) standards. Many pre-approved master templates have gone on to receive official certification by QM, which is currently held as the international standard for quality assurance in online and blended learning.

Opportunities
While feedback and data are being used to improve the design and delivery of the student experience, there's room for growth. Some areas where further feedback could be solicited include
- Student feedback to Distance Education regarding instructional design and IT support
- Faculty feedback to the Instructional Design team after the Master Classroom and QM course reviews
- Faculty feedback on campus-based professional development offerings

Additionally, though the SEOF is already a valuable feedback source, some minor adjustments could yield even more helpful results. For example, currently the SEOF does not ask about the course modality, which is a relevant aspect to consider. Also, while there is a comment section toward the end, it's possible that giving students the opportunity to comment on each question may provide more detailed information about their ratings.

SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Chapter IV: Standard IV – Support of the Student Experience

Executive Summary
The supportive culture at HCC is shaped by the robust services offered to students, a testament to the college's commitment to student retention, persistence, and completion. The affordable tuition, thoughtful developmental placement, and orientation help new students find their place, while advising, CARE services, and a suite of student support offices position students for success in meeting their academic and non-academic goals. Clubs and sports serve to engage students in valuable extracurricular and social activities.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

(This standard supports Institutional Priority #1: Student Success, Enrollment, and Retention and Institutional Priority #2: Student Experience.)

HCC's website promises visitors, "Your best future starts at HCC." As an institution of higher education, the college is committed to helping students achieve their academic and professional goals. As an open-enrollment institution, the college recognizes that it has an ethical duty to provide support to students whose academic needs are as diverse as their personal backgrounds. HCC faculty and staff take pride in providing holistic support inside and outside of the classroom. Students are provided a high-quality education while not taking for granted their most valued resources: time and money.

Proof of HCC's student-centered experience is seen in the data. While too many Colleges face steady or declining enrollment, HCC has experienced an enrollment boom. The Blueprint has contributed significantly to dual enrollment growth, but it's important to note that all sectors of HCC's student body are growing. Moreover, students benefit from a comprehensive scaffolding of support to start them on their academic journey. According to the 2023 CCSSE survey, roughly two-thirds of students surveyed indicated being very satisfied with resources like academic and financial aid advising. (STDIV.01- CCSSE Results)

The commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in efforts like securing a Title III grant, awarded in 2022. During the first two years of Title III, New Student Orientation was transformed and significantly enhanced, and at-risk new students now receive increased support via the First-Year Experience course. Other innovative initiatives include a partnership with the United Way of Washington County, which has recently yielded important wrap-around services for credit and non-credit students, including Lyft services for students with transportation challenges. Partnerships with organizations like the United Way helps HCC to connect students with the community services they need to be successful in college and achieve their "best future."

Criteria 1: clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including:
Criteria 1a. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds

HCC's tuition and fees remain affordable despite the changing national economic landscape. Students can

easily access detailed information about the expenses of attending HCC, as well as scholarship and loan information, on the Tuition and Fees page of the website. (STDIV.C1a.01- Tuition and Fees webpage) About 70% of HCC credit students require financial assistance and HCC is dedicated to creating responsible, manageable financial plans for students. (STDIV.C1a.02- HCC MPAR) Under "Financial Aid' on the website, students can find links to available grants, including Pell grants and Maryland need-based programs. (STDIV.C1a.03- Student Aid Grants webpage) Information about both credit and workforce scholarships can be found on the website as well, including details about qualifications and how to apply. Most importantly, students can easily find instructions about how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as contact information for financial aid advisors who can help with the process. (STDIV.C1a.04- HCC FAFSA webpage) While assistance with Federal and state aid is not unique to HCC, internal student financial assistance is. HCC's Foundation currently offers over $800,000 in annual scholarships, with a goal of reaching a record $1,000,000 in annual scholarship aid within the next few years. Students challenged by unique financial needs that may derail their academic plans can apply for a one-time Student Emergency Grant to keep them enrolled. Applications are reviewed by a committee that collectively dispenses over $15,000 annually in discretionary funding, sourced by the College budget, HCC Foundation and the HCC Alumni Association. Since 2018, HCC's Alumni Association has issued over $12,000 in monetary assistance to help approximately 40 students pay utility bills, take job-entry exams, keep their housing, pay childcare providers, and obtain course materials; 92% of student recipients completed their HCC credential or persist today. More information about the affordability of HCC can be found in Standard II.

HCC regularly reviews practices to ensure they are in the best interest of the student and, when warranted, adjustments are made. Sometimes adjustments result in a net gain for students and a loss to the College financially. An example is the decision to adjust the institutional refund policy in FY23, when the last day to withdraw from classes for a full refund was extended by approximately a week for 15-week session classes (and the equivalent for shorter-term sessions).While the net result was a financial loss for HCC, students benefit by not being financially locked into classes before many could decide whether or not the class was a good match for their abilities or time commitments. Data from the first year of this refund deadline extension shows the number of Registration Appeals declining slightly over the FY24 year, from 106 refund appeals in FY23 to 91 refund appeals in FY24, despite an overall enrollment increase. (STDIV.C1a.05- Registration Appeals Spreadsheet)

Criteria 1b. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals
(This section supports Institutional Priority #1: Student Success, Enrollment, and Retention.)

HCC is a place where the academic underdog has the opportunity to be successful. Being an affordable, open-enrollment community college means that HCC 's reach extends to students who may not have previously envisioned themselves as college bound. Students in need of extra support are identified, placed, and supported inside and outside of the classroom, and this process has been improved for students over the past five years. Formerly, whether a student began at or below college-level courses was determined solely by placement tests. All students new to college were subjected to placement exams, regardless of high school GPA. Too often, placement into developmental courses meant several extra semesters of coursework. Many struggled with what seemed to be an insurmountable barrier, especially when even after a few semesters, they still had not even started on the path to completion. Longitudinal data showed that for students who began with the lowest developmental math course in FA10-13, as few as 0.7% to a high of 8.4% completed an associate degree within 3-4 years. Between 2.9% and 15.3% completed an associate degree in more than four years in 2010-13 cohorts. During the same period, of students who began in the lowest level English course, between 0-7.9% completed an associate degree in 3-4 years and between 0-14.6% completed an associate degree in more than four years. (STDIV.C1b.01- HCC MPAR)

Table 8
Persistence Rates

	Fall 2016 Cohort	Fall 2017 Cohort	Fall 2018 Cohort	Fall 2019 Cohort
16 Successful-persister rate after four years				
a. College-ready students	84.5%	87.6%	82.1%	81.0%
b. Developmental completers	88.0%	85.8%	71.2%	70.7%
c. Developmental non-completers	46.8%	60.9%	25.5%	25.0%
d. All students in cohort	73.4%	83.1%	68.2%	76.6%

Upon studying the successes of several fellow Maryland community colleges, HCC modified requirements for placement testing. Beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, incoming students could meet exemption requirements for participating in Placement Tests in several ways, including achieving a 3.0 or higher high school GPA. First-time, full-time, first-year (FTFTFY) students in the FA20 cohort who were exempt from the placement test because of a 3.0 high school GPA succeeded at a higher rate in math (60.2%) compared with students who were deemed college-ready based on a placement exam. The overall success rate was 58.8%. (STDIV.C1b.02-Gateway Math Coursetaking Report 20-21) Likewise, the FA20 cohort who were considered to be college-ready based on a 3.0 high school GPA were also more successful in completing English (73.3%) than students who were deemed college-ready based on a placement exam. The overall success rate was 66.5%. (STDIV.C1b.03- Gateway English Coursetaking Report 21) This marked the beginning of HCC's adoption of multiple measures -- perhaps the most transformative action taken by administration and faculty in recent years.

In 2018, the Math Faculty started to develop math pathways in an effort to help students get to their general education math course more quickly than in the past. The pathways are Algebra/Calculus or Reasoning/Statistics, and were implemented in FA19. These options have helped the college community to advise students on the correct pathway according to their majors. Prior to 2018, developmental math students took the same developmental classes before choosing their college-level path; now they take a developmental class geared toward their pathway for their major. (STDIV.C1b.04- Math Options File)

English faculty in the composition courses abandoned the remedial course track in favor of the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) model, where students take their development coursework concurrently with English Composition (ENG 101); this shift enabled many students to complete their English composition requirement in one semester by co-enrolling in ENG 095 and ENG 101. Prior to the redesign, only 6% of students who placed into ENG 98 even made it to ENG 101.

Criteria 1c. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience
(This section supports Institutional Priority #1: Student Success, Enrollment, and Retention.)

Improving how students are placed into developmental courses and shortening the timeframe required for students to gain foundational academic skills necessary for success in college-level courses has proven to be transformative to the student experience. Enhancements made possible by the Title III grant to new student orientation and enhanced career development and job services have significantly improved the student experience. Additionally, shifts in HCC's academic advising model and broadening of the CARE team provide intrusive student support.

Orientation
New student orientation is a valuable tool not only to provide students with key information about HCC, but also to help them forge meaningful connections with members of the HCC community. Orientation is offered both online and in-person, and both have improved substantially over the last ten years. Since 2022, oversight for orientation has shifted to the Title III team with more year-round staff dedicated solely to this purpose. The results have been tremendous. Due to the varying off-campus responsibilities of HCC's student population, the majority of new students have typically completed online orientation. The online orientation program has been significantly enhanced using D2L Brightspace, which not only houses the videos, documents, and content related to each department, but also gives students the opportunity to learn to maneuver around D2L before classes start.

From FA17 to SP23, a total of 5,495 students and guests attended either a three-hour in-person orientation program or participated in a virtual program requiring around 30 minutes, with virtual attendance far exceeding in-person, averaging about 500 students per semester. However, in FA23 during the first year of the Title III grant, 834 students participated in both in-person and an updated, more intense online version of New Student Orientation. Approximately 95% attended in-person due in part to the online version not being accessible at the start of the FA23 term. In summer 2024 and FA24, a combined 926 students completed either the Online D2L Orientation course or the in-person Orientation.

While new student orientation participation has risen significantly, it only partially captures the renewed excitement at the start of each semester. This shift is driven by the Title III team, which benefits from a dedicated focus on orientation and an appropriate budget. Prior to HCC's Title III grant, new student orientation was one of several primary duties of an already stretched Student Activities team comprised of only 1.5 FTE and their equally stretched student affairs colleagues "volunteering" what time they could muster to welcome students. The program was half the time (three hours instead of six) and the Student Activities Office somehow maintained to keep their office open, issuing new student ID cards and parking passes and assisting Food Pantry students, while also running the orientation program. Promotion and marketing also struggled under this limited staff model. Resources matter; the Title III grant has transformed the new student experience into a revived, vibrant, engaged new student orientation. As the Title III grant progresses, retention and completion rates for the students who experienced the revitalized orientation in FA24 and beyond will be collected and compared to previous retention and completion rates, with the expectation that the improved orientation will improve both areas.

Figure 4
Orientation Attendance

Orientation Attendance FY 18-24
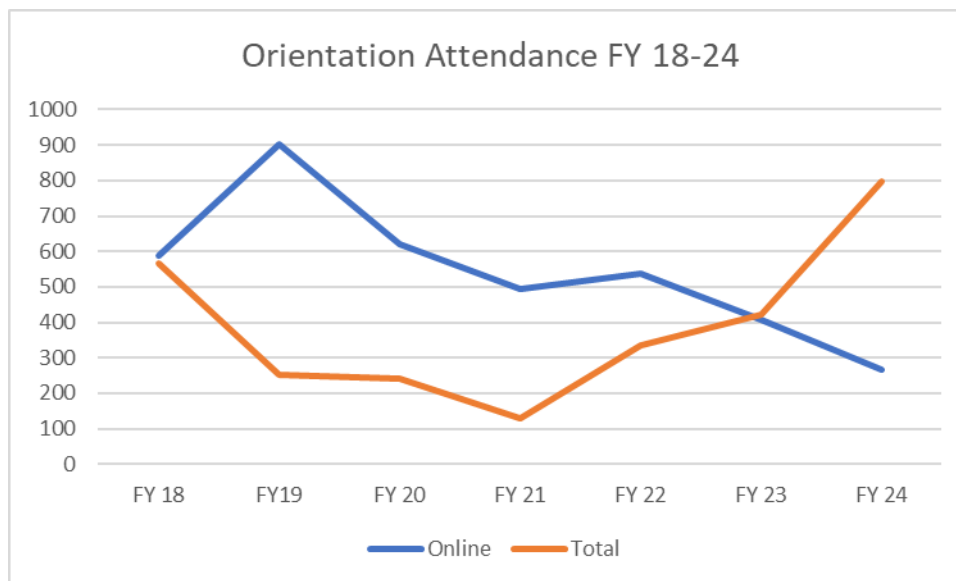
Advisement & Student Outreach

The rippling effects of the pandemic required greater investment in services designed to retain HCC's at-risk student population, who were made even more at risk given heightened economic vulnerability. The advising model on campus has undergone substantial changes, redesigns and reorganizations since the last self-study. In the FA15, Student Affairs was reorganized by splitting Admissions and Registration while moving Registration to the Student Center, which is considered the hub of student activity. The increased traffic from walk-ins challenged the relatively small group of academic advisors, and the pandemic pushed the office from a walk-in model to an appointment model. Today, the office has found a balance operating within both models. Since the pandemic, there has been a steady increase in visits, from 5,975 visits in 2020-2021 to 7,495 visits in 2023-2024. (STDIV.C1c.01- Registration visits report) The Retention and Registration office, now called Registration and Student Support, remains in the Student Center today.

In 2024, based on national research and feedback from students and faculty, a faculty mentoring model was developed to provide an opportunity for students to connect formally with faculty upon the completion of 30 credits, allowing for students to be more firmly in the major and for faculty members to be able to provide guidance specifically connected to their area of expertise. (STDIV.C1c.02- Article on Blended Advising Model) This new model replaced a faculty advising model that was implemented in 2021. The faculty mentoring model was piloted during FA24 and SP25 semesters and will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.

As part of this change, the Retention and Registration office changed its name to Registration and Student Support, and the Retention Specialists became Student Support Advisors. Likewise, the Cohort Specialists went back to Cohort Advisors, as this communicated to students how these advisors could help. The Coordinator of Academic and Advising and Transfer Services became the Coordinator of Athletic Advising and Eligibility to provide proactive and intrusive advising for student athletes. The Manager of Retention and Registration became the Director of Advising, Registration and Student Support, assuming the responsibility of transfer and faculty advising support. Though there have been and continues to be structural changes to the advising system on campus, students continue to report general satisfaction with the process. (STDIV.C1c.03- CCSSE Survey Results)

HCC's Early Alert process continues to undergo a metamorphosis. While the current CARE team utilizes

Ellucian's Retention Alert for faculty and staff reporting, IT is working closely with ConexED, HCC's current software used for scheduling appointments and tracking student notes, to develop a system that would allow faculty, staff and students to report academic and non-academic concerns in one location. Presently, faculty and staff use Retention Alert to submit reports, and students utilize a "Need Help?" form on the website that is connected to Maxient. Streamlining the reporting process for faculty, staff and students remains the goal, and a high priority. Migration away from Retention Alert and to ConexED will be tested in FY25 and potentially implemented in FY26, with the goal of automating the identification of at-risk students without depending entirely on the manual review, analysis and submission from faculty. The addition of ConexED for scheduling, messaging and record keeping has enhanced student advising access and support. All student affairs offices and faculty have been entered into the system and students may make appointments, email, and send messages for assistance through this platform. Additionally, ConexED allows for data collection with automatic post meeting surveys, providing valuable feedback to continue enhancement of student support.

CARE and Student Support for Personal Needs
HCC's BIT and CARE teams have undergone significant changes and enhancements since 2015. The BIT/CARE team had been primarily comprised of three to four student affairs staff, with occasional faculty membership and some involvement with campus police. In 2021, the team officially split so that the BIT (Behavioral Intervention Team) could focus primarily on campus safety and student risk assessment in a coordinated manner, and CARE (Coordinated Assistance and Resource Education) could focus on the majority of the cases, which were mostly for help with non-academic needs such as resource connections. Since HCC does not provide on campus mental health counseling, the CARE team needed to expand to handle the increasing volume of cases; in 2021, the CARE team grew to include all cohort advisors who case manage veterans, students with disabilities, non-traditional age students, student parents, and TRIO Student Support Services students. The team went from four people to 17, which increased the capacity to handle growing student needs. CARE team members also provide increasing support to non-credit students in the workforce and adult literacy programs. The primary role of the CARE team is to connect any student with on and off campus support and serve as a contact person for any additional support needed.

Student Support Advisors and Cohort Advisors have enhanced their awareness of best practices through memberships, professional development, and training. These memberships include the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA) and the Maryland BIT Affinity Group. Members of the BIT are currently trained in threat assessment, non-clinical suicide assessment, case management, and violence risk assessment.

In the past, HCC contracted with a local counseling agency to offer three sessions per student upon referral of a BIT or CARE member; this service cost the college $4,500-$6,000 annually but did little to meet students' long-term mental health needs. Due to demand, HCC increased the number of sessions and budget in 2022-2023, which cost the College about $16,000. HCC took a different approach in 2023-2024 by establishing a partnership with Family Healthcare of Hagerstown (FHH), which provides government subsidized community health, dental, and mental health services. FHH agreed to prioritize HCC students for counseling and psychiatric services at no or low cost. While students could self-refer, they needed to complete the standard intake for medical and insurance paperwork prior to scheduling an appointment with FHH, which is located four miles from HCC. This experiment did not yield the expected results, since nearly half of the students referred to services did not follow through with their referral. (STDIV.C1c.04- Counseling Referrals Data) While students have access to online resources such as a mental health lib guide and hotline information, HCC was not successfully meeting students' mental health needs.

