Muskegon Community College - MI

HLC ID 1351

OPEN PATHWAY: Reaffirmation Review   Review Date: 10/5/2020

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

10/5/2020
Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

Scope of Review

- Reaffirmation Review
- Federal Compliance (if applicable)
- On-site Visit
- Multi-campus Visit (if applicable)

- COVID-19 Response Form

Institutional Context

Muskegon Community College (MCC) opened its doors in 1926 and received its first accreditation by the North Central Association in 1929. Located in Muskegon County in Michigan, the College serves the needs of Muskegon, Ottawa and Newaygo counties through transfer, technical and continuing education programs that correspond to the definition of a comprehensive community college. In 1951 the college officially changed its name from Muskegon Junior College to Muskegon Community College and in 1965-67 moved to its current permanent location. MCC offers 46 associate degrees and 32 certificate programs. These programs are defined by a strong student services program that augments student instructional goals and success.

The 2019-2020 the enrollment was 3459 students marking the continuance of by 2-3% decline per year over the last four years with a 13% decline in 2019-2020 due to the Covid pandemic. The cause of this decline is multi-layered and includes a declining high school graduation population and until recently, a strong economy. Support from the state of Michigan had been steady at $10 million each year as is the strength of the property tax revenue.

The college embarked on a Strategic Plan in 2016-17 which resulted in an integrated approach to planning, re-defined the Mission statement, focused on five broad priorities, 25 student success focused goals and 123 Key Performance Indicators that map accomplishments over the five year period. Originally scheduled to sunset in June of 2022, the college leadership has signaled completing the current version of the plan in December 2021 with a

new plan in place in January 2022.

The college's most recent Comprehensive Visit took place in fall 2010 and in 2013 MCC submitted reports to the Higher Learning Commission on topics of general education and student learning assessment as recommended by the visiting team. At the time this report was being prepared, the college was in the second semester of the COVID pandemic requiring holistic change to the operation, mode of delivery and services to the online environment. Among the many consequences of the pandemic 80% of instruction moved online with 20% face to face, student support services also went to the online environment including tutoring, counseling, financial aid appointments and admissions recruiting and the college instituted new policies/procedures including a self guided course placement process and expanded technology support to faculty and students with additional laptops, hot spots and training. The advent of the pandemic has been challenging but resulted in uninterrupted instruction and service to students.

Interactions with Constituencies

President

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Vice President for Finance and Chief Advancement Officer

Executive Director of Human Resources

Director of Strategic Initiatives

Director of Institutional Research and Grants

Chief Information Officer

Dean of College Services

Interim Dean of Marketing and Communications

Provost and Executive Vice President

Dean of Instruction and Assessment

Faculty

Director of Compliance and Title IX Officer

Faculty and Staff Council Leadership

Department Chairs and Coordinators

Assessment Committee

Center for Teaching and Learning Staff

Student Services and Student Support Staff

Board of Trustees

Students

Additional Documents

There are no additional documents reviewed.

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Muskegon Community College (MCC) operates under the Community College Act of 1966 (CCA), which sets the requirements for governance, control, and administration of community colleges in the State of Michigan. Under CCA Article 389.14 (reviewed), the College is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees (BOT) who are elected for six-year terms on an "at large" basis from throughout the district. Within this context and authority defined in Board Manual under the Board Governance Process 2.14.4, "the Board shall solicit the advice and counsel of citizens in planning and operating the college", the mission statement was updated with feedback from the internal and external stakeholders consisting of 180 members. A survey (30% response rate) and feedback from the listening tours were used to develop the new mission statement. During the virtual visit, it was clear that staff and community focused on the mission statement that is memorable, inspirational, and focused on student success. The Strategic Planning Committee and the President's Cabinet developed three mission statements and presented to the Board for approval. The Board suggested a fourth mission statement. The Board approved the fourth mission statement during the Board of Trustees meeting in January 2017 (Board Meeting Minutes reviewed). The actions stated above support that the College follows an appropriate process for developing and adopting the mission statement.

The College's mission and vision statements are current. The mission statement was updated in

2016 and approved in January 2017, and the vision statement was updated and approved in August 2019 during a regular BOT meeting. MCC's Strategic Priorities and related goals are consistent with MCC's mission and focus on five areas: Student Support, Academic Programs, Facilities and Infrastructure, Community Engagement, and Strengthening Culture of Inclusion, Equity, Safety, and Wellbeing. MCC supports shared governance through a council system that consists of six councils: Business Administrative, Information Technology, Instructional Affairs, Joint Sustainability, Student Services, and Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Council's role is evolving and serves as the final review board for the recommendations of the governing councils.

The mission and vision statements provide the nature and scope of education offerings and services. The College has identified Five Strategic Priorities with clearly defined goals and performance indicators for educational offerings and services consistent with the College's mission. The progress made towards the goals is published in Quarterly and Annual Reports that are shared with internal and external stakeholders. The annual reports outline the Goals, Objectives, and Significant Accomplishments for each strategic initiative that includes education offerings, services, and collaboration/engagement with the community at large. The College's 2010-2016 final Strategic Plan outlines the progress made in Academics, Student Services, Infrastructure, Physical Space, Resource Development, and Human Resource Management during the previous strategic plan. The new Strategic Plan 2017-2022 focus also includes community engagement and inclusion.

MCC students have the option to choose from 78 degrees and certificates. The College offers Associate in Arts and Science (ASA), Associate in Applied Science (AAS), and an Associate in General Studies (AGS) degrees, certificates, and professional credits. There is a rigorous program review, course, certificate, and degree approval process to assure the offerings are current and consistent with the mission. 20% of programs are reviewed every year. and programs with low enrollment for a while are closed. Academic programs are supported by support services that include: Academic Support, Financial Aid, Physical and Mental Health, Disability Support, and student engagement opportunities for a holistic learning experience. In a recent Economic Impact Study by EMSI, the College contributed $ 261.2 M to the region during the analysis year. The study also supports that MCC is a primary source of education and a supplier of trained workforce and 90% of the MCC graduates live and work in the MCC service area.

The College enrollment intensity, gender, and age profile are very similar to the community college population. Based on the 2015-16 Student Enrollment Profile, the % of White, African American, and Hispanic students is slightly lower than the County and the State, and Early Enrollment and Dual Credit enrollment is lower than the national average. There are achievement gaps between the overall graduation rates and the graduation rate of students with color. The College has implemented strategies and is working to address the equity gaps.

The mission, vision, and value statements are displayed on the College's Website, College Materials, faculty offices, classrooms, and labs. The Strategic Plan with five Strategic Priorities was developed with input from the College and community, and progress towards the goals is publicly shared using Quarterly updates and Annual Reports. The College works with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Implementation Advisory Team and the Finance Office to allocate and align resources to accomplish goals.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College demonstrates a commitment to community involvement and engagement in its actions and decisions. Community members participated in the development of College's mission, vision, and values. Focus on building communities is stated in the College's mission statement, "Muskegon Community College, dedicated to equity and excellence, prepares students, builds communities, and improves lives." This commitment is operationalized in the Strategic Priority #4, "Expand collaborations and improve communications to further engage the community in the mission of MCC."

Community members serve on academic advisory committees and provide advice and support for programs. The College offers enrichment opportunities for the community and students by offering free programs at the planetarium, theater performances, and Art Gallery exhibitions. The College partners with the local hospitals to provide urgent care and health and fitness services. Community and students have access to the Lakeshore Fab Lab facility to explore innovations and experiment with the STEM-based projects. Muskegon College hosts events that promote diversity.

Based on the College's 2010-16 Strategic Plan Report, 4 out of 5 Strategic priorities focused on enhancing educational opportunities for students and the community. The fourth Priority," Develop and sustain new and innovative funding streams, partnerships and collaborative efforts that will produce future financial stability," focuses on generating funding streams through annual fundraising campaigns, alumni contributions, and grants. According to the Report on Financial Statements, 65% of operational expenses were spent on instruction. Based on the examples above, funds are used to improve and support educational offerings.

The College engages its external constituencies to seek input and feedback on mission-critical areas. Community members serve on academic program advisory committees and participate in developing the College's mission, vision, and Strategic Plan. The College partners with local employers to offer academic programs, provides entrepreneurship opportunities, job training for unemployed residents, public recreation activities, and facilities for public events. It partners with local schools to offer a

hands-on learning experience in the STEM curriculum. Based on the evidence above, Muskegon College engages with the external constituencies and responds to their needs.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Students are introduced to citizenship and workforce success through curricular and co-curricular activities. Courses are mapped to general education outcomes where citizenship and workforce skills, including patriotism, rights and responsibilities of global citizens, economic inequality, race, crime and gender, human relation and communication, ethical and responsible use of resources, and judgment issues of public concerns are taught. Students have access to numerous co-curricular activities including internship opportunities with businesses, guidance and support for carreers, political forums and historical events, travel abroad opportunities to experience international culture and biology profession skills, and engage in independent scientific research.

The College's policies, services, and recreational events support the College and provides equitable treatment of the diverse population. Equity and inclusion are stated in the College's mission and Strategic Priority #5. The College's Equal Opportunity /Non-Discrimination policy and fair treatment and inclusion are also stated in the "Treatment of People" in the BOT manual under Executive Limitations 4.01. The Student Success Department offers services to address diverse populations, including students with special needs, international and transfer students, and veterans, and offers counseling and guidance, tutoring and carrier services, and a food pantry. Various cultural events and student clubs are hosted to introduce students to the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion for a productive society.

 MCC promotes a climate of respect, inclusion, and equity among students, faculty, and staff. The College's mission statement, "Muskegon Community College, dedicated to equity and excellence, prepares students, builds communities, and improves lives" emphasizes inclusion and equity. Inclusion, equity and respect is also emphasized in the Strategic Priority #5 Culture, "Strengthen our culture of inclusion, equity, accountability, safety and well-being,". The goals listed under the priority focus on creating a welcoming environment, promoting inclusion and equity, safety and security, and wellness for all. The College has policies and procedures in place to address conflict resolution, professional ethics violations, and student and employee conduct expectations. The College offers programs including CARE Report System, Behavioral Intervention, professional

development, and sponsors activities and events to promote inclusion and respect.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Rationale

Muskegon Community College's mission statement was developed through an integrated planning process that included the internal and external stakeholders' participation. The mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees and is publicly displayed.

Strategic Priorities are consistent with the mission and focus on inclusion, equity, continuous improvement, and student success. Through its educational and community offerings, the College demonstrates a commitment to developing an educated and inclusive community. In addition, the College offers co-curricular and non-curricular activities to promote a holistic learning experience. The College allocates sufficient resources to support education and student support services. Through shared governance and clear communication, the College guides its operations in accordance with its mission.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Muskegon Community College (MCC) recently went through a mission statement change which included all stakeholder groups from staff, faculty, administration, students, and the wider community. The 180 member plus strategic planning committee contributed to a mission statement that better reflects what the college represents. This mission statement is now succinct and inclusive and was approved and adopted by the board in January 2017. A further revision of the vision statement was again sent out to the stakeholders and was updated to read, "*An educated, inclusive community.*" The Board of Trustees endorsed the new vision statement in August 2019.

MCC has policies enforced that allows it to operate with integrity. Specifically, each year, members of the Board of Trustees sign code of conduct forms, affirming their commitment to the Code of Conduct in the Board of Trustees Policy Manual.

Various trainings are provided to faculty, staff, and students such as Title IX training. Policies and processes are in place to support anyone who experiences sexual violence or harassment. Campus Safety and Security Reports are prepared and published annually. Safety training was required for all MCC employees during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination policy of Muskegon Community College is designed to provide equal opportunities and not discriminate in enrollment, education, employment, public accommodations, activities or services on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, political persuasion, disability, height, weight, age, or other matters prohibited by law.

In regards to faculty hiring, the Faculty Master Agreement states the provisions of the agreement shall be applied to faculty members in a manner which is not arbitrary, capricious or discriminatory

and without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, (including sexual harassment), marital status, height, weight, disability or other 16 statutory classification of discrimination pursuant to federal or state law and pursuant to College policy regarding political persuasion or sexual orientation, where applicable.

Muskegon Community College's fair and ethical policies for academics are listed on all syllabi.This Academic Integrity Policy reads: "Muskegon Community College expects that all faculty and students will adhere to high standards of personal and academic honesty. Faculty members, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work so that honest effort will be positively encouraged."

There is an academic honesty and student code of conduct policy that all students follow. The faculty follow a professional code of ethics that is found in the Faculty Master Agreement.
MCC posts all College audits on the College's State of Michigan Transparency Reporting page.

MCC is forthright with its auxiliary functions. Auxiliary functions include The Foundation for MCC, Intercollegiate Athletics, Information Technology Services, The Health and Wellness Center, Barnes & Noble Bookstore and Campus Dining Services.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

MCC provides clear and concise communications regarding its affairs to the public. Primary sources of information include the website, MyMCC, social media, printed and online documents including the course catalog and class schedule. A most recent example is the communication of the COVID-19 Pandemic information and course scheduling. The state mandates required large-scale course delivery changes for fall 2020, students were advised via private email of any changes to courses in which they were registered, with the option of dropping the course and receiving a 100% refund if they were not satisfied with the changes. To create a seamless experience for winter 2021 registration, course format decisions will be made prior to student registration. The formats of course offerings were a) about 80% of course sections will be online in some form b) face-to-face classes will offered in areas where online is impossible or very difficult or c) face-to-face classes will be offered if the subject matter is such that small group meetings are necessary.

The website, www.muskegoncc.edu, serves as the primary external communications vehicle for the college. All degree programs and costs, accreditation information, staff and faculty directory, mission/vision and strategic plan, course catalog, financial aid, and the financial services transparency information is kept up-to-date on the website.

The Board Policy Governance Manual outlines the policies and governance of the Muskegon Community College Board of Trustees. "The purpose of the Board, on behalf of the residents of Muskegon County, is to ensure that Muskegon Community College (a) achieves appropriate results for appropriate persons at the appropriate costs (as specified in the Board's Ends policies), and (b) avoids unacceptable actions and situations (as prohibited in the Board's Executive Limitations policies)."

MCC has defined its mission as "Muskegon Community College, dedicated to excellence and equity, prepares students, builds communities, and improves lives." To help support its mission, the college engages in robust economic development and workforce training. Muskegon Community College has met or exceeds the best practice standards for "local strategic value" which is defined in terms of the following three categories: 1) Economic Development and Business or Industry Partnerships 2)

Educational Partnerships 3) Community Services.

Besides the Mission, the best document that describes "claims" made by the College is the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. Each goal of the strategic plan has measurable objectives and key performance indicators. Progress is shared with campus stakeholders at special events each year. The strategic plan focuses on five main priorities: 1) Student Support 2) Academic programs that support the industry and community needs 3) Facilities and infrastructure 4) Community engagement 5) Focused on Culture and topics of inclusion, equity, accountability, and well-being.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

MCC is governed by a seven-member board of trustees who are elected for six-year terms on an "at large" basis from throughout the district (Muskegon County). New board members are trained during their on-boarding process. Current member input created resulted in the development of an orientation manual covering policies and other topics for a new member to review. The Board functions under a well-established governing model that clearly outlines the job and responsibilities of its members. A detailed policy outlines the relationship with the President. The current BOT and College President have a good working relationship that was identified during meetings with the team. The governing model provides details that demonstrate the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities to the college.