Unfortunately, meeting the increasing mental health needs of today's students requires more funding than the budget allows. Recognizing an opportunity to address this challenge, in April of 2024, HCC applied for a Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) Grant for $211,217 to pilot a tele-

mental health counseling service for actively enrolled credit and long-term non-credit students called TimelyCare. TimelyCare was launched September 1, 2024, offering students 24/7 TalkNow support, 12 scheduled virtual counseling sessions per year, and access to unlimited health coaching, as well as access to a digital wellness platform that includes a college peer support community. Additionally, the TimelyCare staff can assist students with basic needs acquisition by connecting them with local resources and support. On-campus group counseling sessions are planned to begin during the fall semester. A detailed assessment plan and data usage of both will shed light on future provisions for mental health support.

Criteria 1d. processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement

HCC takes seriously its commitment to student success and its responsibility to address student needs, as demonstrated through the robust growth in resources and opportunities available through Student Affairs, the library, and the Learning Support Center. The commitment to support all students from all walks of life functions not only as a means for students to achieve their academic goals, but also as a path for under-served and under-represented populations to be included and welcomed into the higher education community.

(This section supports Institutional Priority #1: Student Success, Enrollment, and Retention.)

TRIO
HCC has been home to the TRiO Student Support Services Grant and Program since 2010. Over the past 10 years TRiO has enhanced student retention by increasing engagement and outreach throughout the academic year by one-on-one advising and goal-setting, peer tutoring, and individual coaching and communication. These efforts allow staff to tailor the resources to the students' needs, leading to increased retention and completion for students in the program. (STDIV.C1d.01- TriO APR)

Disability Support Services and Cohort Programs
Three years ago, the move of the majority of cohort specific case management offices (CCCPDF, CCAMPIS, CPA, DSS and Veterans) under the same supervision of the Manager of Disability Support Services and Cohort Programs streamlined support and provided professional development opportunities. Each of the cohort areas have received more focus, attention and oversight. This past year, the group was expanded to include TRIO Student Support Services and Upward Bound.

Disability Support Services
In the Disability Support Services office, several software and technology changes have been made to continue improving accessibility and support for students. For example, the DSS office shifted to Clock Work, which has allowed staff to more fully support students by enhancing case management through the more efficient delivery of accommodation forms. The decision was made to shift to Clockwork because the College was no longer supporting the previously used Access database, and the new system allows students to self-advocate for what accommodations they would like to use or need in specific classes. There are also case management features built in which allow Disability Support Advisors to make meeting notes, set alerts, and schedule exams. They also added Blackboard Ally, which provides inclusive design features and provides instructors with accessibility measures in online classes. Finally, they purchased Panopto in FA20, which provides enhanced captioning services to allow faculty to caption their own materials, making them more widely accessible to students. Disability Support has provided long-term support for HCC's credit and non-credit students.

Veterans
HCC moved from an administrative function of benefits processing to a case management model with a full time Veterans Specialist dedicated to providing support to veterans and their dependents. The Veterans

Specialist was a part-time non-exempt position until May 2021, when the position moved from part-time to full-time and also took on School Certifying Official responsibilities for the first time. In July 2023, the position was changed to a full-time exempt position to align with that of a Student Support Advisor, a recognition of the significant work and time commitment the position requires. The Veterans Connections Center was expanded in 2021 (doubled in size thanks to donor support) and provides a dedicated study and relaxation area for veterans. Per Maryland Legislation in 2018 (House Bill 1074), Veterans were given access to priority registration at least three days earlier than the general student population. Additionally, the Veterans program partners with community organizations such as North Point, which is a local shelter for Veterans. The Veteran's office has provided long-term support for all HCC credit and non-credit students meeting the qualification of Veteran, Veteran's dependent, or Active Military, regardless of use of Veteran Administration Benefits to fund their time at HCC.

Career

Much of the support highlighted so far focuses on admissions, academic planning and assistance, and care for students during their time at HCC. However, student success is about paving the way to a better future. The Career Development, Internship, and Job Services office serves as the bridge between HCC and employers in the surrounding community and works to match students with employment opportunities through internships, career fairs, career exploration tools, and employment resources. (STDIV.C1d.02- CDIJS webpage) For example, Career Development engaged the Chamber of Commerce and local employers with high school and HCC students in two Career-Expo events, open to the public and made possible by an American Recovery Program Act (ARPA) grant awarded by Washington County Business and Economic Development. For both events, there was a combined total of 1,287 jobseekers, 23% being HCC students. The Coordinator interacts frequently with workforce solutions colleagues who are also tasked with enhancing employer relations. Career Expo coordination has been a joint effort with Workforce Solutions program coordinators. In FY24, Title III funding enabled the purchase and implementation of Focus 2 Apply and Focus 2 Career tools for career exploration and career planning tools. These tools are used with prospective students and current students to increase student success and retention.

The Career Development office also coordinates internships, providing meaningful hands-on experience to credit students in alignment with ILOs 1, 3, and 6. (STDIV.C1d.03- ILOs BoT Policy #?) In FY24, 19 students from 11 different programs participated in internships. Student surveys revealed that 100% of internship participants felt that their internship experience was related to their academic program/career goal and that they were taught new skills at the internship site that prepared them for the workplace. (STDIV.C1d.04- Student Affairs SLOA Report)

Early College Degree Program

HCC offers early college tracks for high school students, including the Early College Degree Program (formerly STEM Technical Middle College, STMC). This full-time program allows college ready high school juniors and seniors to replace their high school day with coursework at HCC. Many students complete their associate degree concurrently with their high school diploma. A survey of students in the program indicated that students' least favorite aspect of attending HCC was the homeroom requirement, while the most valued part of the program was the increased independence and flexibility. (STDIV.C1d.05- FA22 Middle College Report) In response to the survey data, an electronic check-in system was installed in FA23 in order to provide an alternative, less restrictive way to track student attendance. Another finding was that almost 75% of respondents preferred in-person classes to online classes. The VPAASS requested that additional general education classes be offered in an in-person format in 2023-24 to increase opportunities for the preferred format.

Students who completed the STMC have demonstrated considerable success, graduating from HCC at the same time they graduate from high school or shortly after and earning an average of 69 college credits. By one

year after their expected high school and STMC completions, 87% of STMC completers transferred to another post-secondary institution to continue their education. Four years after their expected high school and STMC completions, 90% of students who transferred to another institution graduated with a bachelor's degree. The most popular transfer institutions have been University of Maryland, College Park and University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Students have also transferred to and graduated from such notable institutions as the United States Military Academy at West Point, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University: Daytona Beach, Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, and more. (STDIV.C1d.06- STMC Outcomes Report, FA21)

Criteria 2: policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches

HCC's transfer policies align with COMAR regulations, including the Transfer with Success Act and the Academic Credit for Prior Learning Examinations bill. HCC's Board Policy #4025 codifies alternative methods for earning college credit, and students can find detailed information related to transferring credit to HCC from other institutions, being awarded college credit by examination (e.g. Advanced Placement), and credit for prior learning (CPL) in the college catalog and on the website. (STDIV.C2.01- HCC College Catalog; STDIV.C2.02- CPL webpage) Most CPL credit tends to be earned through AP credits and CLEP; since 2018, 2,015 students have earned college credit through AP examinations and 167 students have done so by taking the CLEP examinations. Non-examination CPL are typically awarded for "advanced standing" in a field like nursing. Between FA20 and SP24, 62 students received Credit for Prior Learning for a cumulative total of 786 credits. The vast majority of these credits were for Nursing transition students, who accounted for 733 of the total credits. (STDIV.C2.03 Registrar CPL report)

Criteria 3: policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records (ROA 8)

Administrative Safeguards
HCC protects student data in all formats with reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards that ensure confidentiality, integrity, and availability as well as prohibiting unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. Student records are protected through a multi-faceted approach: account access, policies and procedures, and HCC's cyber security policy. (STDIV.C3.01- BoT Policy #8073; STDIV.C3.02- BoT Policy #5093) The Administration provides the Board of Trustees with an annual information technology security report.

The Records Office is responsible for maintaining FERPA regulations and documentation for the College. In addition to having the option to complete an Authorization to Release Information form to request their educational records be shared with individuals/entities outside of the college, (STDIV.C3.03- Authorization to Release Information form; STDIV.C3.04- HCC Student Handbook) students are further protected by identity checks for phone inquiries, when they are asked to provide three personal identification items such as HCC ID number, birthdate, social security number, or address. (STDIV.C3.05- Records and Registration Policies, Procedures, and Services)

In accordance with AACRAO guidelines and best practices, HCC has a Records Retention Guideline in which policies are clear on the lifetime of documents and what is supposed to be destroyed at which time. The Records and Registration office is currently in the process of updating the HCC records retention guidelines to include consideration of digital records. (STDIV.C3.06- Records and Registration Policies, Procedures, and Services) Additionally, the Records Office has made significant progress in limiting duplicate student records by partnering more closely with non-credit programs that admit and register students outside of the credit Admissions application; non-credit staff receive training from Records Office to limit future concern.

Physical Safeguards

Our paper documents are safely secured under two different locks, and electronic documents are secured in ImageNow with a hierarchical system of access for employees. (STDIV.C3.07- Records and Registration Policies, Procedures, and Services)

Technical Safeguards

HCC mitigates unauthorized access into individual accounts with multi-factor authentication. There is also AI enhanced account protection; one example is an account getting locked when it has a sign in at a geographically unlikely location. HCC maintains a multi-layered security system with AI enhancements, which includes XDR (Extended Detection and Response) throughout the network and on endpoints, VPN with security requirements on connecting endpoints, and Next-Generation firewalls.

Criteria 4: if offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs

HCC has many popular extracurricular offerings, including 14 NJCAA sports and over 20 active student clubs. All of these activities and athletics are governed by clear policies and procedures in addition to adhering to the expectations in the student handbook. (STDIV.C4.01- HCC Club Guide; STDIV.C4.02- BoT Policy #4036)

Students who participate in clubs, sports, and activities benefit from making connections with other students, developing leadership skills, and building resume and transfer applications; additionally, a vibrant and inclusive campus life is directly correlated to retention and student success. (This section supports Institutional Priority #3: Student Experience.) For example, from 2019-2021, completion rates for athletes were higher on average than non-athletes, while completion rates for students in PTK were higher still. (STDIV.C4.03- Student Outcome by Cohort Report)

HCC's Athletics Mission statement establishes athletics as "an integral part of the whole-person educational concept at Hagerstown Community College" and emphasizes the importance of "respect, responsibility, integrity, sportsmanship, and servant leadership" for scholar-athletes. (STDIV.C4.04- Athletics Mission Statement) Each year, the Athletic Director shares the Hagerstown Community College Athletics Program Student-Athlete Academic Performance and Eligibility Report with the Board of Trustees, which provides detailed data, trend analysis, and goal-setting for the following year. According to the FY23 report, 119 athletes filled 136 roster spots, while 109 of those scholar-athletes maintained GPAs of 3.0 or higher. The report also notes that student eligibility was relatively stable and identifies sports with patterns of increased or decreased GPAs. Planned improvements include increasing support and accountability for those sports with declining GPAs. (STDIV.C4.05- HCC BoT Annual Athletics Report)

Criteria 5: if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers (ROA 8)

As mentioned earlier, HCC has partnered with an off-campus counseling service to assist students. Previous contracts with counseling services included counseling fees for students, costing $4500 - $16,000 annually. In FY24 HCC entered into a MOU with a local healthcare clinic that gave mental health priority appointments to referred HCC students, but almost half of students referred didn't follow through with scheduling appointments. In the current year, HCC is contracted with TimelyCare for the provision of telemental health services and a digital platform. TimelyCare meets HCC' stringent liability insurance requirements and is available to any actively enrolled student with access to a HCC student email address, including non-credit students. A detailed assessment plan and data usage of TimelyCare will shed light on future provisions for mental health support.

Criteria 6: periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience

Assessing student learning outcomes (SLOA) has been a long-standing goal of HCC's student affairs offices. (STDIV.C6.01- Student Affairs Strategic Plan) Once HCC's current Institutional Learning Outcomes were defined in 2020, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations and the student experience subsided, incorporating SLOA into HCC student affairs became a primary goal. Early on, the Planning & Institutional Effectiveness team was instrumental in attending student affairs meetings to help unit leaders envision what SLOA could look like for their offices. While the presence of student learning was never in doubt, the formal and consistent documentation of student learning, particularly in offices with a revolving door of students on any given day or with more transactional relationship with students is challenging.

During FY21, the Dean of Students and office leaders developed a Student Affairs SLOA crosswalk that aligned units with the ILOs. (STDIV.C6.02- Student Affairs SLOA Report) In November 2021, sample SLOA questions were crafted to form the first HCC student affairs SLOA survey. PIE sent the online survey to student participants and tabulated the data; this summary was reviewed by the Student Affairs Council and during FY22, additional sample questions for each Institutional Learning Outcome were developed and edited. (STDIV.C6.02- Student Affairs SLOA Report) However, a solution of how to capture SLOA for offices with a revolving door of student encounters, sometimes more transactional in nature, remained elusive. In FY23, the implementation of the ConexEd scheduling software propelled student affairs SLOA efforts because of built-in automated electronic surveys able to be sent to students immediately following office visits. Registration and Student Support piloted this feature to collect SLOA data during FA22; it was used by other offices in SP23. FY24 began with most offices using ConexEd, along with the SLOA survey tool. (STDIV.C6.02- Student Affairs SLOA Report)

Strengths
HCC's robust efforts to support students are clearly reflected in the varied initiatives and revisions discussed in this chapter. Enhanced support for at-risk students, multiple measures for academic placement, developmental restructuring, improved advising models, and the Title III grant are all evidence of the student-centered culture of the college.

At the onset of the COVID pandemic, quickly implementing changes to student enrollment and retention services was critical. Shifting personnel and resources to retention-focused work enabled HCC to help more students take advantage of available financial support, transition to remote learning, and obtain the computer equipment and home internet connectivity that many of them had previously done without. While enrollments declined, HCC fared relatively well among its sister colleges. (STDIV.02- Enrollment Summary Report)

Opportunities
One long-term student support goal is for all prospective students to begin with the Student Support Advisors for guidance and enrollment assistance for both credit and non-credit programs, which would involve expanding current staffing and facilities. WSCE program advising is helpful for students who have initially pursued credit programs and realize that short-term, non-academic programs would be a better fit. Helping students recognize all of their program options is beneficial when a student's career goals do not require a two-year degree, or when the credit pathway is not the appropriate option for a student. The Student Support Advisors and Cohort Advisors have received marketing materials and minimal training on the long-term WSCE certificate programs to advise and assist incoming credit students whose career interests align with more career-focused, short-term training and programming, and managers from various WSCE certificate programs, such as healthcare and technology, have provided guidance in meetings designed to foster improved communication and collaboration between credit and non-credit. However, more collaboration and information sharing are needed. Enrolling in WSCE courses relies heavily on staff in the Records Office and WSCE staff at the Valley Mall. Despite the Instant Enrollment tool available for online registration, the process for registration varies significantly by program, and staff in the advising and cohort areas struggle to help students enroll. Synthesizing advising efforts between credit and non-credit programs will help students find the perfect path for their future goals.

EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT
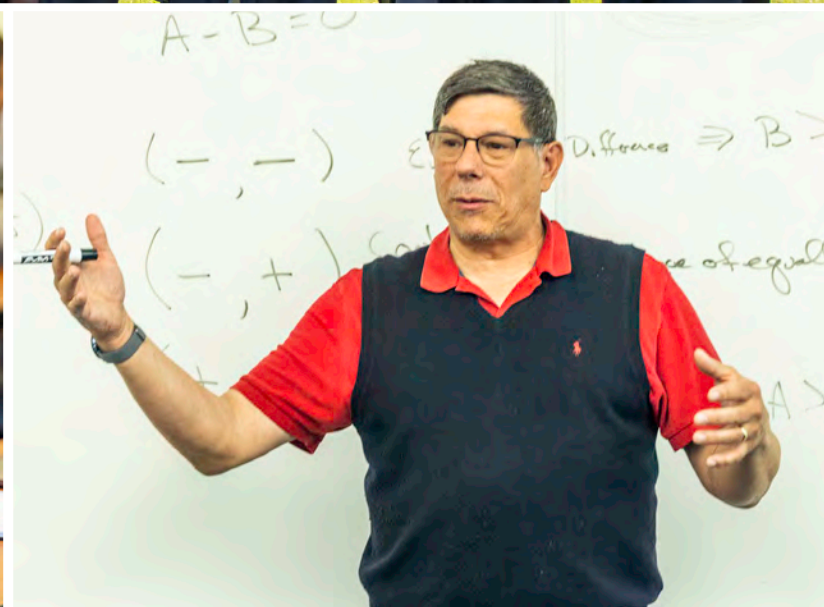
Chapter V: Standard V – Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Executive Summary:
HCC has a comprehensive and structured assessment process to evaluate student learning outcomes across different levels. This includes both direct and indirect measures, such as capstone projects, standardized exams, course evaluations, and student surveys. Faculty play a key role in this process, regularly assessing course-level and program-level outcomes to ensure they align with learning objectives. These outcomes are then tied to the institutional learning outcomes. The assessment process is designed to be cyclical, with results feeding into continuous program improvements. Data collected through the assessment process is used to make informed decisions regarding curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and resource allocation. Through a rigorous and systematic assessment process, HCC ensures that its academic programs are both effective and aligned with student success goals.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education

(This standard supports Institutional Priority #2: Student Experience and Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

At HCC, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) process is viewed as a continuous cycle, similar to that developed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. SLOA at HCC consists of an interrelated system of assessment in which course learning outcomes (CLOs) are aligned with program learning outcomes (PLOs), which are, in turn, aligned with Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The process consists of outcomes that are interrelated at the course, program, and institutional levels to develop an ongoing, faculty-driven process that is periodically reviewed, most recently in 2021-22.