The MCC Board of Trustees' primary function is to oversee the education of the people in the community. The Board's responsibility is to establish and implement policy to maintain the education of students. As stated in the Board's Policy Governance Manual, "Muskegon Community College's Board of Trustees Policies require, above all, that the Board provide vision."

The purpose of the Board, is to ensure that Muskegon Community College: 1) Achieves appropriate results for appropriate persons at the appropriate cost (as specified in the Board's Ends policies), and 2) Avoids unacceptable actions and situations (as prohibited in the Board's Executive Limitations policies)."

The primary function of the Board is to oversee the education of people in the community. The Board is responsible for establishing and implementing policy to maintain an excellent education for all students in a safe, secure learning environment.

Decisions made by the Board support the Mission and Strategic Plan of the College. Guidelines for making Board decisions are found in the Board of Trustees Policy Manual Section 2.02 which states: "The Board will govern lawfully, observing the principles of the Policy Governance model, with an emphasis on the following:

1. Outward vision rather than an internal preoccupation.
2. Encouragement of diversity in viewpoints.
3. Strategic leadership more than administrative detail.
4. Clear distinction of Board and chief executive roles.
5. Collective rather than individual decisions.
6. Future rather than past or present.
7. Proactivity rather than reactivity."

A prime example of making a proactive decision to benefit the college was the decision to close the Lakeshore Fitness Center mainly due to annual financial losses of $500,000. The Board plans to continue to work with community members and interested parties to find a new use for the facility.

The BOT has policies and bylaws that serve the Board and help maintain its independence from influence of special interests. The Board consists of a seven-member board that is elected on a rotation serving six-year terms. It should be noted that the board tenure average is 16 years as many of the positions do not have any opponents during election time. The lack of turnover allows for consistency within the board, however can also lead to a more fossilized approach on decisions. All Board actions require a majority vote and Board members rotate key positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer to offset the control over the decision-making process. The Board Members' Code of Conduct Policy (section 2.11) also commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority, and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members.

The BOT delegates the day-to-day management of the college to administration. The Board's governance model puts limits on Board authority and is found in the Board policies 1.02 and 1.03 explain these limits: 1.02 Board-Management Delegation: The Board clarifies how it transfers a large portion of its authority to management and how the proper use of delegated authority is monitored. 1.03 Executive Limitations: The Board details minimal but specific limitations on management's power to govern, which then enables the Board to withdraw safely from most details of operation.

The method in which the Board delegates authority to the President is outlined in Board Policy 3.03. Accountability of the President: The President is the Board's only link to operational achievement and conduct, so that all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the Board is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the President.

1. The Board will never give instructions to persons who report directly or indirectly to the President.

2. The Board will not evaluate, either formally or informally, any staff other than the President.

3. The Board will view the President's performance as identical to organizational performance, so that organizational accomplishment of Board-stated Ends and avoidance of Board-prescribed means will be viewed as successful Presidential performance.

Faculty maintain and oversee all academic matters through the College council system. This oversight is maintained by the Instructional Affairs Council (IAC). The purpose of IAC is found in the bylaws and is described as "to seek opinions, express ideas, identify, investigate, review and recommend policy and procedural matters to the Coordinating Council that relate to the instructional affairs of the College."

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

MCC pursuit of academic freedom and freedom of expression are reflected in its policies, values, and collective bargaining agreements.The college values state that MCC is a place where "freedom of expression and civility are practiced, encouraged, and protected among all groups."

The MCC Faculty Master Agreement addresses academic freedom and freedom of expression. These guiding principles of the agreement focus on the practice of intellectual honesty, protection of academic freedom, honest academic conduct, promotion of free inquiry, and to further public understanding of academic freedom. Section 13.1 states: "The faculty member shall have the freedom to report the truth as they see it both in the classroom and in reports of research activities. There shall be no restraints which would impair the faculty member's ability to present their subject matter in this context." Article III recognizes the members' right to organize, use college resources, protection from discrimination, and entitlement to freedom of private life including religious or political activities.

A key aspect that faculty emphasize is also stipulated in the Faculty Master Agreement regarding student' academic freedom and freedom of expression. This key element states, "professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors" and "that no religious or political proselytizing shall be conducted in the classroom." The Student Government Association also provides students with the opportunity "for discussion, investigation and resolution of student problems, concerns and ideas."

The College's social media policies states, The College "is committed to fostering an educational environment that allows for freedoms of speech and expression in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution." To protect the rights of all, those protections end any activity or posting that includes "unlawful, defamatory, or obscene" content. The social media tools used by the college are monitored by the marketing department to fall within college policies.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

MCC does not focus on applied research. There are courses that require student research and is guided by the faculty member. To maintain fiscal accountability, all research requests and grant applications need approval from the Vice President for Academic Affairs. An exception would exist for regular research done in classrooms that have already received funding through the normal budget approval process. There is currently a plan to develop an Institutional Review Board (IRB) at MCC. This committee would review student, staff, and faculty research requests that fall outside the normal research conducted as part of a college course.

Instruction and support services are provided by Hendrik Meijer Library in regards to the integrity of research and scholarly practice. MCC maintains policies for acceptable and appropriate practices for research and scholarly practice involving technology. Other college policies include the Network Access Policy, Wireless Access Policy, and Social Media Policies. The college website contains important information on appropriate use of copyrighted material under the heading "Copyright Compliance": MCC offers sabbatical opportunities for faculty to conduct research.

The College faculty also follow a professional code that reads, "As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.

Hendrik Meijer Library is the main source to support student research. There are instructional sessions that help students find and use appropriate library resources, understand the definition of plagiarism, and cover how to cite sources to avoid committing plagiarism. All degree-seeking

students are required to take both English 101 and 102 or Business Communications 102 which teach the ethics of research and use of information resources.

MCC has an academic dishonesty policy that is readily publicized in the catalog. It clearly spells out what the policy entails. Furthermore, MCC also uses the following procedures:

1) Consequences for the specific course are spelled out in the standard syllabus language and enforced by the instructor. 2.) When academic dishonesty is reported, the Behavioral Intervention Team, which documents the incident, communication, and outcomes in Maxient which tracks any and all cases of academic dishonesty. The policy uses a progressive penalties system for dishonest behavior. There is a student appeal process if necessary.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

MCC has policies and procedures in place to help conduct itself with integrity and in an ethical manner. Policies for the Board of Trustees cover all aspects regarding ethical conduct. The Board and the MCC President have an open and transparent relationship. Employees sign a code of conduct upon employment which is reviewed on an annual basis. Students abide by the student code of conduct.

The BOT turnover has been limited due to the current election process. Each board member serves a six year term. The current board has a tenure average of 16 years serving. As revealed by the board members, there usually are no opponents who run for their positions. There is one board member who is retiring and will not seek another term. This is worth noting as new membership can bring new ideas for both the Board and MCC.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Muskegon Community College provided ample examples of the continuous work that they have been doing to ensure that their programs are relevant, up-to-date, and meeting their community's needs. MCC faculty and staff also shared various examples in their argument of how the different course and program learning outcomes are being measured, as well as their continuous improvement by updating/modifying their courses based on their Pathways initiative.

While MCC's online instructional delivery method was previously identified as an "area for improvement," MCC's response provided multiple examples of how they are mitigating the concerns that were previously identified by incorporating more student and faculty training for online teachers and learners. Additionally, MCC implemented an Online Course and Instructor Review Rubric (included as evidence), a course rubric for new online courses to ensure that new online courses met specific criteria that lead to better student success in online learning. Additionally, all faculty who will be teaching online are required to take a course sponsored by Educational Technology Organization of Michigan (ETOM) or a CTL course before teaching online, and the CTL has developed three additional courses for faculty focused not just on technology and applications but also on online pedagogy. They are also planning to implement a common launching point or home-page template for courses so that course materials like syllabi and useful/required information will be located in the same place in every course Blackboard shell.

MCC plans to begin disaggregating data on student success to determine whether there are different success rates based on mode of delivery (face to face v. online or hybrid delivery).

Sample online courses were engaging, well-structured, offering a range of delivery methods for different learning styles, and designed to encourage interaction. However, based on comments during the session with students, there appear still to be online courses that are not greatly conducive to interaction between students, between instructor and students, and between students and material. In the session with students, students mentioned courses that were organized around lectures (PowerPoint presentations) and assessments. Further, given the rapid transition to online in the face of the Covid pandemic, only a portion of courses are "closed captioned" for students with disabilities. The CTL staff and faculty included in the session on online teaching mentioned that there are some courses that still need revision in order to meet standards, and they are planning to follow up on this.

Included in MCC's assurance argument, and evident through the statements provided by the various groups during the site visit, MCC's faculty and leadership team clearly articulated the academic quality of the college's instructional and non-curricular programs. Additionally, MCC has created opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in a shared governance when making decisions regarding the college's instructional offerings, establishing learning outcomes and conducting quality reviews including MCC's Instructional Affairs Council and the Michigan Transfer Agreement initiatives. Not evident at the time of this report is progress on an Academic Master Plan (AMP) which is one of the KPI's of the strategic plan. In discussion, it appears that this will be under construction soon, having had the Covid crisis interlope in a planned cycle for development of the AMP. It will be important to implement the master plan as a way to focus on and articulate academic priorities in the immediate future and beyond.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Muskegon Community College (MCC) has a well-articulated institutional mission that is evident in the college's core general education outcomes: Communication; Problem Solving and Technology; Ethical Reasoning and Creativity; and Personal, Social, and Cultural Awareness. MCC also highlighted how the core general education outcomes are evident in the college's course offerings, and shared as an example all of the courses that are specifically aligned with the Personal, Social, and Cultural Awareness general education core outcome. Based on the evidence provided in the assurance argument, MCC demonstrated how academic or programmatic changes made that have an impact on the general education core outcomes must go through a very thorough review process in alignment with the college's instructional policies and procedures prior to the changes being finalized.

Thus, while there is still work to be done, MCC has made good progress in developing a set of four general education skill outcomes and a related assessment plan. Assessments take place in high-enrollment, multi-section general education courses, and results are recorded on a regular schedule. Sample results were presented as part of the evidence. In a more limited way—because still in the early stages—the college has initiated co-curricular assessment and included three reports in the evidence. At this time there is no evidence of systematic use of results to plan improvements in co-curricular and non-curricular assessments. The college should consider including this part of the cycle--the use of results in all assessment processes to plan and implement improvements--in its Academic Master Plan.

Based on the evidence provided through the assurance argument and during the site visit, MCC demonstrated that the general education program outcomes are grounded in a research-driven and -proven framework aligned with best practices. Specifically, MCC discussed its participation in the Michigan Transfer Agreement, which was composed of representatives from all of Michigan's community colleges and with approval from all of Michigan's higher education approving bodies. Additionally, MCC has been an approved participant of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, which requires that participating institutions agree to follow the interregional guidelines for the evaluation for distance education programs for best practices in postsecondary education.

The MCC assurance argument addresses a recommendation that was made during the 2010 HLC visit--to further assess the college's general education program--and provides examples of what the college community did to address that need to further assess its general education programs and outcomes. The college describes its general education program as one that "encourages community by providing access to the knowledge common to all educated men and women, regardless of their vocation" and as one that "is designed to cultivate in each student four general abilities of an educated person." Assessments of how well students are learning the specific skills/abilities named in the outcomes take place in high-enrollment, multi-section general education courses. Most notably in English and Communication (with their ambassador program to encourage more instruction in research in high schools) there has been some focus on planning improvements based on those results. That said, there was less evidence of closing the loop on general education assessment--using the results to evaluate learning and make changes as needed--than there was of assessment and data reporting taking place. Further, it is not evident that the purposes, content, and learning outcomes for general education are explicitly communicated within those courses and in other activities that allow students to recognize where they are developing those skills and how those skills may be valued in the range of content areas that are part of the general education program. MCC would be wise to incorporate these areas as the college expands and improves its general education assessment.

In addition to the college's efforts towards the core general education outcomes, MCC also provided a variety of supporting documents highlighting its efforts toward creating an environment that recognizes cultural diversity and provides its constituents the opportunity to address equity, diversity, and inclusion topics. Such examples include the various student clubs listed in the assurance arguments, a lecture series called "And Justice For All," as well as a Diversity Wall.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Through the assurance argument, Muskegon Community College (MCC) demonstrates its commitment to diversity by ensuring that the college's personnel is reflective of not only the college's student constituents but also the community it serves. This commitment to diversity is further emphasized through the college's mission statement, which reiterates that MCC is "dedicated to equity." Efforts aligned with this element of the mission were evident in accounts from the Board of Trustees, who shared how MCC prioritized equity, diversity, and inclusion training for the board members, as well as from the community, who voiced their support for MCC's efforts to ensuring that the college's employee base reflects the community it serves. The assurance argument submitted also highlighted how the college ensures faculty provide an optimal student learning experience through a clear Faculty Master Agreement and through the college's commitment to continuous quality improvement based on the efforts of the Assessment Committee. The efforts towards continuous quality improvement were also demonstrated through the work being done by the Distance Education Advisory Committee, which is proving to be direly needed due to COVID-19.

Based on the feedback received during the site visit, MCC shared that while they have been making significant efforts to increase diversity among the faculty ranks, they have not been able to meet their established goals. While students of color represent 20% of the college population, the faculty ranks

are 12-15% of color. To that end, MCC has decided to hire a Chief Diversity Officer in the 2021-22 academic year. This individuals' focus will be both internal (with curriculum, training, student programming) and external (recruitment of faculty and staff, regional and national foci on events and best practices in inclusion) with the ultimate result of greater and more targeted efforts in cultural and ethical programming goals. Included with this new hire will be a renewed focus on the mentorship of African American males which has not achieved as much success as was originally intended.

Through the Faculty Master Agreement, MCC also demonstrated their minimum standards for faculty qualifications, which meet accreditation requirements. Additionally, the assurance argument provided evidence of how full-time and adjunct faculty are continuously evaluated, as well as with a sample of the evaluation reports that are completed. Considering continuous quality improvement, MCC's assurance argument also showed that MCC participates in nationally normed surveys, such as SENSE and CCSSE. Based on the student demographics and emerging needs, MCC's assurance argument demonstrates various ways in which the college is providing multiple training opportunities for its faculty and staff to be proficient in the services that they provide.