Faculty have significant autonomy in establishing course and program outcomes and designing methods of assessment, beginning with developing clearly stated and measurable learning outcomes based on what they believe students should be able to do when they finish a course or program. Faculty design assessment methods to measure these outcomes, build the rest of the course curriculum, and determine benchmarks. Assessment data is used to improve instruction and assess curriculum with a focus on student success. This data is used to review learning outcomes, to reflect on potential improvements, to develop new assessment techniques, and to modify instruction. (STDV.01- COG Form) Until recently, all courses were assessed annually, but the process evolved so that course and program outcomes are now assessed on a rotating basis.

SLOA data are also used to evaluate program and institutional outcomes. Course outcomes are mapped to program level outcomes, and program goals and ILOs align. (STDV.02- Curriculum Map Example) Course Outcome Guides (COGs) report the outcomes assessed, the methods used to assess them, an analysis of the data, and any recommended improvements in pedagogy or other areas. (STDV.03- COG Record Data) Lead faculty then use COGs to complete Program Outcome Guides (POGs), reporting whether the benchmark was reached for program outcomes and assessing ILO outcomes as necessary. (STDV.04- POG Record Data)

Figure 5
Levels of Assessment

Assessment of student learning at all levels is essential to identify strengths and challenges and ensure that the College remains true to its goal of providing a well-rounded and high-quality education. Frequent, thorough, and accurate assessments enable the College to identify trends, anticipate changes, and ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of students.

Criteria 1: Clearly stated student learning outcomes at the institution and degree program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission
Criteria 2: Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals.
Criteria 2a. define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals (ROA 7, 8, 9)

(This section supports Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

The alignment of institution, program, and course outcomes provides the blueprint for assessment at HCC. The cyclical nature of assessment means that discussing the outcomes at any level leads to also discussing how those outcomes are measured, what the assessment reveals, and whether or not the outcomes or assessments and learning activities need to be revised. The ILOs inform programmatic goals, which in turn steer course outcomes. The current ILOs were endorsed by the Faculty Assembly and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2020. They reflect the values of the College's mission and the aims of the general education curriculum. (STDV.C1.01- ILO Revision Process Documentation) More about the alignment between ILOs and HCC's mission and vision can be found in Standard I.

The assessment process is organized so that two of the six ILOs are assessed each year across campus. The schedule of ILO assessment, in part, drives each program's schedule of course and program assessment. Program maps demonstrate alignment between course and program outcomes as well as program outcomes and ILOs. (STDV.C1.02- Program Map Examples) The curriculum maps indicate which course and program outcomes need to be assessed each year because they show the course, program, and ILOs alignments; if a program outcome is aligned with one of the ILOs that is being assessed that year, that outcome is assessed and results submitted. (STDV.C1.03- Curriculum Map Example; STDV.C1.04- ILO Assessment Timeline)

Faculty identifies which assessments measure progress towards the ILO being measured and then determines whether the program or course meets the benchmark. The Dean of Instruction collects the results and provides an overall analysis of the extent to which the ILO was met in a variety of disciplines. The information below details the variety of different disciplines that align with the "Globalization and Diversity" ILO and also shows the methods of analysis used to assess the ILO. (STDV.C2a.01- SLOA BoT Report 2024)

Figure 6
ILO 2 Globalization and Diversity

Programs with Alignment to ILO 2:
Globalization and Diversity

- Administration of Justice: A.A.S.
- Administration of Justice Concentration: A.A.
- Biotechnology: A.A.S.
- Dental Hygiene: A.A.S.
- English Concentration: A.A.
- Environmental Studies: A.S.
- History Concentration: A.A.
- Human Services Concentration: A.S.
- Music Concentration: A.A.
- Paralegal Studies Concentration: A.A.
- Radiography: A.A.S.
- Visual Arts Concentration: A.A.

Methods of Analysis for ILO Assessment

Test Questions 17%
Art Analysis 9%
Discussion Forum 8%
Completion of DV requirement 8%
Written Assignment 8%
Mixed methods 50%
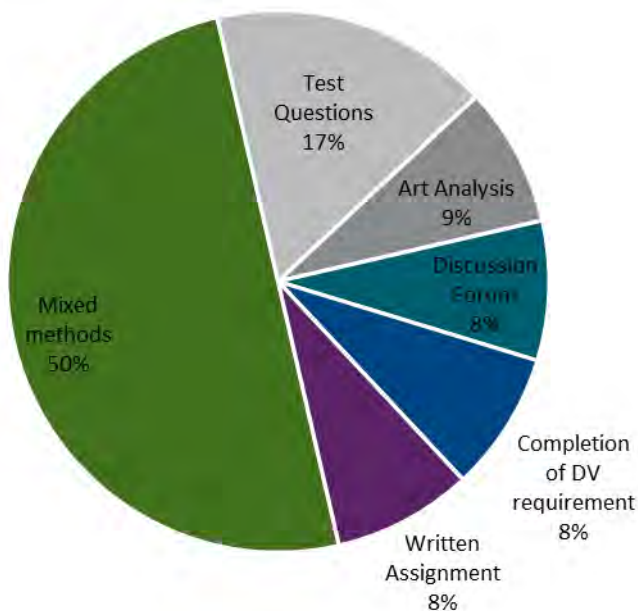
In addition to assessment of academic classes and programs, Student Affairs programs assess ILOs that align with goals of the programs and services outside of the classroom. For example, athletes evaluated their learning associated with ILOs, including Responsibility, Globalization and Diversity, Critical Thinking and Communication, and Professionalism. Survey data shows that athletes agree that participation in athletics contributed to attaining the outcome Responsibility ("set personal and professional goals and establishes a plan of action to attain those goals"). When asked whether "athletics gave me the knowledge to apply to my personal and/or professional goals," respondents agreed with an average score of 4.72/5. With an average of 4.75/5, the athletes predominately agreed with the statement "Athletics will enhance how I work with others with respect, honesty and responsibility." (STDV.C2a.02- Student Affairs SLOA Report) Likewise, Registration and Student Support uses student surveys to collect data after each advising session via the software system that schedules appointments (ConExED). One question, related to the outcome Responsibility, ("Utilize resources to sustain and improve personal well-being") showed that 58.6% of students surveyed agreed that they were made aware, in the advising meeting, of support services on campus (i.e., tutoring, library, food pantry). (STDV.C2a.02- Student Affairs SLOA Report) A survey relating to student involvement in campus clubs showed that most saw value to club participation. For example, 90% of students agreed that club participation helped them to clarify their personal or professional goals (Responsibility, ILO 1). Eighty percent agreed that club involvement improved their professional communication (Professionalism ILO 6).

ILOs are also measured via the Graduate Survey. In 2023, students were asked about their level of achievement by responding to statements that correlate with the six ILOS. A large majority (84-93%) agreed or

strongly agreed that their education at HCC had enhanced skills associated with the ILOs. (STDV.C2a.03-Graduate Survey Results 2023) In 2024, when, ILO #1 Personal Responsibility and ILO #5 Information Literacy and Technology were specifically being assessed, 93% of respondents agreed that their experience at HCC improved their ability to practice personal and social responsibility through self-direction, persistence, lifelong learning, and responsible citizenship (ILO #1), while 87% agreed that their experience at HCC enhanced their information literacy and technology skills so they can use technology to analyze, evaluate, and use information successfully (ILO #5). (STDV.C2a.01- SLOA BoT Report 2024)

POGs
Program outcome guides (POGs) address program outcomes, assessment methods, results, follow up (closing the loop), and budget implications. Often, the basis for the data provided in the POG is course-level assessment results that align with program level outcomes.

A timeline for completion of each year's work is established in the SLOA Guidebook (STDV.C2a.04- SLOA Guidebook), which is updated regularly. The Guidebook outlines deadlines, processes, and identifies parties responsible. For example, data from course outcomes is due to the course's lead faculty member by the end of the spring semester. The completed COGs are uploaded to a SLOA cloud site by June 1. POGs, which rely on data and results of the COGs, need to be uploaded to the site by June 15. Directors of each division bear responsibility for reviewing, revising, and finalizing COGs and POGs by August 1. Division SLOA summaries, which highlight important challenges and conclusions drawn from COGs, POGs, general education assessments, and ILOs, are also due at that time. (STDV.C2a.05- Division Summaries) By October, all aspects of the process are completed, although the process is always ongoing since faculty continue to collect data from their classes.

Program Reviews
A new process for program review was developed in FY23, in collaboration between Academic Affairs and Planning & Institutional Effectiveness. Program reviews follow a set timeline from June to May to align with the academic year, culminating with a report of activities to the Board of Trustees. Divisions are provided with templates to follow and requirements to determine suitable program evaluators and parameters for how the evaluation visits should be conducted.

In the first year, nine programs were reviewed with the remaining programs scheduled to be reviewed across a five-year period. (STDV.C2a.06- Program Review Schedule) The review process includes the following:
- An analysis of the program's alignment with the mission of the College and the ILOs
- An examination of the program's curriculum and experiential learning opportunities
- An analysis of program outcomes, teaching modalities, completion data for majors, program faculty credentials, financial data (expenses and revenue) and resources, student demographics, articulation agreements, connections with an advisory board (if any), marketing, and assessment results
- A report including data on program retention, transfer, and completion
- A review by an outside evaluator who reads the report and visits the campus to talk with faculty, students, and administrators. The evaluator's report is included in a culminating report prepared by the VPAASS and shared with the Board of Trustees (STDV.C2a.07- Program Review Procedure)

Gen Eds
General Education Outcomes are assessed and reported for each course that is part of the category. (STDV.C2a.08- General Education Outcomes) In 2021, course outcomes for each general education category were revised so that they aligned with the new ILOs. There are three outcomes for each general education category, and faculty are able to assess the outcomes using a method that best fits with their course. The faculty then analyze the results and indicate, based on the benchmark, whether or not the outcome was achieved. As part of the closing the loop process, faculty members reflect on the activities and assessments

that measure the outcomes and adjust to improve student learning as necessary.

Each category of General Education courses is analyzed by compiling results across all of the courses that meet that requirement. General Education reports for each course were previously collected by Division Directors, summarized for each category, and reported to the Dean of Instruction. Beginning in 2021, faculty enter results into a fillable COG form, which has improved collection and reporting of results. COGs are stored on the SLOA One drive. (STDV.C2a.09- COG Examples)

Division Directors reflect on assessment within their divisions in an annual report. The reports now include analysis of both division SLOA results and general education results. Moving forward, the Assessment Committee will be determining a standardized method of data collection, which will also facilitate more meaningful reflection and changes in the "closing the loop" process. Additionally, faculty and administration are discussing how to develop common assessment tools for each general education category. For more about general education courses and offerings, see Standard III.

Criteria 2b. articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals

(This section supports Institutional Priority #2: Student Experience and Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

Program and course outcomes, tied to Institutional Outcomes, are developed with the ultimate goal of career and personal success for students. As the mission articulates, HCC's goals are closely tied to the region in an effort to "provide access to affordable high-quality programs" that develop the local workforce and its "cultural vitality." Many programs seek to prepare students for successful transfer to another college, while others are principally aimed at immediate job training.

The HCC website includes reports on institutional student achievement that are prepared annually. Along with program level data, this information establishes HCC's accountability by reporting the extent to which students achieve post-graduation success. These reports include persistence of students who are and are not college-ready, developmental completers and non-completers, success of transfer students, passage of exams required to practice a career, and others. (STDV.C2b.01- HCC MPAR) Some samples of relevant data include:

- For the FA17 cohort, 87.6% of college-ready students were successful persisters after four years. Overall, 83.1% of all students in the cohort were completers.
- The graduation-transfer rate after four years for the FA17 cohort of college-ready completers was 74.6% compared with 62.5% for developmental completers.
- Of those who transferred, 86.2% achieved a first-year GPA of 2.0 or above at the transfer institution in AY 20-21.
- All candidate Licensed Practice Nurses passed the NCLEX exam in FY18, FY19, FY20, and FY21. The percentage of Rad. Tech. candidates who passed the certification exam from the American Registry of Rad Technologists was 83% in FY18, 87% in FY19, 85% in FY20, and 100% in FY21.

Further information is available through the Graduate Survey. In 2023, the response rate was 46% (215 of 465 graduates). Respondents reported that they were planning to work (33%), continue their education (32%), or both work and continue their education (29%). Of those working, 43% planned to work in their career field. Of those planning to continue their education, 75% plan to attend a four-year college.

Employment and wage data from state agencies have consistently demonstrated positive outcomes for HCC graduates in career programs. (STDV.C2b.01- HCC MPAR) For graduates in FY20, the median annualized

income three years after HCC graduation increased by over $38,000 (188%) compared to one year prior to graduation. Three-quarters of HCC graduates are employed in Maryland within one year of graduation, and additional graduates may be employed out-of-state.

Program Outcome Guides provide important insight into post-graduation success. For example, the 2020 POG for the RN program includes data for outcomes such as time spent to complete the nursing program, graduate program satisfaction, pass rate of the NCLEX on their first attempt, and employment rate. The POG for the AA in Human Services reports on the number of graduates who transfer to a bachelor's in social work (BSW) program. In 2020, 16 of 17 students who graduated later transferred to a BSW program. The Practical Nursing Program POG for 2022-23 incorporates a variety of different assessments including clinical, lab evaluations, simulations, exams, and assessments that predict the probability of passing the NCLEX-PN. Ninety percent of the students had a 90% or higher probability of successfully passing the NCLEX-PN based on the assessment. A Graphic Design Technology POG reported on project-based instruction that was used to complete a "designer's flight test." The project used in the assessment allows students to demonstrate their ability to design, present and defend their work. As such, the project demonstrates proficiency in "Adobe software skills, hardware computer skills, practice legal copyright knowledge" and professional presentation and critiquing abilities. (STDV.C2b.02- GDT 112 COG AY23)

Accredited programs, such as Registered Nursing, Dental Assisting, Dental Hygiene, Health Information Management, and Radiography complete comprehensive self-studies of their programs and host a site visit by an evaluator. For example, Dental Assisting's comprehensive self-study encompasses financial resources, admissions criteria, curriculum, clinical experiences, faculty credentials, and educational effectiveness, including SLOA assessments. Between full self-study reviews, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), requires completion of a thorough annual report on student demographics, methods of instruction, costs per student and program budget costs, pass rates on national and state/regional board examinations, program completion data, and information about employment after graduation. In the most recent report, 90% of students passed the written national board exam, 100% passed the state board exams, and all of the students are employed in the field. (STDV.C2b.03- Dental Assisting CODA Survey 2023-24) Radiography reports Program Effectiveness Data (including exam pass rates, job placement, and program completion) to the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT).

These examples illustrate HCC's recognition that what happens in the classroom directly impacts the long-term success of students, as well as the institution's responsibility to effectively prepare students for life after graduation.

Criteria 2c. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders

Criteria 3f. informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs (ROA 10)

From the Board of Trustees to members of the surrounding community, HCC's stakeholders are invested in student success, and assessment provides those stakeholders with meaningful evidence of that success. The Board receives an annual report, prepared by the Dean of Instruction, that summarizes changes to the process and presents highlights from the summaries of SLOA division reports prepared by Division Directors. (STDV.C2c.01- SLOA BoT Report 2024)

Often, sharing assessment techniques and analysis between divisions inspires innovation. Each fall, the Dean of Instruction hosts a "Celebration of Leaning" session, when faculty can share assessment results and how they used the results to improve their teaching and curriculum design. These sessions facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and often inspire improvements in other divisions and departments. Moreover, these sessions

support goals from the 2026 Strategic Plan Commitment #6: Community, e. Create a celebration of success program and f. Create a culture of respect and understanding to improve communication and align goals. (STDV.C2c.02- Celebration of Learning PowerPoint)

Academic administrators have access to COGs, POGs, Maps, and Master Syllabi for all courses through One Drive. Prior to the changes implemented in 2022, COGs and POGs were on the website and available to anyone accessing the website. A legitimate concern raised by some faculty was that uploading their assessment instruments to the website would preclude them from reusing the exam questions and assignments in subsequent years, thereby affecting comparability of results over time. HCC is focused on improving the collection and storage of assessment results; Watermark, an assessment software that will allow for organized storage and consistent access for faculty and administrators, was secured in FA24.