While it appears there is an HR process in place that ensures the hiring of qualified staff, and the staff survey indicates that staff believe there are sufficient professional development opportunities-- and the listed trainings seem truly relevant to working in higher education--missing is more detail about targeted professional development in specific service areas like tutoring, financial aid advising, and academic advising. Clear processes are in place in HR to hire qualified faculty, and faculty are evaluated in accordance with the college's policies and procedures including student evaluations and regular classroom observations. It is laudable that the Vice President for Academic Affairs and HR Director meet individually,every semester, with full-time faculty. However, based on evidence gained from the assurance argument and the interviews with students, MCC could benefit from more frequent evaluations, especially in light of the significant changes due to COVID-19, as well as from following up evaluations with specific plans for improvement that build on strengths and support developing skills and knowledge in new or less familiar areas. This might also include a plan for targeted professional development. This is especially so considering the various comments from students that they felt that they were being "self-taught" because faculty were only posting PowerPoint slides to their Blackboard course shell with few or no opportunities for interaction with other students and the instructor.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Muskegon Community College (MCC) provided a broad range of examples of how MCC delivers academic and developmental support services to its student body. Additionally, the argument provides various forms of assessment reports related to the support services referenced. Specifically, the assurance argument described and gave examples of how the academic and developmental support services are being advertised to students, the number of students participating in such support services, and student learning outcomes and programmatic learning outcomes established.

Advising at MCC is provided in more than one area. The Early College program serves high school students who are simultaneously enrolled as MCC students; Early College students receive substantial advising and other support services, with support from the dean and a mentor from the specific program they are pursuing for the three years they are there. The Counseling and Advising Center is available to all MCC students, who are given information about career pathways and academic disciplines when they seek advice from a counselor. While the assurance argument and the meetings with various groups during the site visit gave evidence that MCC has been developing a culture of assessment for these types of services that are offered to students, there was little evidence to show how continuous quality improvement in co-curricular and support services was taking place based on the results of assessment.

Related to that, some questions remain about whether advisors have a specific caseload (i.e., whether students have an assigned counselor they meet with regularly), whether meeting with a counselor is required of all or some students (e.g., first-time students), whether there is systematic outreach to students, and whether there is a process in place to measure the success of the range of services offered to students, both separately and as a connected set of services. And while there was a page from the career and transfer office focusing specifically on transfer support,detail about the support offered in career services and the assessment of those services was absent.

The MCC assurance argument included a synopsis of all of the extension sites where MCC provides instruction and support services. In it was a description of each extension site and the types of services offered through each site. The assurance argument did not provide any data describing the utilization of such services at each site or the effectiveness of the services being provided to MCC students. Additionally, in response to the need to put 80% of classes online, MCC has provided technology--computers and hot spots, some funded through the CARES Act--to faculty and students to support their ability to teach and learn remotely.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in spring 2020, placement services for students needing developmental mathematics, reading, and English moved to a new model of "self-guided placement" by the student combined with other measures. The decision to change the placement process, beyond the difficulty of administering standard placement testing during this time of COVID-19, is based on the student assessing their own knowledge and skill level from indicators like high school grades and proficiency in language and quantitative reasoning, among other skills, combined with a clear description of what is expected in each course. While in its initial semester with little data to demonstrate the efficacy of this change, MCC has taken a bold step in using multiple measures for a placement process that allows students more autonomy in course selection.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

Following the monitoring report submitted by the institution in 2013, MCC has made a solid effort to establish and assess a General Education program, as well as to begin assessment in co-curricular and non-curricular areas, and the evidence for the argument supports this. Much has been done to support the development of a culture of assessment, and there are clear processes for approvals of new and revised curriculum. Further, as discussed in the Rationale for Core Component 3C, clear processes are in place in HR for hiring qualified faculty, and faculty are evaluated in accordance with the college's policies and procedures. Student evaluations and classroom observations occur regularly, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and HR Director meet every semester with new full-time faculty. Additionally, there is professional development available to faculty, and the Center for Teaching and Learning has been critical in supporting best practices in taking a majority of courses online in this time of COVID-19. MCC has has begun the process of disaggregating and analyzing data on student success in classes with different delivery modes.

It must be noted that at this time there is no operational academic master plan in place describing the strategies needed to accomplish the college's academic goals in relation to other institutional planning processes, such as the strategic plan and budgeting processes. Having a master plan would be one way to ensure that the institution is *systematically* assessing student learning and that changes to program content, delivery, and resource development are made based on assessment results in all contexts in which learning takes place, whether curricular, co-curricular, or non-curricular. It will be important to implement the master plan as a way to focus on and articulate academic priorities in the immediate future and beyond.

As noted in the Rationale for Core Component 3D, while the assurance argument and the meetings with various groups during the site visit gave strong evidence that MCC has a culture of assessment for these types of services that are offered to students, there was little evidence to show how continuous quality improvement was taking place based on the results of the assessment conducted nor was evidence forwarded that outlined specifice and value added curricular reform/revision as a result of student learning outcomes or faculty review of student attainment. Questions also remain about advising caseload vis a vis assigned advisors vs. random access and whether there is a process in place to measure the success of the range of services offered to students, both separately and as a connected set of services. That said, MCC recognizes that this is an area of development and noted that the effort continues to coalesce student services into a continuous quality arm of the institution.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Muskegon Community College (MCC) has in place a comprehensive plan for review of all degree programs and liberal arts transfer disciplines. Instructors, department chairs, the Office of Institutional Research, the Dean of Instruction and Assessment, an advisory committees (for technical degree programs) review the self-studies on a five-year cycle. These reviews help establish goals for improving curriculum and instruction. MCC provided many sample program review documents, (33 examples of occupational program reviews and 42 liberal arts). However, only three of the examples (Automotive Technology, Respiratory Therapy and Philosophy) were exhaustive and others, including Anthropology (2019) and Math (2019) had 44 pages and four sections missing respectively. The reviews provided indicate the toe goal of deliberate efforts to ensure currency of courses, continuous improvement of student learning outcomes and student success. What is apparent in the reviews themselves is the collection of data; what is not apparent is the incorporation of that

data into meaningful revision of curriculum. Besides offering 46 associate degree programs, MCC also offers 32 certificate programs.

MCC has established policies for awarding credit based on assessment of prior learning (AP, IB, CLEP, military credit etc.). These are articulated both on the institution's website as well as in the College Catalog. Students can also demonstrate learning through examination (either by nationally recognized exams or course-specific exams designed by the institution) or experiential learning (LEAP). MCC relies upon World Education Services or Educational Credential Evaluators for the appraisal of international credits. Students can transfer any number of credits to MCC by assessment of prior learning.

To ensure quality of learning, the Registrar's office determines course transfer equivalencies in consultation with discipline specific department chairs. For evaluation of credits completed at a college or university in Michigan, MCC employs the Michigan Transfer Network to check transfer equivalencies. Moreover, to attest currency of knowledge, MCC imposes a time limit on course transfers in the areas of accounting, computer science, nursing and medical assistant.

MCC has in place processes to oversee and ensure alignment of all curriculum and modifications to the curriculum. The Instructional Affairs Council (IAC) is charged with reviewing all new courses and changes to existing courses examines content, pre-requisite requirements, academic standards and course and institutional learning outcomes. To maintain consistency and continuity in course delivery, the faculty have created a master syllabus for all courses. The institution has a robust dual enrollment and Early College program that are taught by MCC faculty with identical expectations as all other MCC students. In 2016 the institution formed a Faculty Qualifications Committee to examine faculty qualifications with a goal of ensuring all faculty have the credentials that meet or exceed HLC standards. The outcome of this process was a Faculty Qualifications Manual that contains the required information for each liberal arts, general education, transfer, occupational and CTE course. The Manual is maintained in the Academic Affairs office and updated by Human Resources at the time of hiring. MCC also offers a plethora of learning resources on campus and online to students via the Student Success Department.

MCC maintains specialized accreditation in three programs: Nursing, Respiratory Therapy and Medical Assistant Certificate. Its accreditation in a fourth program, the Early Childhood Education, expired in July 2020 due to the program not meeting the conditions in the initial NAEYC Commission decision in 2017 around proficiency of graduates in the necessary early childhood education professional standards and competencies. MCC plans to reapply for accreditation and complete a self-study by March 2021.

MCC gathers data from multiple sources to ensure its graduates are well prepared for advanced study or employment. The 2018 Achieving the Dream Student Success Report identifies persistence, completion and transfer rates by gender, race/ethnicity, age and FTEIC. Moreover, accredited programs keep detailed records on their graduates' success and job placement rates for accreditation and licensing requirements. They also survey graduates and employers to inform their work to best prepare students for the workforce. An example from the 2019 survey of the MCC Advisory Committee is provided as evidence of the institution's ability to fulfill its mission.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Rating

Met With Concerns

Rationale

MCC has endeavored since the 2010 HLC comprehensive visit to improve its assessment processes and build a culture of meaningful assessment. An outcome of this process was the four general education outcomes MCC adopted in November 2011. 20 courses have developed curriculum maps that track the four general education outcomes with the intent to add additional courses and mapping in the near future The efforts of improving assessment were supported through the college's monitoring report submitted to HLC in December 2013. MCC has processes in place for the assessment of student learning outcomes in its

   o General Education offerings

   o Programs and Disciplines (the institution went through a concerted effort to develop learning outcomes, curriculum maps and assessment plans in 2014)

   o Non-curricular offerings (launched in 2018)

   o Co-Curricular offerings (started in Spring 2019)

Annually, faculty and staff in each group submit a completed assessment report to the Dean of Instruction and Assessment on March 1. In May, the Assessment Committee reviews the reports, provides feedback and produces a yearly assessment report that is distributed to faculty, staff, and administration and is available for the MCC community on the Assessment Blackboard site. In reviewing the year-end reports over the last three years, it is difficult to ascertain what the substantive findings (vis a vis improved student learning) were in any given year and what improvements, beyond process, were initiated.

It is clear from the review, the yearly reports to the Assessment Committee and the subsequent faculty minutes from department meetings that MCC has focused on the process of assessment, especially since the submission of the monitoring report to HLC in 2013. What is not evident

are results and analysis of same that suggest evidence of improved student learning by conducting the assessment. While MCC is focused on data, data gathering and doing the annual report to the Assessment Committee, there is no clear focus on substantiating that students have had "value added learning" and the college has taken "lessons learned" and improved the curriculum as a result. The assessment effort appears to be piece-meal and not systemic.

It is also true that the non academic assessment is in its infancy (begun in 2018) and co-curricular (begun in 2019) and relies only on student responses to surveys rather than a comprehensive understanding how the non/co academic programs and services contribute in a real way to student learning at the college. When asked about tutoring, for example, staff indicated that tutoring should continue based on student survey feedback, but could not provide evidence of the value (qualitative) that tutoring brings to the student experience. Without substantive, content driven and authentic assessment practices and analysis, MCC cannot conclude that any specific service or student services as a whole are on the path to imrovement.

It is also clear that MCC has not systematically examined the quality of its programs across modalities (face to face, hybrid, online), instructor (full and part time teaching faculty) and location (on campus vs. off campus) Results are disaggregated for only about 15% of the sections, on a volunteer basis. In further discussion at the meeting with the Assessment Committee, the team learned that assessment across modalities, instructors and location is neither a widespread practice at MCC nor something the Committee requests from programs/disciplines on a regular basis. This is concerning because (a) MCC has been offering online courses since 1998 (b) in 2012, it sought approval to offer 100% of its current programs through distance education (c) it expanded its offerings at additional locations in 2012, 2017 and 2018 (d) its 2017-18 student success data reveals that students in online courses fare worse than students who take hybrid or face-to-face courses in terms of pass with C or better, drop or fail and GPA. The institution developed an Online Readiness Course as an intervention to boost the success rates for students in online courses; however the impact of that intervention was not clear. Without a comprehensive review of assessment results that analyzes the quality level of instruction regardless of type, location or instructor, MCC cannot, with confidence, stake claim with clarity of being a continuous quality institution.

Given that assessment has been a topic of continued focus since 2010 and a required interim report to HLC on general education in 2013, this team is concerned that the student learning outcomes assessment process and its results are not more robust and central/integrated into the fabric of MCC. MCC could benefit from nationally benchmarked practices that include the substantive, quality driven and improved student learning results that consistenly examine confidence in students achieving stated learning outcomes. One option for MCC would be to join the HLC Assessment Academy where a curriculum, commitment to outstanding assessment practices and access to a coach/mentor are contained. Alternatively, an outside consultant focused on assessment could assist the institution over a course of time to evaluate, imbed and improve the institutional learning that results from stellar, infused assessment practices. It is apparent to this team, however, that there is no clear evidence as to how the assessment efforts of the institution and the Assessment Committee's leadership coalesce for actual results/improvements and a meaningful culture of continuous quality improvement.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

The team recommends a Focus Visit in October 2022, confirming that the entire assessment process has been integrated, is comprehensive and includes broad based, infused curricular, co-curricular and non-curricular re-examination and improvements reflecting a complete cycle of review. Results of this more mature assessment process should indicate that the review process has led to insights and potential action for program/course/general education across sections, instructors, modalities and location, co-curricular and non-curricular support, improvement, change, etc. Given that assessment has been cited by the previous team in 2010, a monitoring report in 2013, it is clear that the assessment process at MCC would benefit from re-examining and meeting its stated goals and uses data on student performance that ensures a continuous quality improvement process.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Guided by its 2015-2018 Quality Initiative Proposal and Priority 1 (Student Support) of its 2017-2022 Strategic Plan--*Successful Students, Successful Communities*--MCC has in place institutionally developed goals for retention, persistence, and completion/graduation rates. The institution joined Achieving the Dream in 2010 to better use data to guide reforms in the areas of student success and achievement. It uses internal (Student Success Data) and IPEDS data to gauge progress. Besides these metrics the institution also employs enrollment, GPA, credits attempted, credits completed, successive course enrollment, certificate or degree completion or transfer to identify achievement gaps and to recognize trends in persistence, retention, transfer and completion.

Furthermore, the institution uses data analytics to inform areas of improvement with a focus on student learning and persistence. Examples of student success initiatives/interventions that have been an outcome of this process include

 o The 2016 relaunch of Achieving the Dream

 o Using "The Center for Community College Student Engagement's" Guided Pathways to redesign student experience. The College has adopted eight of the thirteen High Impact Educational Practices (HIEPs) proposed by the CCCSE.

Each winter/spring, HIEP leads use the Student Success Data Report (as well as data from the National Student Clearing House and the CCSSE and SENSE surveys) to close the loop on their previous year's goals, evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies, set goals for the coming year, and

identify action plans. This process led to the development, for example, of an early alert system that allows the institution to provide timely intervention to students in need of financial, academic or personal help.

Implementation of all these efforts resulted in an increase in retention and persistence rates for both full-time and part-time students from 2015-2017. The graduation rate on the other hand saw a 2% drop from 2010 to 2015. Although, most recent data from the institution, upon request, shows an increase in the graduation rates, retention, particularly of the underrepresented student population continues to be an issue. MCC is aware of this gap and is making efforts (JayHawk Hub, Mentoring Program for African American males) to counter the issue. Last, no trends in data could be found in the assurance argument on placement, enrollment, credits attempted, credits completed, successive course enrollment and credit completion, GPA and certificate, or degree completion or transfer to get a sense of data driven improvements implemented by the institution in these areas.