A section of the website provides Curriculum Maps, course syllabi, training videos and other resources to the campus community and other users of the website. (STDV.C2c.03- Example Curriculum Maps)

Key indicators of educational effectiveness are available on the College website through the following reports and resources:
- Annual MPAR, which are written in response to state goals that address challenges affecting public colleges and universities. (STDV.C2c.04- MSDE State Plan for Education 2022) The HCC reports offer data and candid analysis on matters such as achieving equity in educational access, including the level of completion by racial and ethnic groups, efforts to maintain college affordability, and other measure of student success. The most recent report addresses Access, Student Success, and Innovation and provides data on "HCC Degree Progress Four Years after Initial Enrollment." (STDV.C2c.05- HCC MPAR)
- A 2021 MHEC report, which provides a summary and analysis of HCC Assessment practices, the impact of assessment on student success, and confirms the College's compliance with assessment standards established by MSCHE. (STDV.C2c.06- HCC's MHEC 2021 SLOAR Report)
- The HCC Fact Book, which reports on enrollment, retention, program enrollment, and program completion. (STDV.C2c.07- HCC Fact Book) Reports on rates of retention, transfer, college completion and program completion are also available at the National Center for Education Statistics. (STDV.C2c.08- HCC NCES Data)
- Programmatic student success reports (for some programs). For example, nursing program data is available on that website including the NCLEX pass rate, retention data for all pathways, and employment date from graduate surveys. (STDV.C2c.09- HCC Nursing program Data) The completion rate for the Radiography program is available as well, which includes the completion rate for the program (STDV.C2c.10- HCC JRCERT Information)

Criteria 3. consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution's mission, such uses include some combination of the following:
Criteria 3e. planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services

The alignment between program outcomes, institutional learning outcomes, institutional priorities, and the HCC mission statement means that assessment data is an essential measure in the Unit Planning process. The Unit Planning process provides an excellent opportunity for outcomes assessment results and other data to be presented in a "Closing the Loop" document as evidence supporting additional resources for academic programs and resources. Every academic and non-academic unit of the College prepares and submits written reports that detail the extent to which programs are achieving their goals, which are aligned with the College's mission, vision, and strategic plan. Among the materials submitted prior to the meetings are "Closing the Loop" documents that evaluate the prior year's program goals, including data examined, data analysis, and further actions to be taken. (STDV.C3.01- Closing the Loop Document Examples) In addition, any extraordinary budgetary needs are presented and justified. For example, in 2014-16, the Administration of Justice (ADJ)

program was taught only by adjuncts, and outcome assessment, advising, academic rigor, and program recruitment were problems. (STDV.C3.02- Unit Planning Document for ADJ) The data provided in Unit Planning illustrated the impact on the program of staffing courses with part-time instructors; following retirement of a paralegal instructor, approval was granted in SP16 to hire a full-time faculty member to direct both programs. An improved SLOA program was implemented, along with other improvements in instruction, the addition of new courses and a revised curriculum, and stability in advising.

As part of the Unit Planning process, some programs were asked to provide a cost-benefit analysis, along with other pertinent information. For example, in 2017, Administration of Justice (ADJ) associate degrees were reviewed because the Police Academy was going to be discontinued in the SP18. In addition to a financial analysis, the report analyzed enrollment trends, graduate completion, grade distributions, job projections, and goals for improvement of the program. (STDV.C3.03- ADJ Program Analysis Report) Likewise, a program review of Paralegal Studies addressed enrollment, completion, overall program costs, a comparison of the curriculum at HCC compared with programs at other community colleges, as well as proposing eight goals to improve program quality, enrollment, and retention. (STDV.C3.04- Paralegal Program Analysis Report) These examples highlight the intersection of assessment, unit planning, and budgeting, and the concrete, measurable way assessment data is used to make important financial decisions. More about how assessment is used in budgetary decisions can be found in Standard VI.

Criteria 3a. assisting students in improving their learning

Criteria 3b. improving pedagogy and curriculum

Criteria 3c. reviewing and revising academic programs and support services

Criteria 3g. improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates

(This section supports Institutional Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

The most important use of SLOA data is to facilitate student learning through improving pedagogy and curriculum. When faculty complete their COGs and POGs, they identify their data-driven changes and goals moving forward. Faculty members develop common assessments to ensure that courses are taught to the same rigorous standards; these assessments are shared with part-time faculty, both at HCC and in surrounding high schools. Expectations regarding assessment and data collection are provided in faculty guidebooks, including the Academic Affairs Faculty Guidebook and the Dual Enrollment Instructor Guidebook. (STDV.C3a.01- Academic Affairs Faculty Guidebook; STDV.C3a.02- Dual Enrollment Instructor Guidebook) Division directors ensure that all credit instructors submit assessment data for every section of every course they teach. "Closing the loop" meetings provide faculty with the opportunity to reflect on the data collected and deliberate on pedagogical and curricular changes. Though outcomes and assessments are universal in all locations, the implementation of Watermark will facilitate a streamlined data collection process that will allow for the comparison of outcome achievement between campus-based courses and courses being taught in the high school.

Figure 7
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle at HCC
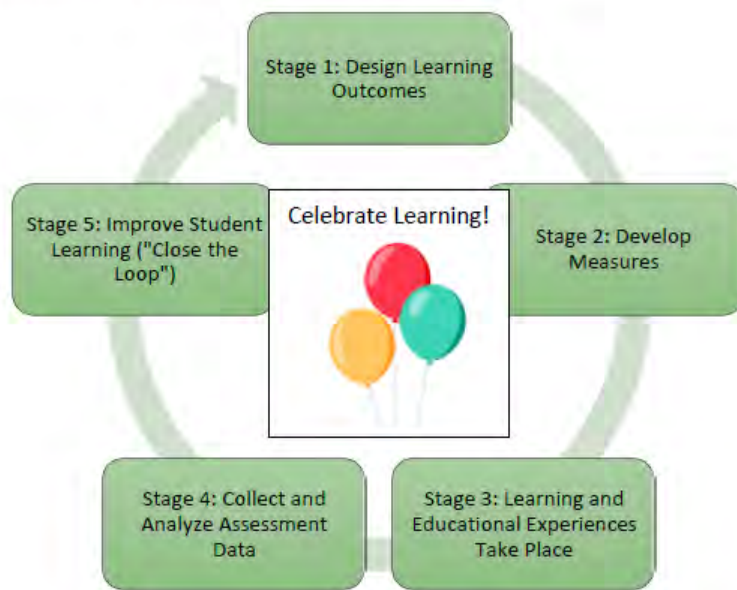
The Nursing and Dental Hygiene programs are excellent examples of using assessment data to make meaningful improvements to teaching and learning. SLOA summaries and POGs for the Nursing program include data from the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI), a system that assists faculty in identifying the specific learning needs of their students. After each nursing course, students take a nationally normed exam on the particular course, e.g. Pediatrics. If student scores on various topics are lower than the national average, faculty adjust their teaching to focus on concepts that students find more difficult. At the end of the program, the students take a Comprehensive Predictor exam, which tests them on everything that they have learned in the program and covers all of the courses. Students must achieve at least 92% chance of passing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) on this test. If they don't, they can remediate and take it again. There is a distinct correlation between how they do on this exam and how they do on the NCLEX. All students also attend a four-day live review course that also helps them pass the NCLEX.

This use of data to improve teaching and learning has helped HCC score high on pass rates in the RN and PN programs. Since 2018, the NCLEX RN pass rate has ranged from a low of 85.71% in 2021 to a high of 98% in 2018. HCC's pass rate for RNs in 2023 was 93.10%, the second highest in the state. (STDV.C3g.01- HCC MPAR) The PN pass rate in June 2023 was 100%. The PN pass rate was 100% between 2018-23, except in 2022, when it was 92.57%.

In Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting, data from student course evaluations and exit surveys were used to determine the success level of a course that bridges students who move from the Dental Assisting to the Dental Hygiene program. The data was used to study the potential for a combined oral anatomy class that is offered to students in both programs simultaneously. In response to the survey data, two jointly-offered classes were added: Dental Radiography (DEN-104/DHY-104) and Head, Neck, and Oral Anatomy (DEN-108/DHY-108). These courses assist students who enter the dental assisting program, graduate, and wish to continue on with the dental hygiene program by reducing the credits required to complete the dental hygiene program. Additionally, combining courses and disciplines helps to build teamwork that is beneficial in the workplace. There are currently two students in the first-year DHY class in the dental hygiene program that had previously completed DEN-104/DHY-104. There are currently four students in the second-year DHY Class that completed both DEN-108/DHY-18 and DEN-104/DHY-104. In Dental Assisting I, SLOA revealed a weakness in responding to critical thinking questions. In the 2023 DEN-101 didactic class, critical thinking formatted

questions were introduced with homework assignments and quizzes. Current data suggests that students have improved their ability to break down questions, pulling out critical information to effectively answer questions.

A stated goal of the Academic Strategic Plan for FY24 was to "align program outcomes with industry standards and transfer requirements" (HCC SP Commitment 5). HCC has fourteen Program Advisory Committees that review academic programs, including Dental Hygiene, Radiography, and Paralegal Studies. (STDV.C3c.01- Program Advisory Committee Handbook) Program Advisory Committees may include local professionals in the field, HCC adjunct faculty, faculty in career programs from other colleges, alumni, and HCC faculty and administrators. Program outcomes are shared with these groups, who provide input and feedback along with suggestions for improvement based on interaction with graduates who are employed in the field. The Dental Hygiene program, for example, includes industry professionals, local high school and vocational representatives. The Radiography program includes local professionals in the field, local medical centers and employers. (STDV.C3c.02- Examples of Program Meeting Minutes)

In SP22, the Paralegal Program Advisory Committees was reviewing and discussing a program outcome about professionalism: Program goal #8, "Demonstrate an understanding of the professional attitudes and behaviors associated with paralegal practice". While the committee was supportive of all of the program outcomes, they emphasized that some young people are unaware of the expectations for behavior and dress in a legal practice. As a result of the discussion and feedback, the faculty has added content on professionalism to PLS 101: Introduction to Paralegal Studies and other courses. (STDV.C3b.01- Paralegal Studies POG)

Advisory Committees for Graphic Design, Web and Multimedia, Accounting and Business, and Visual and Performing Arts are among those that also reviewed program outcomes in order to provide industry perspectives about curriculum and offerings. (STDV.C3c.03- Closing the Loop GDT/SDE/WEB; STDV.C3c.04- Business Advisory Committee Minutes; STDV.C3c.05- HCC AA Dance Concentration Sub Mod Form)

Criteria 3d. planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities
HCC's faculty recognizes that an exchange of ideas and information about SLOA helps to maintain the vitality of the process. To that end, a variety of professional development offerings have been developed to facilitate collaboration and conversation about assessment. A new initiative, added in conjunction with the revision of SLOA processes in FA22, is the "celebration of assessment and student learning." Introduced by the Dean of Instruction, the celebration provides an opportunity for faculty to showcase instructional improvement based on SLOA data, and to share information about any challenges that they encountered. In addition, occasional workshops on assessment involving faculty presenters sharing best practices are held through the Fletcher Center (STDV.C3d.01- Celebration of Learning PowerPoint), and the Fletcher Center website provides webinar videos for SLOA, including a video to assist adjunct faculty members. (STDV.C3d.02- Fletcher Center Website) Discussion of the assessment process is also included in the year-long orientation program for new full-time faculty members. (STDV.C3d.03- Fletcher Center Teaching and Learning LibGuide) For more about professional development, see Standard III.

The implementation of the Blueprint in the FA23 resulted in a large number of HCC courses being taught in the local high schools. Divisions have provided extensive support to their instructors in the high schools, including training related to outcome assessment and data collection. In addition to in-person training sessions, instructors have access to outcome assessments and data collection instruction and forms via D2L. (STDV.C3d.04- English Training Materials)

Criteria 4. if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers

N/A

Criteria 5. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

Strategic Plan Commitment 2.D. is dedicated to the development and implementation of an institutional assessment plan for the College. As a central goal of the college, conducting meaningful assessment means periodically evaluating policies and procedures and making improvements when necessary.
Reform of the assessment process has occurred resulting in numerous changes. For example, the new ILOS were created and course and program outcomes were aligned with the ILOs to facilitate assessment of two ILOS each year. The new ILOs were created to support the institution's mission and reflect the expected outcomes of the general education program. Additional changes to the assessment process include the creation of new COG and POG templates, which incorporate reporting about general education and ILO outcomes. Completed COGs and POGs are submitted directly to the Dean of Instruction, which facilitates centralized collection and analysis of ILOs and general education data. Previously, collection and analysis of general education outcomes were decentralized at the division level. The quality of assessment is now valued over quantity. Faculty were previously required to assess every course every year until 2022. Now, a rotation of course and program outcome assessment is encouraged as long as all courses and programs are assessed within a three-year period. Although the amount of assessment being completed each year has been reduced, it continues to be integral to the role and thinking of faculty.

The Dean of Instruction held four training sessions in the 2021-22 academic year, in person and on Zoom, to introduce these changes and provide related instruction on assessment improvement. Training recordings were shared, and divisions discussed the changes in division meetings. (STDV.C5.01- Training Recordings) Two follow-up workshops on POGs were held in 2022-23 for interested faculty, and additional training sessions for faculty have been held since that time.

On the basis of feedback provided on the feedback forms, division directors and the Dean of Instruction are able to discover common problems that need to be addressed. For example, in a division meeting in September 2023, the Director of the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division discussed some common areas in which improvements could be made by faculty to clarify methods and results. (STDV.C5.02- Division Meeting Minutes) At the request of the Health Sciences division Director, the Dean of Instruction visited a division meeting to provide instruction about how assessment data could be used to recommend improvements. As a result of the

meeting, some faculty from the division initiated individual meetings with the Dean of Instruction to discuss ways to improve course and program assessment in their disciplines. Providing guidance and feedback on the process of collecting and analyzing data has resulted in improvements in the assessment process.

Another important improvement to assessment is the recent implementation of a standardized Program Review process. Previously, program reviews were often the combination of POGs and Unit Planning data and materials, and reviews were inconsistent, though the relevant information and data was largely collected. Beginning in 2023, a schedule of program reviews was established, several programs completed program reviews according to the new procedure. (STDV.C5.03- Example Program Review Report) Moving forward, programs will be reviewed on a five-year cycle. The fairly new comprehensive program review process added an outside evaluator and review of all academic programs on a rotating basis. Key strengths and weaknesses identified through the process will be shared with relevant shareholders, such as the Board of Trustees.

More detail about the new program review process can be found in Standard III.

Strengths
HCC understands the essential value of assessment as a tool for reflection and improvement and maintains its ongoing commitment to assessment at all levels while encouraging and supporting faculty-driven assessment systems.

The integration of the new ILOs into the assessment process has improved the continuity of outcomes at all levels, and the feedback form that the Division Directors provide to faculty has proven invaluable. Prior to instituting the form, directors shared feedback less systematically on the Annual Review and Professional Development Plan (ARPDP) for each faculty member. The new forms are a vehicle to provide feedback about the clarity and measurability of the outcomes, appropriateness of assessment methods used, adequacy of results presented, conclusions drawn, and improvements recommended.

In addition to these changes, a more formal system of evaluating faculty assessment work was adopted in 2022. Division Directors complete an evaluation form for each COG and POG, which provides all faculty members with feedback pertaining to their work. This process has better informed Division Directors about the strengths and weaknesses of assessment in their divisions, allowing them to address common problems.

Opportunities
General education outcome data is being collected but needs to be synthesized between divisions and analyzed to make improvements in general education courses. The Shared Governance Assessment Committee is discussing possible infrastructure additions to facilitate "closing the loop," including researching and securing assessment software that will better standardize data collection and storage across campus. (STDV.05- Assessment Committee Meeting Minutes) Additionally, general education data collection needs to be structured so that data is collected cyclically. The new Assessment Committee will be able to address these goals moving forward.

While the academic program review process is being completed using a rotation, the annual Unit Planning process has the potential to be a more valuable supplement to periodic program reviews. Using the Closing the Loop for interim reviews of academic programs between program reviews is a useful exercise. However, the quality of data used in Unit Planning appears to be uneven. While suggested improvements and budget requests are sometimes provided in the UP reports, supportive data is often not provided. This suggests the need for some professional development of unit heads in collecting and using data for decision-making.

Assessment support and accountability for Blueprint instructors has historically been a challenge, and further efforts should continue to improve response rates and meaningful analysis. Assessment expectations have been

added to the teachers' signed contract with the College and included in the Dual Enrollment Instructor Handbook, which may continue to improve understanding and accountability. Professional development sessions have been provided to these instructors to enhance their understanding of assessment expectations and HCC procedures for conducting SLOA. HCC needs to continue to monitor the SLOA data collected from courses taught in the high schools to ensure that it meets the institution's expectations.