The institution's processes and methods for collecting and analyzing data for retention, persistence and completion reflect best practice. The Office of Institutional Research compiles and analyzes data while the Data Integrity and Reporting Team ensures integrity and safety of the data gathered. Data from several sources (for example: IPEDS, Student Success Data, CCSSE, SENSE, ATD and EMSI Alumni Database) provide the institution many opportunities for developing a greater understanding of student performances.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Rationale

The team's review of documentation and its discussions with faculty, students, staff, and administrators revealed a rich learning environment at MCC. The commitment to educational achievement is documented by quality assurance processes applicable to its educational programs, learning environments and student support services although the actual use of the assessments being done remains unclear.

The college reviews and evaluates all credit it transcripts. It has a robust program review process for all programs that are not subject to external accreditation. The review is conducted every five years. Additionally, the institution recognizes and supports external accreditation as a mechanism to ensure continuous improvement processes are embedded in many of its occupational programs, which are central to its mission.

Core Component 4B is met with concerns as noted. Progress is needed in assessment of the student learning outcomes (programs/disciplines) and student centered (co-curricular and non-curricular) outcomes. While the institution has pockets of assessment as well as elements of data that is collected, it lacks a substantive and cohesive assessment plan that documents evidence of student learning across faculty, modalities and location and there is need for critical analysis of assessment findings to assist in imbedding those results in a clear and systemic practices. It is for this reason, the team recommends a focus visit in October 2022.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

At MCC a six council governing structure exists that has academic, student and operational business as its primacy. The councils include: Business Administration Council, Student Services Council, Instructional Affairs Council, Technology Council and Sustainability Council.   Overseeing this council structure is a Coordinating Council through which all recommendations (policy, strategic, etc) must be approved. The six councils have as their charges and agenda to propose, develop, implement and align policy and processes for the institution that are forward thinking, quality and student success oriented. The Coordinating Council has the ultimate responsibility of overseeing the other councils and is charged with ensuring that all proposed policy changes are in concert with the mission, vision and strategic plan of MCC and incorporate quality improvements in the learning environment. In addition to the council structure, MCC has several key committees including a Student Success Strategy Team, an Implementation Team and a collective bargaining environment that outlines the roles of employee groups in the decision making process.

The initiation of a new strategic plan beginning in 2016 involved multiple internal and external constituencies including community members, advisory committees, faculty, staff and students. Among the many activities in the new planning cycle were surveys and listening tours that helped inform the college on the tenets of the plan and the forward trajectory of short, medium and long term efforts that were prioritized for leveraging resources and monitoring progress. The plans included (as indicated in the KPI's) completing a Academic Master Plan, increasing classes in

continuing education, increasing Pell-eligible students and creating promotional program videos. However, inter-mingled in the objectives to support the KPI's are other "tasks" that appear to be routine and not linked specifically to the over-arching strategic plan. Further, college staff admitted that some goals are not written with demonstrable, measurable metrics. It calls to question what MCC deems as significant benchmarks to accomplishing the strategic plan and what are operational accomplishments that would ordinarily be a part of work performance.

One key metric that the college has not achieved its goals is the area of improvement in equity. For example, students of color graduate at a rate of 8.91% while the general college graduation rate is 19.31%. This achievement gap is something the college acknowledges and recognizes as a serious and critical goal with which to focus their efforts.

The Governing Board of MCC is a policy board and delegates the authority to the business of college operations to the President. The President, through his staff, authorizes appropriate authority to staff to execute the day to day running of the institution. The Board is kept informed by multiple monthly communications from the college regarding the current status of many of the operational and strategic initiatives. Simultaneously, the Board of Trustees verified that they are active members of the community and are continuously reaching out and hearing from their constitutencies as to needed programs or services that the College could provide. The longevity of the Board members is a testament to a commitment to foster and support the work of MCC and their dedication to the mission of the institution.

MCC outlines a number of internal, state and national reporting to inform the decision making at the college. Included in the list are IPEDS, VFA, Achieving the Dream, state of Michigan required reporting, CCSSE and SENSE national surveys and others. MCC also compares itself to seven other colleges in the region with "like" programs and demographics. The Office of Institutional Research oversees data collection and dissemination. One group that is cited as critical in the use of data for MCC is the Student Success Strategy Team (SSST) whose charge it is to monitor and deploy student success tactics that will ensure continued and improved persistence, retention and graduation for MCC students. From IPEDS data, first time college enrollee retention rates fall to fall have improved from 59.87% in 2011 to 64.73% in 2019.

When examining the data use by the SSST to introduce and engage in strategies to improve efforts in retention, the list provided is more of a "to do" outline of tasks to be accomplished (including things like planning questions for focus groups and organizing events) rather than data that illuminate efforts and processes that have proven to be viable in terms of student success attainment. It is unclear how the actions outlined "inform" the team of improvements in the overall retention effort of the college nor is there evidence that the actions described explicitly result in improved retention and student success.

The Instructional Affairs Council (IAC) is responsible for the approval of all new, revised and sunset programs/curricula for the institution. Guided by academic policies, the council reviews proposals from departments or individuals that seek to enhance the academic experience of the students, often at the advice of advisory committees or student outcome assessment data results. The Board of Trustees, as a policy board, delegate academic decisions to college personnel which is in turn the major role of the IAC.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Muskegon Community College's hiring practices along with its formal annual review process ensure that staff are qualified for their positions. The Human Resouces office oversees the posting, recruitment, interview protocols and final hiring processes for the institution. Hiring supervisors are trained in the hiring process, affirmative action policies, interview protocols and other state and federal legal requirements regarding appropriate hiring practice. Included in the training of search committees is the development and use of a rubric and diversity tenets including illegal questions, inappropriate committee comments/behavior and MCC's overall commitment to fair and equitable practices.

One over arching goal of the college is to increase the number of full time faculty of color to better reflect the diversity of the student body. To that end, students of color represent 20% of the student body whereas the faculty numbers are 12-15%. To address this issue, the Human Resource Office has expanded the areas and locations of recruitment for open positions; however, the effort has produced little to no actual diverse hiring results. While the goal as articulated by the college is laudable, a re-examination and renewed commitment to achieving the goal of hiring a more diverse staff is warranted.

A review of the faculty credentials by the on-site HLC team member allowed for verification of full and part time faculty including those teaching dual enrollment fully meet the credit and degree requirements as outlined by HLC and standard faculty credentialing metrics. Twenty-nine files were reviewed and all met the expected standard.

The recently reviewed and revised Mission Statement and Vision set out for MCC reflect a commitment to student success in all of its aspects. The five goals including Student Success, Academic Programs, Facilities and Infrastructure, Engagement and Culture and the accompanying Key Performance Indicators set a broad plan for reaching milestones in the five year journey of the plan. With a plethora of objectives supporting the KPI's the college is touching a wide swath of the

organization. The KPI/objective efficacy is discussed more thoroughly in 5C.

MCC has an overall operating budget of $41 million with approximately $10 million previously allocated from the state of Michigan. In the 2019-2020 year and with the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, the college allocation was cut by $1 million from the state. To address this mid-year reduction, MCC invoked several strategies including freezing salaries, non-filling of open positions, furloughs, an early retirement incentive, significantly reducing travel and departmental budget cutbacks. Another action in the toolbox invoked by MCC during the pandemic was a negotiated increase in the faculty workload to 109% of the previous course load. This action alone has significant impact both in the short and longer term as faculty simultaneously converted most of instruction to online learning.