PLANNING, RESOURCES, & INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT
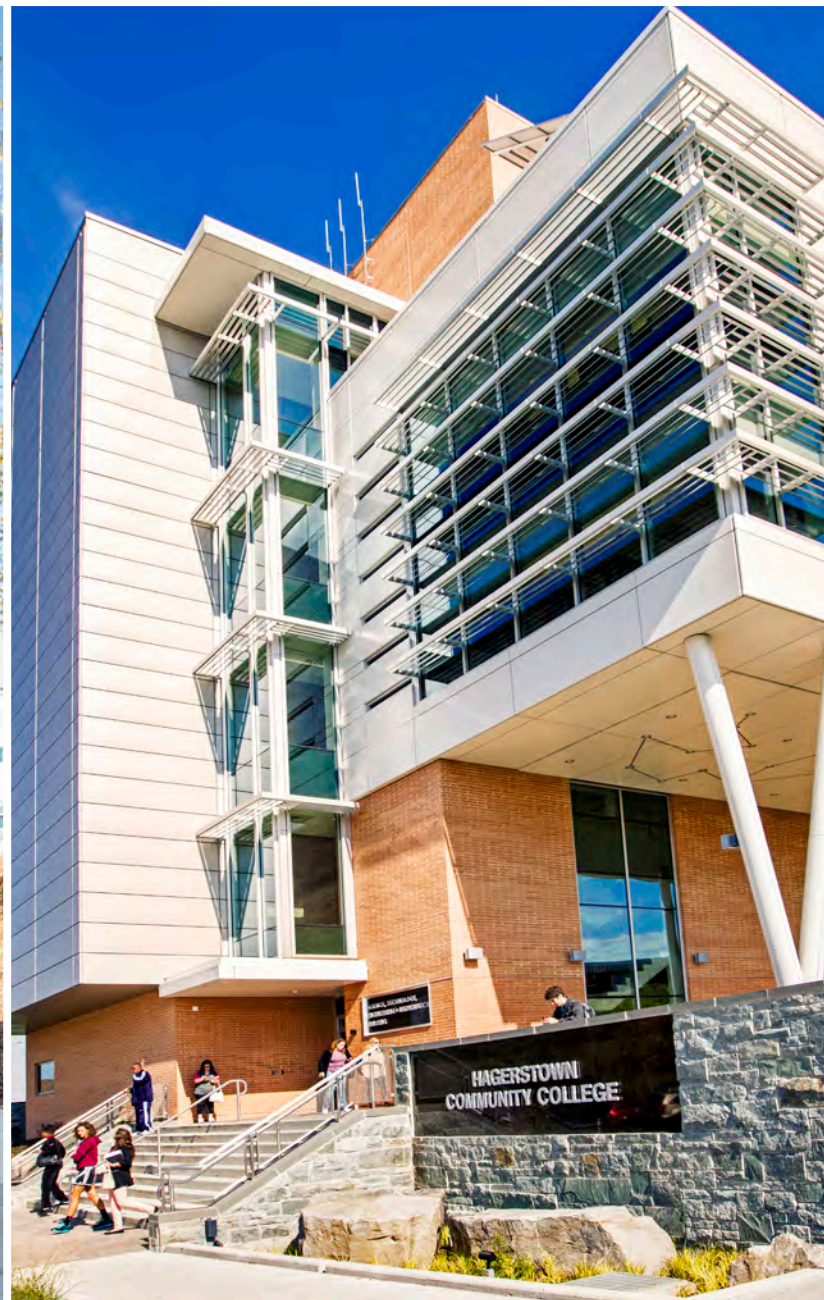
Chapter VI: Standard VI - Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Executive Summary

HCC is dedicated to ensuring its long-term viability and growth through effective planning, resource management, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Standard VI evaluates how the institution integrates planning, resource allocation, and assessment processes to support the achievement of its mission and strategic goals.

HCC's strategic planning process is highly collaborative, engaging faculty, staff, administration, students, and community stakeholders to ensure diverse perspectives are incorporated. This process is closely aligned with resource allocation decisions, ensuring that financial and operational resources are strategically directed to support the college's priorities and goals. The Vice President of Administration and Finance oversees the development of the college's annual budget, which is informed by enrollment projections, revenue forecasts, and long-term financial planning. Resource allocation is driven by strategic goals, ensuring that key areas such as academic programs, student services, and infrastructure receive the necessary funding to operate effectively.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

(This standard supports Institutional Priority #1: Student success, enrollment, and retention.)

At HCC, administration, staff, and faculty engage in a responsive unit planning process that integrates assessments of effectiveness, planning, and resource allocation, ensuring continuous alignment with and fulfillment of the college's mission and goals. These planning and assessment strategies have allowed HCC to capitalize on opportunities for growth, such as purchasing a six-acre plot of land with a 45,000 square foot building located within the City of Hagerstown. Known as the D.M. Bowman Family Workforce Training Center, this new state-of-the-art facility will include three truck ranges for the Commercial Vehicle Transportation (CVT) Program, a skilled trades apprenticeship program, and a career and job services support center. The work on the D. M. Bowman Family Workforce Training Center exemplifies HCC's strategic planning processes, ensuring successful goal completion, effective resource use, accountability, and stakeholder participation.

Criteria 1: Institutional objectives, both institution wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation (ROA 2)

HCC's strategic planning process drives institutional improvement and ensures that resources are allocated in line with the college's mission and priorities. This process involves rigorous financial planning and budgeting, with resource allocation guided by both institutional goals and evidence of effective resource use. The Strategic Plan informs unit planning and annual budgeting (discussed in the sections below), enabling HCC to maintain and grow its long-term assets, respond to community needs, and embrace innovative approaches that keep its academic programs forward-thinking.

In addition to ensuring equitable access to affordable, high-quality educational programs, it is HCC's mission to foster workforce development and cultural vitality in the region. The strategic plan for 2026 includes commitments to excellence in six areas: 1) enrollment, 2) assessment, 3) retention, 4) strong integration of workforce solutions and continuing education, 5) partnerships that meet the needs of and improve the economy of the region, and 6) an ever-stronger campus community. (STDVI.C1.01- 2026 Strategic Plan) The six areas of the 2026 plan are consistent with the seven of the previous 2022 plan, which included the following: strengthen sustainable enrollment management systems and improve student retention, maintain teaching excellence, maintain continuous quality improvement systems, expand community and business services and strategic partnerships, improve human resource development systems, align technology and facilities development and safety and security practices with mission-based priorities, and enhance financial resource development and allocation to ensure effective use of resources. For more about the evolution of the strategic plan, see Standard I.

Figure 8
Planning Alignment
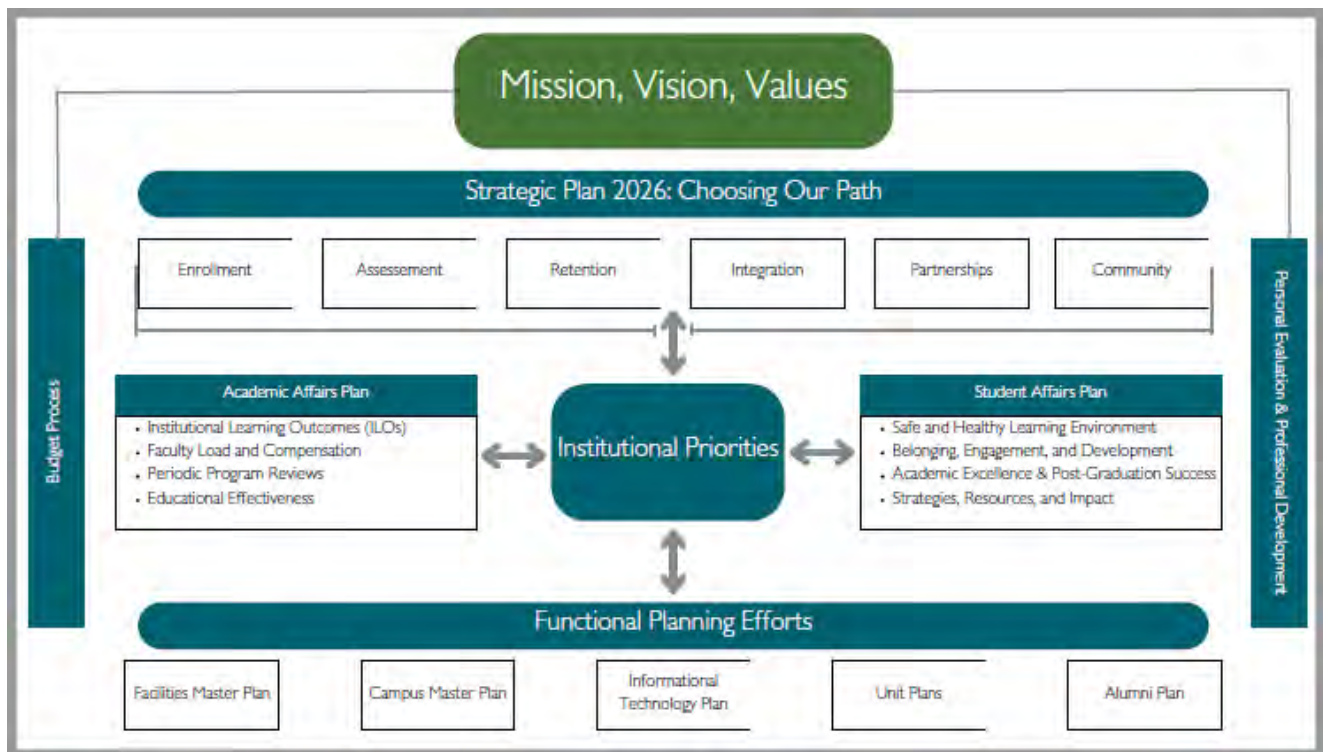
Criteria 2: Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results
Criteria 5: Well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability

Decision-making at the leadership level involves the team's consideration of HCC's mission, long-term strategic commitments, and strategic priorities. Together with relevant quantitative data and funding request justifications, these long-term considerations form the basis for making decisions in the annual unit planning process. The preparation of unit planning documents, thus, sets the framework for later assessing the outcomes of the planned projects and allocations.

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Figure 9
Unit Planning and Budget Cycle
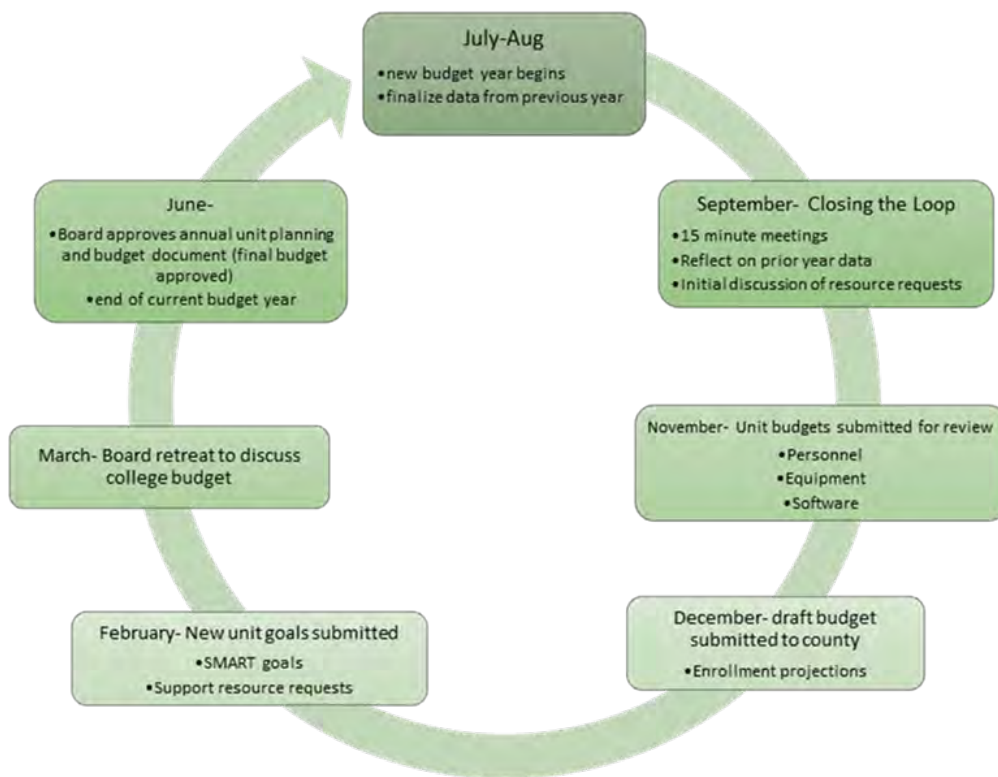
Like all assessment cycles, unit planning includes determining goals, working towards those goals, assessing progress, revising current goals as necessary, and setting new goals. In the case of unit planning, this cycle is linked directly to resource allocation. (STDVI.C1.02- Example of Closing the Loop)

Preparation/Closing the Loop
In preparation for their yearly unit planning meeting, unit leaders and constituents review progress towards the prior year's goals, assess their progress, and introduce budget requests for the following year, including documenting and justifying budget requests through the Self-Service data tracking system. The planning process includes completing and submitting two forms: Closing the Loop (for the prior fiscal year) and Goals (for the upcoming year). (STDVI.C1.03- Closing the Loop Template; STDVI.C1.04- Unit Planning Goals Template)

The Closing the Loop form addresses how the resources were employed and assesses their effectiveness or proposes additional steps to be taken. On Unit Goal forms, unit leaders tie individual unit goals to the current strategic plan, demonstrating how each goal addresses and advances the mission of the college. (STDVI.C1.05- FY24 Nursing Goals Form) Units also use the Goals form to request and justify the resources the unit needs to fulfill their goals for the coming fiscal year. For example, the Goals form for the Public Safety Unit for FY23 requests two additional officers and more on-campus police officers certified for instruction by the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions. These goals were addressed in the Closing the Loop form for FY24, which reported that two new officer positions were created and indicated which officers had received in-service training and were ready to provide on-campus training to other officers.

Unit Planning Assessment
Unit Planning meetings are held in the Fall semester for each organizational unit, when the Goals forms are

discussed with the President, Vice President of Finance and Administration, the Executive Director of Human Resources, the VPAASS, and the Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. Unit leaders justify why certain resources, such as adding staff and faculty positions, are needed, and meeting participants consider enrollment numbers, and any other data provided in support of the request. Unit directors later receive confirmation of budget approvals. Assessment results generated through Unit Planning are shared at Bi-annual colloquia, Board Meetings, the College website, the President's Cabinet meetings, and staff and council meetings. Among the councils are the Academic Council and the Student Affairs Council.

Criteria 3: A financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives

HCC's Annual Plan and Budget document links institutional priorities and strategic planning goals directly to the fiscal year's unit planning goal forms that are submitted yearly by each organizational unit. (STDVI.C3.01-HCC's Annual Planning and Budget) This comprehensive document aligns each of the annual institutional planning priorities to one of the commitments in the current Strategic Plan and includes proposed budgets that are approved by the HCC Board of Trustees.

Resources in the annual plan and budget are divided into key areas:
- **Cost center base budgets** – Funds for basic ongoing operating functions, including personnel and non-personnel items, such as materials and supplies, contracted services, and communication.
- **Productivity funds –** Resources that support the increased costs of unit work, as well as help align actual expenditures with base budgets as dictated by enrollment and related circumstances.
- **Designated funds** - Those funds that are distributed on an annual basis to support and help achieve established institutional priorities and strategic goals. Such funds are allocated for new initiatives or for strengthening existing initiatives, programs and services.
- **Contingency Funds** - Additional funds have been set aside to absorb potential funding cuts and/or enrollment declines throughout the fiscal year, unanticipated expenses, and additional allocations as may be required for program development, new programs and initiatives, and continued enrollment growth.

The Annual Plan and Budget document also demonstrates how institutional improvements are accomplished over time. For example, recent projects completed or scheduled for completion in the next year that relate to Facilities and Technology include:

- FY21: Implementation of Kronos HR software (HR/IT, Standard VII, S.P. 6.6); installation of HVAC in Athletic, Recreation and Community Center (Facilities, Standard VI, S.P. 7.1); renovation of the Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Studies (Facilities, Standard VI, S.P. 7.1)
- FY22: Installation of improved phone system (IT, Standard VI, S.P. 6.6); installation of LED lighting (Facilities, Standard VI, S.P. 6.1) ; development of Facilities database of major equipment status (Facilities, Standard VI, S.P. 6.1)
- FY23: Update of mobile cart hardware to support curriculum and instruction (Academic Affairs/Information Technology, Standard VI, S.P. – Commitment 3); gradual implementation of ConexEd software (Academic Affairs/Information Technology, Standard IV, S.P. – Commitment 3c); renovation of the D.M. Bowman Family Workforce Training Center started (President/Facilities Management, Standard VI, S.P. -Commitments 1 and 5)
- FY24: Implementation of Ellucian Portal for students and employees (Information Technology, Standard IV, S.P. – 3c and 6f); enactment of cyber security training for campus community (President and Information Technology, Standard VI, S.P. – Commitments 6
- FY25: Implementation of Ad Astra, and Event Scheduling Software.

As the strategic plan sets the direction for the College, some changes are based on the evaluation of administrative units rather than through the unit planning process. For example, HCC was challenged to find an adequate number of custodians to keep the campus clean. These problems extended over a period of years and were exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. The College surveyed faculty and staff, logged complaints, and began to assess different methodologies to attack the issue of maintaining a sanitary campus. In 2023, the decision was made to outsource custodial services. An outside corporation would better be able to find the talent to maintain the campus and its buildings, and a contract was put out for bids. The college examined 15 bidding companies and chose Olympus, a corporation dedicated to cleaning higher education entities, as its preferred provider. In the summer of 2024, the contract was put out for bid again due to Olympus' poor performance. A committee was formed, and the new company Integrity was selected and started in August 2024.

There have been other similar changes in the past six years in administrative units where data was used to change and enhance operations, including changes to Campus Food Services, restructuring the advisement model for students, the provision of day care services on campus, and an overhaul in HCC's Early College due to state legislative change.

Criterial 4: Fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered (ROA 11, 15)

Information Technology
Information Technology (IT) is critical to every aspect of HCC's services by providing and maintaining security, network services and data management. According to the Information Technology 2026 Strategic Plan, "IT provides the highest quality technology-based services in the most cost-effective manner to facilitate HCC's mission as it applies to critical functions, which are designed to meet student and community success." (STDVI.C4.01- IT Strategic Plan) HCC's large budget allocation for IT resources demonstrates a recognition of the importance of meeting the technological needs of the campus. For FY25 the operating budget is $2,380,592 and an additional $1,589,083 is allocated to Equipment/Technology in the Capital Funding & Reserve.

IT services are split between the Information Technology staff and the Learning Technology staff to facilitate the provision of academic services. The Learning Technology staff maintain classroom technology, manage the Learning Management System (BrightSpace), and address faculty requests for technical and software assistance related to online courses, classroom technology, on-campus events, and other initiatives related to faculty or student-led events.

IT staff use the Service Desk system to respond to regular maintenance requests and to replace equipment according to need, which is more cost-effective than following a replacement cycle. The job log provides important data that IT staff use to identify trends regarding the usage and sustainability of past equipment purchases that may inform decisions regarding future purchases. The Service Desk system also provides database reports that are used to assess the utilization and lifespan of software and equipment and how efficaciously they support academic programs and services. (STDVI.C4.02- Example of Service Desk Reports)

For example, the Advanced Technology Center includes the laboratory housing Computer Aided Design (CAD) software used in Engineering courses. The CAD lab requires both the software licensing and hardware to appropriately support it. When this project was originally presented by the Business and Technology division at their unit planning, the $85,000 request for updated hardware was denied for that year but was resubmitted and approved in the following year. IT researched equipment with the required specifications, purchased the computers, installed them, and ensured that the equipment functioned as expected. Unit planning also yielded the approval of moving to VDI – Virtual Desktop infrastructure— which increased the sustainability of

computer equipment used by individual employees. The machines last 15 years and reduce the demands placed on IT support staff.

For significant construction projects, such as the Northern Avenue building that will house the D.M. Bowman Training Center, IT also works closely with Facilities, Campus Police and other stakeholders to ready core upgrades, maintain the wireless network in all the buildings, improve emergency communications, and respond to internet security issues.

Human Resources:
When the annual Unit planning meetings finish up in the Fall semester, HR engages in several crucial assessment processes:
- All requested positions are analyzed to determine the costs of the positions themselves as well as to project the costs of running the searches needed to hire for those positions, including examining aspects of proposed job positions may pose issues for recruitment
- The previous staffing model is assessed to determine whether existing staffing needs have been met
- HCC's self-funded Employee Benefits claims are analyzed to project impacts on financials and projections are shared with the President and his Cabinet (STDVI.C4.03- Cabinet minutes)

Additionally, HR uses information from the CCSSE surveys and the HCC Fact Book to compare the institution with other colleges' ability to provide commensurate academic services. The HCC climate surveys are consulted to identify issues that may be affecting student and employee satisfaction and performance in certain areas that may require a response.

Safety and Security
HCC recognizes the importance of designating resources to the protection and well-being of students and the campus community. Improvements to Safety and Security services and procedures, another goal of the 2022 Strategic Plan, included adding manually operated inner locks to all classroom doors, installing a campus wide notification and alert system, and developing unified communication procedures for HCC employees to follow that ensures both local emergency services and HCC campus security receive alerts during an on-campus incident. The number of emergency training drills conducted on campus has increased, including hosting local emergency services personnel in live-shooter drills in a couple of HCC's main campus buildings, tornado evacuation practice, and weekly fire drills during the Summer College for Kids in compliance with state regulations.

In the case of the COVID pandemic, decisions about health policies had to be made quickly and adapted regularly as the state of the pandemic changed. The College drafted a four-phase Road to Recovery plan to outline standard operating procedures during the pandemic and guiding the College through state and federal mandates. Each phase implemented gradual changes to allow the College to return to normal operations. The College created a COVID Response Team that met weekly to discuss operations during the pandemic. (STDVI.C4.04- Roadmap to Recovery) HCC also purchased GoEvo, an employee screening software that prompted HCC community members to answer a series of health-related questions for the purposes of screening people arriving on campus. It could be used on mobile devices or at desk-top stations, and was purchased and implemented between July 2020, and January 2022, when the license expired. As faculty and students increasingly returned to campus, HCC's office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness issued a preliminary report in SP20 of a survey that engaged faculty and staff in assessing HCC's institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic. (STDVI.C4.05- COVID Survey Results)

Of course, other types of danger are assessed and responded to via the unit planning process. For example, IT staff continually assess their comprehensive approach to cybersecurity, utilizing Next Generation Firewalls, endpoint detection software, and AI log evaluation to detect and mitigate threats. IT has implemented

supplementary security products to filter out malicious emails, established processes for system failures, established standard procedures for common issues, and trained adaptable staff for unique IT problems. In extreme incidents, HCC relies on Cyber Insurance for enhanced response capabilities. (STDVI.C4.06- IT Security Threats Report)

Criteria 6: Comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes

(This section supports Institutional Priority #1: Student success, enrollment, and retention.)

The development of facilities projects over the past ten years demonstrates an institutional commitment to fulfilling strategic goals and engaging community support. HCC's capital budget requests for new facilities and renewal are tied to its ten-year Facilities Master Plan and are well aligned with the mission, vision, values, and strategic goals of the college. (STDVI.C6.01- Facilities Goals FY24; (STDVI.C6.02- Facilities Closing the Loop FY24) Projects are funded with a combination of State, County, HCC Alumni, and HCC Foundation funds.

Additionally, HCC has a proven track record of securing supplemental funding from a diverse range of sources, including private, local, state, and federal funders. These grants and sponsored programs significantly enhance the college's ability to provide quality services and instruction to students, develop new programs and resources, and improve campus facilities and equipment. The college benefits from ongoing support for several key programs, such as the Program of Adult Literacy, which has been funded for 22 years by the Maryland Department of Labor; the Child Care Career Professional Development Fund, supported for 17 years by the Maryland Department of Education; and various workforce training initiatives funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission. These funding streams help maintain the college's high standards for affordable education and training. The college has also recently received a number of transformational grants, including $5,840,000 from the Economic Development Administration for the renovation of the D.M. Bowman Family Workforce Training Center, and a $2,249,894 Title III Strengthening Institutions grant from the Department of Education. The latter supports the Guided Pathways to Student Success initiative, aimed at improving student retention and graduation rates. As of August 1, 2024, the college has a portfolio of 24 grant-funded projects with an award value of $16,202,000.

In terms of state and local funding, the president meets with both state and local leaders to monitor the economic and political climate and to advocate on behalf of the college's legislative needs. During the summer, the president meets with each county commissioner individually to discuss local funding needs. Both Washington County and HCC prioritize capital needs over a ten-year basis, and plans are updated annually. After gaining insight from local leaders, the president presents the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Board for approval in November. This plan is then submitted to the County and Maryland Higher Education Commission for incorporation into their capital funding budgets.

Operating budgets are more fluid in nature. During his meeting with local commissioners, the president assesses the County's ability to increase local operational appropriations. Working with county commissioners and staff, the president and VPAF forge a request to submit to county officials in January of each year. If accomplished, the county will build the operational request into the budget for that year. For FY25 the college has received a 2% increase in operational appropriations, and the college has asked for a 3% increase for FY26. In addition, In FY26 the college has submitted a one-time funding request of $750,000 for deferred maintenance, which will be listed under Other Revenue.

Table 9
State and Local Appropriations from FY16 to Proposed in FY26

Fiscal Year	State Appropriation Amount	Local Appropriation Amount
FY16	8,456,933.00	9,265,010.00
FY17	8,995,300.00	9,543,050.00
FY18	9,177,615.00	9,743,000.00
FY19	9,177,996.00	10,035,290.00
FY20	9,455,511.00	10,035,290.00
FY21	9,489,550.00	10,035,290.00
FY22	11,357,531.00	10,035,290.00
FY23	13,959,737.00	10,035,290.00
FY24	16,184,916.00	10,035,290.00
FY25	15,852,133.00	10,236,290.00
FY26	18,404,431.00	10,543,379.00

5-year budget

HCC has not increased tuition and fees for students since SP20 in order to keep tuition and fees affordable. As of FY25 HCC is charging the fourth lowest tuition and fees rate of the Maryland Community Colleges. Although in recent years enrollment has declined or remained steady, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) enrollment projections predict that HCC will experience a growth of 23% in overall headcount between FA22 and FA32 and an expected increase of 35% in full-time equivalent (FTE) and full-time day equivalent (FTDE) in the same period. The headcount showed an increase from FY23 to FY24 of 2% for undergraduates and 217% for dual credit, with a total increase of 48%. The increase of the FTE from FY23 to FY24 is 37%. In part as a response to these projections and in order to continue meeting the needs of the growing student population, the 5-year budget includes a 5% increase of tuition and fees for FY26. Student, Community and Course specific Fees are reviewed every year during budget planning and increased or decreased, if needed.

The 5-year budget shows a 3% increase of tuition and fees for FY27, FY28, and FY29.

Table 10
5-Year Budget

	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
Revenue					
Tuition (credit)	13,866,578	12,946,500	13,334,895	13,734,942	14,146,990
Tuition(non-credit)	1,137,000	1,292,500	1,331,275	1,371,213	1,412,350
Fees	2,831,729	2,874,617	2,900,000	2,950,000	3,000,000
State Allocation	15,852,133	18,404,431	18,200,000	18,000,000	18,000,000
County Allocation	10,236,290	10,543,379	10,859,680	11,185,470	11,521,034
Interest Income	1,125,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000
Other Revenue	200,000	950,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Total Revenue	**45,248,730**	**47,811,427**	**47,625,850**	**48,241,626**	**49,080,374**
Expenditures					
Salaries and Wages	23,957,474	25,555,990	26,578,230	27,375,576	28,196,844
Health Benefits	4,264,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000
Employee Tuition Reimbursement	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Social Security & Medicare	1,849,743	1,955,033	2,033,235	2,094,232	2,157,059
Other Benefits	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Contracted Services/Materials & Supplies	8,969,749	9,948,408	8,553,390	8,260,822	8,365,476
Communication	451,000	451,000	460,000	460,000	460,000
Professional Development & Memberships	465,933	470,000	470,000	470,000	470,000
Grants & Subsidies	1,633,692	1,155,996	1,155,996	1,155,996	1,155,996
Utilities	1,150,000	1,200,000	1,250,000	1,275,000	1,280,000
Fixed Charges	725,675	775,000	825,000	850,000	875,000
Minor Construction/Deferred Maintenance	120,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Other	510,990	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Furniture & Equipment	139,710	200,000	200,000	200,000	20,000
Contingency - General	360,764	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Total Expenditures	**45,248,730**	**47,811,427**	**47,625,850**	**48,241,626**	**49,080,374**

For FY25, the college's capital funding & reserve balance is designated as follows: 15% for buildings and campus grounds repairs/improvements, 56% for building renovations, and 24% for equipment/technology. 11% is undesignated as of January 2025, but the discussion is to increase to 17% to align the college with the county's practice of 17%. Within each of these categories specific projects are listed and designated. The designations are reviewed during the annual Board retreat in March.

The ten-year Facilities Master Plan (FMP) "establishes the framework for the systematic development of all capital improvements that support the mission, vision, values, and strategic initiatives of the college over a period of at least a decade." (STDVI.C6.03- Facilities Master Plan 2024 Update; STDVI.C6.04- Facilities Master Plan 2025) The FMP, required by the state of Maryland, establishes a framework for the orderly development of all capital improvements to support the role, mission and educational plans of the College and includes a connection of facilities planning to the college's mission and goals, a snapshot of current infrastructure, and an overview of ongoing and upcoming projects. The plan documents the institutional goals and objectives,

facilities projections, capital requirements for the College over the next ten years, and land use over the next twenty years, and is updated annually.

The 2020 Campus Master Plan (CMP) provides a vision for development patterns beyond the 10-year planning horizon. This expanded view of the campus enables HCC stakeholders to understand future opportunities and potential trade-offs between unforeseen short-term projects and long-term growth and identifies and incorporates existing positive characteristics of the campus grounds and buildings. The CMP was designed to support and complement the FMP and remains a working plan in progress. (STDVI.C6.05- Campus Master Plan BoT PowerPoint 2025)

Large projects that involve constructing or refurbishing a building begin with the President's office identifying the purpose of the project, relevant stakeholders, and financial viability, and obtaining approval from the Board of Trustees. The plan documentation, along with instructions for the architect, is prepared and sent for state approval (MHEC, Department of General Services, Department of Budget Management.) Once state approval is granted, in the next fiscal year the project begins its progress through the project lifecycle illustrated in "Capital Improvement Project Lifecycle" document. (STDVI.C6.06- Capital Improvement Lifecycle) Some examples of large projects over the last five years include:

- The Energy and Trades Training Center, which opened in 2019. The college received a $48,000 grant from the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation aimed at supporting the growth of construction trades apprenticeships in Washington County. This grant funded HCC's 2020 HCC Construction Trades Core Boot Camp, including programs to prepare students to enter a Registered Apprenticeship in HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and carpentry offered through the Barr Institute at the Cumberland Valley Associated Builders and Contractors chapter in Hagerstown.
- The David W. Fletcher Incubator + Labs in the Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Studies (CBES), which opened in 2021. The 34,000-square-foot space is used to promote business development and other support services for local business owners, entrepreneurs, and independent workers. Three of the resident entrepreneurs received awards through Project Restore, a Maryland state initiative of its Department of Housing and Community Development. (STDVI.C6.07-HCC News Announcement)
- Two electric vehicle charging stations were funded by Potomac Edison and installed in 2023 and a third was added in 2024. These additions complement the Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education Division's introduction of an online, self-paced electric vehicle technician certificate program in partnership with George Brown College.

Prior to unit planning, the Facilities staff perform assessments to determine if any projects need to be completed on campus. Projects are separated into two categories: minor projects and capital improvement projects. Minor projects are smaller in scale and can be managed or completed by the Facilities Staff and within a year. These projects are typically funded through the College, the State Renewal Grant, or donors. For example, repairs to the stone walls around campus were completed with funds provided by HCC. (STDVI.C6.08- Facilities Closing the Loop FY23)

Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) are larger in scale and are usually evaluated prior to the November Board of Trustees Meeting. These large-scale projects are funded through a variety of sources, including state or county money, donors, or HCC. A typical CIP is funded with approximately 65% state money and the local match is 35%. These projects are submitted to state agencies 16 months before the fiscal year for which the funding is intended. The State has issued a manual to help guide community colleges through the process of a CIP, and the link can be found online. (STDVI.C6.09- Maryland Community College Facilities Manual) Once they have been approved for funding, projects move forward following the processes the State has in place. Board Policy 6020 was recently revised to increase the bidding threshold that requires board approval, in accordance with the Maryland Annotated Code. (STDVI.C6.10- Policy 6020)

As a sustainable organization, HCC strives to achieve institutional goals with an eye on reducing the impact on future generations of the depletion of limited resources. The College is actively working to continuously improve environmental conditions focusing on growth, energy and water conservation, waste minimization, habitat, health, safety and well-being. HCC has developed a variety of approaches aimed at improving the chances for long term success through the promotion of cost effective, efficient and responsible resource use. Recent initiatives include energy conservation through the installation of energy efficient LED fixtures with built in motion sensors and planting hundreds of saplings to increase the forest canopy. Current activities are addressing infrastructure improvements to make the campus more pedestrian friendly and safer. The College remains committed to reducing its carbon footprint by increasing the number of renewable energy sources in use, recognizing its place in the community to influence and empower people with knowledge and skills setting a sustainable example for others to follow.

Like IT, Facilities uses Service Desk, along with School Dude, to monitor day-to-day maintenance requests and to replace equipment. The jobs logged are also analyzed to detect trends regarding the usage and sustainability of past equipment purchases that may inform decisions regarding future purchases.

When a more minor maintenance or refurbishment project is undertaken to support a specific academic program or college service, the in-house project is handled through unit planning and tracked with the School Dude e-requisition system. For example, underused conference rooms in the Student Center have recently been reconfigured, one into the expanded Registration and Student Support offices, and the other into an E-sports activity center for students. For these types of projects, the Facilities Master Plan helps in tracking the allocation of space across the campus, as does an electronic space and event tracking system, currently Ad Astra.

In recent years, HCC recognized the increasing importance of a robust and forward-looking IT infrastructure to support the growing needs of students, faculty, and staff. With technology playing a critical role in every aspect of campus life, from classroom learning to administrative functions, it became evident that a comprehensive IT strategic plan was necessary. This realization came as the college experienced several challenges, including network outages, aging infrastructure, and the rapid evolution of digital tools and resources. To address these challenges and position the institution for future success, HCC's IT department embarked on the development of a detailed IT strategic plan. (STDVI.C6.10- IT Strategic Plan) This plan was designed to align with the college's broader goals, ensuring that technology would support academic excellence, operational efficiency, and student success. The resulting IT strategic plan focuses on key priorities such as enhancing network reliability, improving cybersecurity, expanding digital learning tools, and increasing access to technology resources.

A prime example of this strategic approach in action is the recent decision to secure a backup Wi-Fi provider. Recognizing the impact of campus-wide outages on the college community, this initiative was implemented to provide a reliable secondary option in case of disruptions, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity. This solution exemplifies HCC's commitment to proactive planning and ongoing assessment in the IT space, reinforcing the college's dedication to creating a technology environment that fosters success for all.

Criteria 7: An annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter

HCC's Board of Trustees has a standing Audit Committee, comprised of three Trustees and guided by the Audit Committee charter. The committee "assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibility for oversight of the quality and integrity of the accounting and budgeting polices, auditing, reporting practices and internal control of the College, and other duties as directed by the Board." (STDVI.C7.01- Audit Committee Charter) (he yearly audit, including the retention of the auditing firm and oversight of the auditing process, falls under the purview of the Audit Committee. The audit is presented to the Audit Committee, President, Director of Finance, and Vice

President of Administration and Finance in early October, and then the Audit Committee Chair presents the audit to the Board of Trustees in the October board meeting. (STDVI.C7.02- October BoT minutes) HCC has a strong record of clean audits. (STDVI.C7.03- Audit report FY24; STDVI.C7.04- Audit report FY23; STDVI.C7.05- Audit Report FY22)

Criteria 8: Strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals
HCC's leadership regularly reviews data and reports (STDVI.C8.01- IPEDS Finance; STDVI.C8.02- Audit Report FY24; STDVI.C8.03- HCC Budget Model; STDVI.C8.04- HCC Fact Book) that provides information on resource allocation and utilization. The data reviewed by key stakeholders is closely linked with key metrics like enrollment and retention trends, classroom usage, and budget expenditures. By monitoring these metrics, HCC can make agile, data-informed adjustments to resource allocations, whether that means hiring additional faculty or staff in high-demand areas or redirecting funds toward under-resourced programs. This proactive approach ensures that HCC's resources are consistently aligned with institutional goals and responsive to the evolving needs of the students and community.

HCC's budget model is developed to provide mechanisms for budget planning and measurement on a regular cycle, allowing for an ongoing, continual assessment of the utilization of institutional resources. By integrating data-informed planning and regular assessments into decision-making processes, HCC ensures that resources are allocated effectively to promote student success, operational efficiency, and strategic growth. HCC uses annual budgeting and planning cycles that align departmental needs with institutional priorities, ensuring each unit has adequate resources to meet its objectives. This process includes evaluating program needs, adjusting budgets based on enrollment trends, and aligning personnel resources with strategic goals to maximize impact.

The planning process involves evaluating the financial sustainability and resource requirements of each academic and non-academic program to identify areas for potential reallocation or increased funding. For example, programs with consistent growth in enrollment undergo rigorous resource evaluations to ensure that classrooms, labs, and clinical spaces meet both current and projected demands. This ensures that high-demand programs have sufficient resources to operate effectively, while other areas with lower enrollment or less impact on strategic goals are adjusted accordingly.

To optimize the use of physical resources, HCC is conducting facilities utilization studies. These studies evaluate space usage across campus, including classroom occupancy rates, lab utilization, and student service areas, allowing the college to make informed decisions about scheduling, renovations, and space allocation. For instance, data from these studies informed renovations in the CBES Building, ensuring that classroom and lab spaces are aligned with contemporary teaching methods and institutional needs. This targeted approach has enabled HCC to enhance the overall environment while maintaining efficient use of space and minimizing unnecessary expenditures.

Program Reviews help to inform the financial viability of academic programs (More about Program Reviews can be found in Standard III and Standard V).

Criteria 9: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources (ROA 8, 9)

With the arrival of Dr. Klauber, the unit planning process was streamlined. The unit planning process was recently assessed via faculty and staff survey, which revealed that faculty and staff would benefit from further training and discussion regarding the purpose and relevance of unit planning. As a result, two workshops were

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offered, on 08/19/2024 and 09/18/24. One of the training sessions was recorded and posted on HCC's website. (STDVI.C9.01- Training Recording) All budget managers were invited, and two choices were given to ensure availability. Attendance was taken and emails pointing to the recorded training session were sent out to budget managers who were unable to attend.

A new program review process was developed in FY23 to improve consistency and regularity. (STDVI.C9.02- Program Review Schedule) There is now a template for each division and a predetermined schedule. Program reviews follow a set timeline from June to May to align with the academic year, culminating with a report of activities to the Board of Trustees. More about the program review process can be found in Standard III and Standard V.

Unit planning and resource allocation decisions are also discussed in detail at the yearly Board Retreat, where board members analyze rationale and provide feedback.

Monthly financial statements and the annual financial audited statements are an indicator to evaluate planning and resource allocation. The Vice President of Finance and Administration presents monthly financials to the Board and answers questions by Board members. (STDVI.C9.03- BoT Financial Report)

Because HCC has been in a positive financial position, the CFI has not needed to be specifically addressed in financial board reports. However, the CFI for FY20 is 4.38, for FY21 is 3.56, for FY22 is 5.31, for FY23 is 3.06, and for FY24 is 3.25. A score greater than or equal to 1.5 indicates the institution is considered financially responsible. (STDVI.C9.04- CFIs)

Strengths
The college is in a strong financial position, having actively pursued and secured support through grant awards and the HCC Foundation—efforts that were especially successful during its recent 75th anniversary celebrations. The financial strength of the college is evident in the proactive approach to facility maintenance; all maintenance needs are addressed promptly with no major deferred maintenance issues.

Unit planning provides a documented trail of evidence supporting accountability and effective communication with stakeholders. The process has been refined based on survey feedback, and two workshops were conducted in FA24 to explain the unit planning process.

Opportunities
Institutional Objectives assessment is in the early stages of data collection, and in general data collection procedures are being revised, thus in the future data from the assessment of institutional objectives will be more fully engaged cyclical planning processes.

While the current Unit Planning process provides good evidence for planning, resource allocation and stakeholder input, regularly assessing the efficacy of the institutional planning process as a whole and the extent to which stakeholders have effective input would support stronger outcomes. For example, deadlines for the annual budget requests are currently earlier than those for the submission of annual unit goals, but moving forward both will be due at the same time. These kinds of changes based on review and feedback will help maintain good alignment between various planning cycles at all levels of administration.

Project planning processes take the impacts of improvements and maintenance on campus sustainability into account more cohesively than ever before. Furthering this approach would increase efficiency and cut costs as well as enhancing sustainability. A variety of projects, such as the installation of EV states, that had developed relatively independently of one another are being integrated into a cohesive vision including assessment of recycling, water consumption and waste minimization.

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, & ADMINISTRATION

Chapter VII: Standard VII - Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Executive Summary:
HCC uses a governance framework built on a collaborative model that involves the Board of Trustees, senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students. This framework has established a robust governance, leadership, and administrative structure that ensures the effective fulfillment of its mission, institutional goals, and strategic priorities. Standard VII evaluates how the governance system operates to promote transparency, shared decision-making, and strategic leadership at all levels of the institution.

HCC's senior leadership, led by the President, is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the institution in alignment with the Board of Trustees' vision. The governance, leadership, and administrative structures at HCC are well-aligned with the college's mission and strategic goals. Through a transparent and inclusive decision-making process, effective leadership, and strong administrative support, HCC remains a dynamic and responsive institution.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

(This standard supports Institutional Priority #2: Student Experience and Priority #3: Teaching Excellence and Curriculum Development.)

The Board of Trustees, alongside the President and administration, guides Hagerstown Community College toward its institutional goals by developing and evaluating policies, incorporating input from different constituents, and delegating responsibilities appropriately. While the Board's leadership remains at the policy level, the president and his team work closely with administration, faculty, and staff to manage the college effectively.

Criteria 1: a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students (ROA 14)

The decision-making process at HCC is summarized by Chart 1: Decision Making at HCC Chart, which follows. The governance of Hagerstown Community College is principally performed through its Board of Trustees, while the President influences and is ultimately accountable for both areas of decision-making: administrative day-to-day/operational decisions and policy development. Administrative bodies focus on day-to-day operations; employees are hired to make reliable and responsible decisions in their assigned work areas. Along with the President and his executive officers, other organizational bodies that influence administrative work and decisions are the President's Cabinet, Faculty Assembly, Student Government Association, and all of the College's councils. These college councils are composed of employees in their areas of responsibility.

Figure 10
Decision Making at HCC
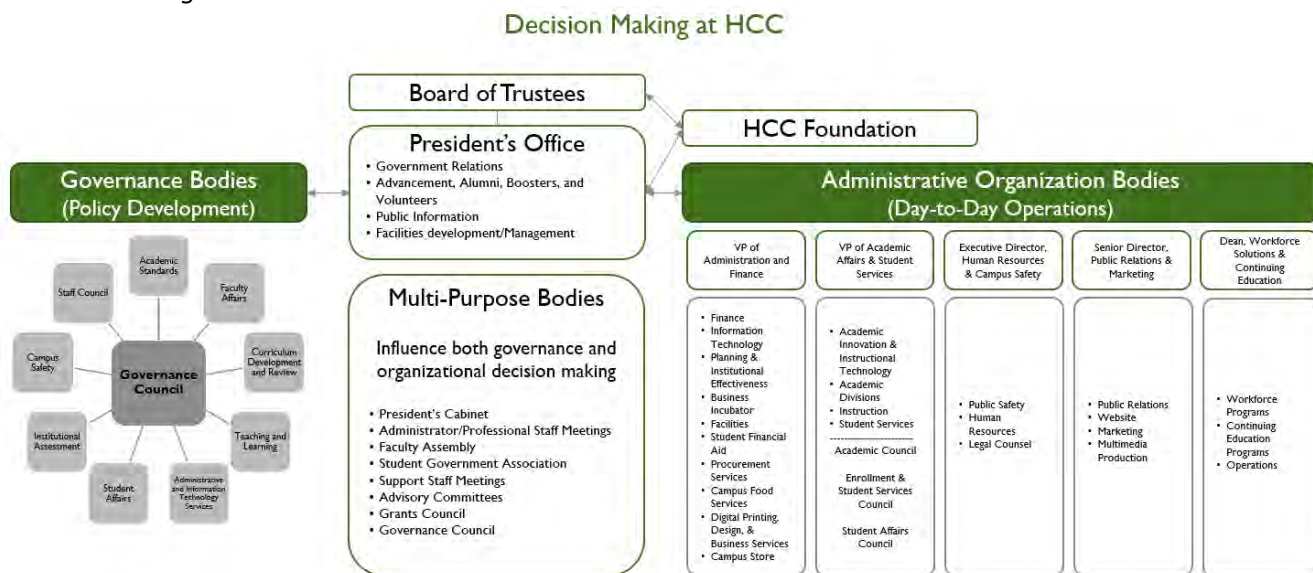
Shared Governance

Hagerstown Community College's institutional governance and decision-making model integrates job-based decision-making with shared governance and institutional decisions. The system emphasizes broad faculty and staff involvement and a high degree of communication and trust between all campus constituencies. The members are a diverse representation of faculty, staff, and students (STDVII.C1.01- Governance Council Roster), and committees are focused on policy formation and review. The President chairs the Governance Council, the coordinating body for shared governance concerns and issues on campus. The Governance Council oversees HCC's decision-making structure by ensuring that committees are fully staffed and actively studying issues or reviewing policies. All activities of the Governance Council and the shared governance process are detailed in the Annual Governance Report. (STDVII.C1.02- 2024 Annual Shared Governance Report)

Criteria 2: a legally constituted governing body that:
2a. serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution (ROA 1, 7, 12)

With its establishment in 1946 as Maryland's first public two-year college, Hagerstown Community College is subject to the laws established by the State under Maryland Education Code Ann. Sec. 16-101 et. seq. (2022). Maryland law provides for the terms, powers, duties, limitations, and lengths of service for community college board members, and specifically for HCC. That authority is further refined in the board bylaws and ultimately its board approved policies. The Board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor, with advice and consent of the Maryland Senate, for six-year terms. (STDVII.C2a.01- MD Code) There are no term limits, as Board members may be reappointed any number of times. Terms are staggered with one member having their term expire each year over a seven-year period. (STDVII.C2a.02- MD Code) Listed below are the current Board Members of HCC. (STDVII.C2a.03- HCC BoT Biographies)

Table 11
Board of Trustees

Name	Appointment	Expiration	Occupation
L. William Proctor	March 23, 2012	July 1, 2025	Attorney
Paula A. Lampton	July 1, 2016	June 30, 2028	Nurse (retired)
Austin S. Abraham	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2026	Local Government (retired)
Carolyn W. Brooks	July 1, 1993	June 30, 2029	Retired
Thomas C. Newcomer	July 1, 2021	June 30, 2027	Self Employed/Business Owner
Gregory I. Snook	July 1, 2007	July 1, 2025	Self Employed/Real Estate
John D. Williamson	March 23, 2012	June 30, 2030	Retired/Financial Services

The Board of Trustees is granted broad authority by the State, is the sole entity possessing legal responsibility for the institution from the State, and their powers are set forth by statute. The Board is subject to the authority of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, but with their approval the Board is empowered to establish and operate one or more community colleges. Included but not limited in its duties, the Board is charged by statute with general control over the institution to keep records and minutes and adopt reasonable rules, regulations, or bylaws to carry out the provisions of state law. The Board is further empowered to set salaries and tenure of the president, faculty, and other employees. Finally, the Board is authorized to accept gifts on behalf of the College, determine entrance requirements, acquire and dispose of property, set fees, and tuition rates. (STDVII.C2a.04- MD Code)

2b. has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities

New members of the Board of Trustees participate in orientation, where they learn about the Board's relationship with county and state officials, fundraising, advocacy, the HCC organizational chart, state groups (USM, MHEC, etc.), external partnerships, public information procedures, government relations, Human Resources, and Continuing Education.

In addition to orientation, Trustees participate in professional development on an annual basis, with an Annual Board Retreat in March. (STDVII.C2b.01- BoT Retreat Agenda) Trustees are also involved in the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Trustees have attended ACCT meetings, participated in panels at ACCT, and served on committees within the organization.

2c. ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution

As the Board of Trustees operates on a policy level, clear delineations between their work and the day-to-day operations of the college are established through several Board Bylaws, including Bylaw II. D, which states, "The Board, as the final institutional authority, has the responsibility to guarantee the integrity of the College, to develop and periodically to evaluate policies and procedures for the College, and to entrust the administration of those policies to the President." Additionally, Section VIII: Powers and Responsibilities of the Board further defines the role of the Board in college operations. (STDVII.C2c.01- BoT Bylaws)

2d. oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the promulgation and approval of all policies of the College. All of the policies of Hagerstown Community College are compiled in the Board of Trustees Policy Manual. (STDVII.C2d.01- BoT Policy Manual) This manual can be found on the College website, and all policies are available for review, download, or printing. Board Policy 2040 provides that college policies must be reviewed at least once every five years. (STDVII.C2d.02- Policy 2040) Each policy is marked with an initial date of approval, followed by a date of revision or periodic review, whichever occurs later.

State law does not provide when or how often the Board should meet. However, the HCC bylaws prescribe a minimum of six regular meetings per year. In actuality, the Board meets in regular meetings monthly ten times a year from September through June. The Board does not meet in July or August. Prior to March 2020, the Board only allowed in-person attendance. On March 17, 2020, the Board adopted an emergency policy to allow attendance by electronic means during the COVID 19 pandemic. (STDVII.C2d.03- Policy 2010A) Since that time, this allowance on attendance has been incorporated into the permanent bylaws.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Board frequently meets for work sessions and closed meetings. Regular meetings and work sessions are all open to the public and operated within the provisions of the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Work sessions typically encompass matters such as preliminary policy review, preliminary budget discussions, Board training, or other subject matter. Closed meetings occur only at times when matters fall within one of the fifteen exemptions to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. These items typically involve contractual procurement, property acquisition, select administrative functions, or personnel matters. (STDVII.C2d.04- MD Code)

2f. appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer

Board Bylaws section VIII:F establishes the appointment and evaluation of the president as a Board duty. (STDVII.C2f.01- BoT Bylaws) The president is evaluated on an annual basis. In September of each year, the president submits a list of goals and objectives to the Board for their review and approval. At the following June meeting, the president submits the identical list with the accomplishments provided for Board review. (STDVII.C2f.02- FY24 President's Goals and Accomplishments) The Board then meets in closed session to discuss performance, and any contractual changes. At a later date, the Board Chair and Vice Chair meet with the president to review his performance and share any contractual changes before the beginning of the new fiscal year. (STDVII.C2f.03- FY24 President's Evaluation)

2g. is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance

In order to better define its duties, scope and authority, the HCC Board of Trustees adopted its first set of bylaws on October 7, 1971. These bylaws have been amended from time to time over the years, with the last revision on February 21, 2023. (STDVII.C2g.01- BoT Bylaws) The bylaws mirror the state statutes with regards to community college governance and provide for the election of a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. In accordance with state law, the President of the College serves as Secretary/Treasurer to the Board. (STDVII.C2g.02- MD Code) The bylaws outline the duties of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. These officers serve a term of one year. While not outlined in the bylaws, it has been longstanding tradition that officers typically serve two one-year terms before rotating to another position or out of the role of officer.

The HCC Board has established two standing committees, an Audit Committee and a Nominating Committee. While the Board has the authority to create special committees at any time, it has seen it only necessary to form these two standing committees. The Audit Committee has oversight responsibility of the annual financial audit of the College in accordance with Board policy.

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More about the Audit Committee can be found in Standard VI. The Nominating Committee is responsible for preparing a slate of officers for consideration at the last meeting of the fiscal year or anytime a vacancy in an office shall occur. (STDVII.C2g.03- BoT Bylaws)

There have been occasions where a Special Committee was necessary. In 2022, a Bylaws Review Committee was formed consisting of Trustees Austin Abraham, Paula Lampton, and William Proctor. These trustees were charged with updating the bylaws. Their recommended changes were determined in a committee meeting in December, 2022. The changes were forwarded to the full Board at its January work session, and then adopted as part of the consent agenda at the February 2023 regular Board meeting. (STDVII.C2g.04- BoT Minutes Feb 2023)

2h. establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest (ROA 13)

On January 30, 2014, the Board of Trustees adopted a Conflict of Interest policy for itself and the President that sets forth the requirements that the Board members and the President must disclose any matter or relationship that might constitute a conflict of interest. In addition to disclosure, Board members must abstain from voting on any matter where a direct or indirect personal financial interest exists. Trustees file conflict of interest disclosures annually, which are retained with the records of the Board. (STDVII.C2h.01- Policy 2025)

According to Policy #2025, Board members do not receive any compensation for their service. They may be reimbursed for travel expenses on college-related business.

2i. supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution

THE PRESIDENT
3. a Chief Executive Officer who:
3a. is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body;

The selection of a president is, by law, exclusively left to the Board of Trustees of each community college. State law further provides for five duties of the president: reports directly to the Board, recommends appointment of qualified faculty and other employees, recommends the discharge of employees for good cause, is responsible for the conduct of the community college, and shall attend all meetings of the board except those involving the president's position itself. (STDVII.C3a.01- MD Code) The duties of the president are provided for in greater detail within Section VIII (F) of the Board Bylaws. (STDVII.C3a.02- Policy 2010)

3b. has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization c. has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission

Dr. James S. Klauber, Sr. was appointed to the position as HCC's fourth president on March 20, 2018. (STDVII.C3b.01- BoT Minutes March 2018) Additionally, those same minutes detail the Special Meetings that the Board conducted on February 27th, 28th, March 1st, and March 2nd for the purposes of interviewing candidates for the position. Finally, in its selection process, a delegation of Board members traveled to Huntsville, AL to interview employees and local leaders at Dr. Klauber's then current employer to determine

his suitability for the position. Those items were discussed in a Special Meeting of the Board on March 9th, 2018, according to the March 20, 2018 meeting. The Board conducted a thorough search utilizing the services of Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to ensure a pool of qualified candidates on a national level. (STDVII.C3b.02- President's Biography)

In addition to his listed accomplishments, Dr. Klauber served as one of the Kentucky members of the Board of Trustees, and later its Executive Council, for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) from 2012-2015. (STDVII.C3b.03- Klauber CV)

Dr. Klauber has served as President at two colleges previously. His first presidency was at Owensboro Community and Technical College, a part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Then in 2015, he was selected as the fifth president at John C. Calhoun Community College, the largest community college in the State of Alabama. While at Calhoun Community College, he led the college to more than double its IPEDS graduation rate, and more than triple the graduation rate for Black or African American students.

Since arriving at Hagerstown Community College in 2018, the institution has seen graduation and retention rates continue to rise. A strong believer that students come first in every endeavor, Dr. Klauber was awarded the Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction from Phi Theta Kappa in 2024. Believing that educational attainment is directly tied to the success of a particular locality, Dr. Klauber is very active in the business and economic development aspects of Washington County. He was recognized as Business Person of the Year by the Washington County Chamber of Commerce in 2022 and led the College to be recognized as the Large Business of the Year in 2023. He serves on the local economic development board (CHIEF) and on the management board for Meritus Park. He is also very active in several community organizations on behalf of the College.

Criteria 3d. has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness (ROA 15)

President's Executive Leadership Team (PELT)
The President's Executive Leadership Team at HCC is composed of senior administrators who report directly to the President. This group works collaboratively to provide strategic direction and operational oversight across all major areas of the college.

President's Cabinet
The President's Cabinet is an advisory group that addresses day-to-day operational matters. The Cabinet consists of all vice-presidents and deans; the Faculty Assembly chair; the Executive Director of Human Resources; the Senior Director of Public Information and Marketing; the Senior Director of Information Technology; and the Senior Director of College Advancement.

Academic Council
The Academic Council addresses day-to-day operations of the divisions, academic scheduling, and curricula. Membership includes the VPAASS, the Executive Assistant to the VPAASS, all division Directors, the Faculty Assembly chair, the Dean of Academic Innovation and Instructional Technology, the Dean of Instruction, the Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, and the Director of Early College Programs.

Faculty Assembly
The Faculty Assembly is the central faculty governance body through which the faculty expresses their ideas regarding academic policy, student success, and matters related to teaching and learning. The Assembly also serves as a forum for faculty to express views on matters outside governance. The Assembly chair is

responsible for taking issues from the Assembly to the Governance Council, the President's Cabinet, or directly to the VPAASS or the President based upon whether the issue is a governance matter, an administrative issue, or a topic that requires direct deliberation with the President. The chair of the Assembly is a member of the President's Cabinet, Governance Council, Academic Council, and Enrollment and Student Services Council.

Enrollment and Student Services Council
The Enrollment and Student Services Council addresses the day-to-day operations related to enrollment, recruitment, and retention. Membership includes both Vice Presidents, all Deans, all division Directors, the Faculty Assembly chair, and appropriate members of Student Affairs, and other campus representatives as assigned.

Student Government Association
The Student Government Association (SGA) is the representative body for students. The SGA presents concerns of all students to the College's administration, ensures student involvement at all levels of the institution, maintains positive communication and understanding between and within all members of the College community, and collaborates with the Office of Student Activities to plan a program of activities for all students. Officers of the SGA serve on appropriate standing and ad hoc committees to ensure student advocacy.

Criteria 4: an administration possessing or demonstrating:
4a. an organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships
4b. an appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities
4c. members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles
4d. skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties

Hagerstown Community College's Organizational Chart provides a current and accurate representation of the reporting relationships to the president and the College. (STDVII.C4a.01- Organizational Chart) The president is supported by an administrative assistant and six direct reports who bring the necessary experience to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. (STDVII.C4b.01- President's Direct Reports CVs; STDVII.C4c.01- President's Direct Reports CVs; STDVII.C4d.01- President's Direct Reports CVs)

4e. regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives

The President and his leadership team provide important and systemic updates in person at the annual Colloquium, the Faculty Retreat and periodically throughout the year through emails on timely topics including major changes, capital improvement updates, and instructional updates.

Communication Efforts
Dr. Klauber provides regular updates to the campus community via email, typically 1 – 3 emails per month. Topics include campus updates (including HR, IT, Board meetings, and legislation), structural or organizational changes, accolades and awards, upcoming campus events, revisions or updates to the strategic plan and Mission & Vision Statement, and well-wishes and thanks for the hard work of campus employees. (STDVII.C4e.01- Sample Campus Update Email)

4f. systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations

The most basic form of annual assessment of departments across campus is in the Unit Planning Process. While

the process is principally used to plan the following year's budget, it is the primary venue for academic and nonacademic units to present their assessment data from the previous year and planning goals for the next year. Each September, all units across the College present this data to the President's Unit Planning Team.

The presentation in Unit Planning gives every employee, within every department, the opportunity to engage with the administration on their role in actuating the strategic plan, and more specifically what the activities and needs for the upcoming fiscal year will be. Unit leaders are required to submit their "Closing the Loop Form" to the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness prior to their unit meeting. This form gives the unit leader the opportunity to detail their accomplishments over the year, how it relates to strategic planning goals, key metrics, and a basic forecast of needs for the upcoming year. (STDVII.C4f.01- Closing the Loop Form Template) Receipt of the form prior to the Unit Planning meeting gives the members of the Unit Planning Team the opportunity to formulate objective knowledgeable questions about the unit and its needs going forward.

In recent years, units are asked to submit their goals for the next year the following February. While some units have formulated goals in September at Unit Planning, others have not. Waiting until February has given units the opportunity to use current environmental scanning to document realistic goals for the next fiscal year. By May, the goals from the unit planning process are aligned with the available budget, culminating in the Annual Plan and Budget document. (STDVII.C4f.02 HCC's Annual Planning and Budget) This final document is presented to the HCC Board of Trustees for approval and becomes the basis of activities for the next fiscal year. In September, the whole process repeats itself. More about the Unit Planning process and the Annual Plan and Budget can be found in Standard VI.

While unit planning is an annual activity, the strategic planning process at HCC begins once every five years. Hagerstown Community College was operating under a strategic plan that was set to expire in 2022. Following the hiring of a new president, Dr. Klauber felt that the plan in existence was too rigid for a community college that was about to undergo significant change at the state level due to anticipated new legislation. The plan had strict administrative prescriptions, and did not allow units flexibility to accomplish goals. He decided to begin a new strategic plan to guide the institution through 2026.

The planning process began with public input from external stakeholders. Alumni, donors, employers, local businesses, and others were invited to share their vision for HCC. Once external input was gathered, the College turned inward to gather information and data from its employees. This information was shared with the strategic planning committee who created new mission, vision, and values statements for the College along with six commitments. The plan was presented to the HCC Board of Trustees and adopted in January 2022. (STDVII.C4f.03- 2026 HCC Strategic Plan) More detail about this process can be found in Standard I.

Criteria 5. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration

Periodic assessment is extensive at HCC and begins with the Board of Trustees. Over the last few years, an increased focus on Board self-assessment has enabled the Board of Trustees to set better policy guidelines for the college. The Board assesses itself in August of each year via the Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation Tool. (STDVII.C5.01- BoT Self-Evaluation Tool) Once the survey has closed, the Executive Assistant to the President makes a comparison chart of the results for the past three years. At the September Board meeting, the Trustees review the compiled survey results in a Closed Session. They discuss the results, review their overall Board and Individual performance, and plan their goals for the next year. The results from the Board of Trustees Board and Self-Evaluations are also used to provide feedback to improve both Board and Trustee performance. The Chair of the Board of Trustees uses the results to determine committee assignments based on area of interest and subject matter expertise. Trustees are encouraged to rotate committees to increase their knowledge of the institutional operations of the college.

Staff at HCC are evaluated through the College's Annual Planning and Performance Review (APPR) process. Executive Officers require their direct reports to develop and implement outcome-based goals which are based on the College's mission, goals, institutional and unit priorities, and key metrics. Each administrator develops at least one goal reflective of HCC's mission, vision, and strategic goals. The end-of-year appraisal assesses the level of goal achievement. The President personally discusses the results with each executive officer.

Staff performance is measured via the Staff Performance Evaluation tool, found in Kronos. The Help Guides, also in Kronos, give the employee and the manager a way to navigate through the process, and provide a good overview of the process and what it looks like in the Human Resource System. The Staff Performance evaluations are one of several ways that supervisors provide continual feedback to their direct reports throughout the year. They are a means for the supervisor to document performance conversations but are also a way for employees and supervisors to collaborate on establishing goals for the upcoming fiscal year. Employee goals should pertain to the strategic plan or initiatives that come out of department unit planning. The Staff Performance Evaluation tool is used to formulate goals for employees based on employee-supervisor joint participation. The goals that are established are related to the College Strategic Plan as well as initiatives related to department planning from the Unit Planning process. The agreed upon goals that come out of this process impact institutional operations and help to guide employee-supervisor performance toward the achievement of institutional goals and objectives.

Faculty are provided the opportunity to conduct a 360° survey of their Division Director on an annual basis. These surveys are conducted through the human resources system, Kronos. and housed in the Office of Human Resources. The overall results are summarized by the VPAASS to maintain the confidentiality of the direct reports. The summaries are then shared with the Division Director.

During the past five years, the shared governance system has been amended twice. In each instance, the President convened a working group of faculty and administrators to examine the system, update it, and make changes where necessary. In the FA18, an ad hoc committee comprised of five administrators, five faculty, and one student, and co-chaired by the Faculty Assembly chair and VPAASS, began working on revisions to the system following a charge provided by the new President. They identified problem areas in the current governance system, and researched ways to improve the model. The revisions were shared with the Faculty Assembly and the entire college community and continue to be supported by the President and all constituent groups.

One of the additions to shared governance resulting from this revision was the creation of a Staff Council. The Staff Council meets at least quarterly to discuss issues going on at the College as it relates to administrative staff and support staff, and the Chair of the Staff Council sits on the Governance Council. The Staff Council reports to the President and occasionally requests training or additional information on college events. For example, when the Maryland General Assembly passed collective bargaining legislation, the Staff Council requested that the President present an overview of the new law to staff and administrative support personnel so that they could better understand the statute. The President did and posted the video to the College HR web page. (STDVII.C5.02- Staff Council Video)

After working with the revised Shared Governance Guide for several years, users determined that some parts of it needed further clarification, so another working group was formed in 2023. The revisions were completed in May 2024. (STDVII.C5.03- Guide to Shared Governance 2024)

On April 30, 2024, the full-time faculty at HCC voted affirmatively for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to act as their exclusive representative under the Maryland Public Employee Relations Act. As this self-study is written, the College and AFT are in negotiations for a collective bargaining contract. This may bring some changes to the shared governance process and the negotiating teams will confer and collaborate to ensure compliance with the requirements of the law regarding necessary modifications.

Strengths

One of the greatest strengths of HCC is its fiscal stability, a testament to the strong leadership throughout the institution, from the Board of Trustees to senior administrators. This leadership has been key in navigating financial challenges, such as the State of Maryland's inconsistent funding of its community college formula. Despite these fluctuations, the allocations HCC receives, combined with local funding, have positioned the College favorably compared to many other colleges. Strategic financial management has allowed HCC to maintain fiscal stability without raising tuition rates for over five years. This prudent oversight, led by the Board and carried through by institutional leadership, has enabled HCC to leverage its fiscal strength to support institutional priorities and student success.

Another strength of Hagerstown Community College is its ability to hire, retain, and promote strong leaders at the institution. The College has approached this in several ways. First, the Human Resources Department has recognized some states do not have a funding model similar to Maryland. This environmental scan offers opportunities to recruit top talent that may be frustrated with the inability to accomplish educational goals due to lack of state and local funding. In several instances, the College has recruited senior leader talent from other states principally due to fears of downsizing or inability to accomplish their respective missions. The attractiveness of the region, the ability to have funding to meet educational goals, and the opportunity to build a rewarding career are powerful attractants that the College employs in its recruiting.

Opportunities

HCC has demonstrated its commitment to continually evaluating the effectiveness of its governance and administration, while also identifying opportunities for further enhancements.

There are further opportunities to enhance student involvement in assessing learning, shaping the educational experience, and influencing key policies and procedures. Currently, SGA representatives make presentations to the HCC Trustees at each Board meeting. The President of the Student Government Association sits on the Governance Council, and the Vice President of the SGA sits on one of the shared governance committees. The College uses student input in its administrative decision-making process, and students evaluate faculty in each course. However, there are ways that students could be engaged in more types of decision-making on campus. For example, student focus groups would give a greater opportunity for deeper information than a mere survey and provide solid insight from a student's perspective into proposed changes at the College. Focus groups on subjects such as course scheduling, modality, and other academically related items could yield better opportunities for students to get the courses they want, when they want them.

AFT and the College leadership moving through the collective bargaining process provides another opportunity for growth. One of the principal reasons for selecting AFT as their exclusive representative was to "ensure HCC provides a teaching and learning environment that will secure an academic future that is as strong as its stellar academic legacy." (AFT Press Release, 4/30/2024, Ray Baker, AFT Maryland, quoting Professor Thomas Crawford). Faculty members saw this action as a move to "fortify the foundation of higher education, nurturing an environment where faculty can excel, students can thrive and the pursuit of knowledge has no bounds." (AFT Press Release, 4/30/2024, Ray Baker, AFT Maryland, quoting Professor Dawn Nally) It is clear the HCC faculty see that the College has accomplished much in its delivery of education to its students, and they want to do more. The administration likewise sees this change as an opportunity for growth at HCC.

A third opportunity is the evaluation of the effectiveness of communication across the college community. In 2021, the College conducted a Pace Survey to identify areas of opportunity within administration, leadership, and the overall college community. One of the biggest areas of concern was that of communication. For that reason, one of the parts of Commitment 6 under the new strategic plan was to "improve communication and align goals across departments." As the College works through the Strategic Plan to 2026, earnest steps have been taken to better the communicative process. Shared governance documents are placed on the website for anyone to see. Minutes from other campus committees are shared college-wide. While there are areas for improvement, improving communication within the College is and will continue to be an essential goal.

Conclusion

Over the past two years, HCC has worked closely with the campus community to conduct an in-depth analysis of the institution. This process helped us assess how well we meet MSCHE accreditation standards and affiliation requirements, as well as evaluate our progress toward three key institutional priorities that align with our mission and strategic plan:

- Student success, enrollment, and retention
- Student experience
- Teaching excellence and curriculum development

The seven working groups, led by the steering committee, took a close look at HCC's policies, practices, and processes, and the findings clearly demonstrate our success. The College is incredibly proud of the work of the campus community and of the college's achievements. HCC's commitment to continuous improvement has also helped us pinpoint opportunities to build on our success moving forward. A summary of the recommendations is detailed below by standard.

Standard I

HCC will begin developing a new strategic plan in 2025, integrating Middle States recommendations, external stakeholder feedback, and environmental scanning. The plan will reassess the college's mission, vision, and goals, addressing dual-enrollment growth in collaboration with WCPS in response to Blueprint legislation. HCC is pursuing NACEP accreditation to ensure high-quality dual-enrollment programs and aims to have all general education courses certified by Quality Matters by Fall 2026.

Standard II

The College prioritizes recruiting employees from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, aligning with its Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan Commitment 6.

Standard III

HCC is expanding feedback mechanisms to improve the student experience. Key areas include student feedback on instructional design and IT support, faculty input on Master Classroom and QM course reviews, and refining SEOF to capture course modality and more detailed student responses.

Standard IV

HCC aims to enhance student support by centralizing initial advising through Student Support Advisors for both credit and non-credit students. Improved collaboration between credit and non-credit programs is needed to streamline enrollment processes, particularly for WSCE courses, which currently face registration inconsistencies.

Standard V

General education outcome data needs improved synthesis and analysis across divisions. The Shared Governance Assessment Committee is exploring infrastructure enhancements and assessment software to standardize data collection. While academic program reviews follow a rotation, strengthening Unit Planning as a supplementary assessment tool requires better data usage. Enhancing assessment accountability for Blueprint instructors remains a priority.

Standard VI

Institutional Objectives assessment is in its early stages, and ongoing refinements will better integrate data into planning. Regular evaluation of planning processes, including aligning budget requests and unit goals, will improve efficiency. Campus sustainability efforts, such as EV station installation and waste minimization, are increasingly cohesive.

Standard VII

Expanding student engagement in decision-making is a key opportunity. While students participate in governance and faculty evaluations, focus groups could provide deeper insights into scheduling, modality, and academic experiences. The collective bargaining process with AFT presents another avenue for institutional growth. Additionally, communication across the college remains a focus area, with improvements in transparency and information sharing through shared governance.

The HCC Steering Committee is happy to share that several initiatives addressing the improvement opportunities identified in this self-study are already in progress, and the institution is eager to monitor their effectiveness into the future. Continuous improvement is an ongoing effort and the self-study process highlighted actions that can be implemented almost immediately—a very encouraging sign.

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