Other cost saving measures included actions such as reducing the contract awarded for printers across the campus, a 20% departmental budget decrease across the board, other small inroads such as dues and subscription duplication, reducing the number of attendees at conferences and software licenses that in the aggregate resulted in some significant savings. The College is also in the third year of a "zero based" budget approach where each year departmental budgets must be justified in order to be approved.

In addition to the above actions, the institution proposed and the Board approved an increase in in-district tuition of 3% to $121.50 per credit for the 2020-2021 academic year. An indistrict, full time student carrying 12 credits in-district pays $1458 in tuition plus a technology fee of $25 per credit and an infrastructure fee of $15 per credit. This credit increase places MCC in the middle of tuition assessed when compared to other Michigan community colleges. These actions in the face of an unprecedented crisis were appropriate and necessary given the catastrophic and immenent challenge of immediate budget reductions in the face of the pandemic. Presently, it is unclear if the reduction from the state is permanent or will be restored in future years. With a slow economic recovery, MCC is planning for the status quo and will await legislative actions pending a rosier financial outlook.

To ensure that the financial practices of the institution met industry standards, the college hired a staff member whose working title is Budget Analyst. The duties of this individual are to assess and analyze the current status of the financial operation, offer insight/recommendations where it might improve and bring best higher education and industry financial practices to the institution. This addition and activity is laudable and underscores the goal of achieving financial and operational success MCC's behalf.

MCC has a Foundation that actively seeks philanthropic donations to augment student and institutional support. In 2018-19 the Foundation for Muskegon Community College raised $342,000 and $214,000 in 2019-2020. The goal of the Foundation currently is to raise the endowment in order to sustain the viability for future years and projects.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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

Rating

Met With Concerns

Rationale

The strategic plan, which aligns with the Mission and Vision of the College, is the guiding blueprint for budget and resource allocation. Muskegon Community College has engaged in Strategic Planning including the review and revision of the Mission and Vision Statements. In 2016, the College began a comprehensive planning initiative that included internal and external stakeholders, community constituencies, listening tours, surveys and student input. The result of the planning process produced five initiatives that will guide the institution for the next five years. The broad categories of the plan are Student Support, Academic Programs, Facilities and Infrastructure, Engagement and Culture. Imbedded beneath the goals are Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and objectives that set activities and targets by which MCC will measure itself and the progress toward accomplishing the plan.

The collaboration resulted in an integrated plan that identifies five priority areas: Student Support, Academic Programs, Facilities and Infrastructure and Engagement and Culture. The priorities are supported by 25 goals and 7 KPI's and 100+ objectives. Examples of the objectives to support the KPI benchmarks include structured development of plans, outreach efforts, creation of tangible documents, videos and resources with numerical or financial indeces attached. However, also included in the objectives are routine activities or duties such as hiring a clerk or creating lists of donors/prospects which appear incongruent to the "strategy" or planning effort. While such activities are no doubt necessary operational endeavors, they do not reflect real "key performance". In reading, analyzing and digesting the layers of the plan as it is is presented in the argument and in discussion with staff, it appears that the plan is overly complex and does not seem attainable given the time frame remaining. And while a plan most always includes stretch goals and those that may or may

not be accomplishable, MCC would be wise to look critically at the layers of the plan, especially the 100+ objectives as they are listed, and identify and reduce them to those most germane to the strategic plan itself.

The capacity of the institution is considered when deploying resources available to the budget. As enrollment is the main driver, institutional research and the Strategic Enrollment Management team develops enrollment scenarios that project matriculation numbers that anchor the proposed budget for the new fiscal year. In 2018-2019, the overall college enrollment was 1445 FT and 2633 PT students. For the 2019-2020 year, enrollment at MCC was 1417 FT and 2582 PT students. This pattern of enrollment decline can be tracked over more than five years and the latest Institutional data is projecting at least a 3% decline in enrollment for the 2020-2021 academic year. Concomitantly, revenue from the State of Michigan declined initally by $1 million in spring of 2020 to $9 million and the college was recently notified that their most recent allocation from the state will be $9,363,000 in 2020-21.

The State of Michigan has instituted a new program entitled the Future of Frontliners that authorizes students free tuition for four years to "train" for needed skills in front line industry if they worked as an essential worker during the state's "stay at home" order in the Spring of 2020. In the initial launch of the program, nearly 50,000 individuals applied including 300 to MCC. An urgent and incentivized program like this could have substantial impact on enrollment in the coming year.

Linking student learning outcomes to the budget planning process has begun to become more formalized in the last budget cycle. The assessment outcome reporting form has a budget request indicator that forcasts the potential need for resource allocation to improve or rectify an issue discovered through the assessment process. The entire assessment report, through the college's budget process, may receive priority if approved at all levels and resources are available to support the request. In review of the examples provided by MCC, most requests associated with assessment results for the 19-20 year were approved with an actual financial impact of about $30K. However, it is unclear to the team if this assessment compilation and funding are fundamental "drivers" of the budget as would be the intention of true integration of assessment in the budget cycle. Furthermore, the amount associated with this years assessment driven requests is nearly inconsequential given a $41 million budget. The effort to link student learning outcomes with budget planning and approval appears to be in its infancy. It is critical that the assessment process and budget outcomes be inextricably linked in the future.

The Certified Financial Index (CFI) has dropped precipitously over the last 9 years. In 2011 MCC's CFI was 2.7 and in 2019 it was 1.21. When questioned about this significant decline, the response from the college was in investment in infrastructure and facilities that caused the financial "health" of the institution to suffer. Given current and forecasted enrollment declines, declining resource allocation from the state of Michigan and a local, regional and national economic downturn due to the Coronavirus, it is imparative that the College thoroughly examine its budget (including program health and currency and efficiency standards such as course saturation rates) and incorporate strategies that will shore up its finances to ensure a sustained and balanced budget in the face of continuing threats to the "bottom line" of the institution.

Assessment, in all of its forms, is the hallmark of a continuous quality institution. MCC cites several regional and national organizations with which it is affiliated and from whom standards of operational excellence are proffered and compared. In additon, MCC has launched an effort to examine non-curricular programs/processes and in 2019 reviewed athletics, the library, student orientation and tutoring by surveying students and through them seeking their input for

improvement. While the college has initiated this type of review, the survey methodolgy and ultimate data collected is not authentic assessment in the sense that "learning" and improvement in student learning for the co-curricular and non-curricular areas is not documented. Moreover, the review/assessment approach from one program to the next is unique and not codified. It would assist MCC greatly by making more uniform its' approach to co/non-curricular assessment in order to impactfully and systemically allow for substantive program improvements.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

A focus visit in October of 2022 outlining the processes, steps and outcomes of:

1. Linking student assessment outcome data to the budget process that includes a documented process of assessment being integral to budget assumptions and development and a detailed, purposeful execution of assessment as central to budget preparation and implementation.

2. Focused effort on budget impact including but not limited to reserves, the CFI, alternative sources of revenue and developed methodolgy for program closure, should environmental and enrollment scenarios warrant.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Rationale

Muskegon Community College links strategic planning to budget as well as other reviews of the physical plant, technology needs, personnel requests and internal and external priorities. The new strategic plan, developed beginning in 2016-17 has five goals that broadly outline the future direction of the college and including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that set the benchmarks with which the college may determine achievement. Originally set to elapse in spring 2022, the President has signaled an earlier sunset of December 2021.

The financial position of the college is stable especially in the face of declining enrollment, dwindling allocation from the state of Michigan and a COVID outbreak in spring of 2020 that required the college to invest in additional technology and training and take other measures to ensure a balanced budget at the close of the fiscal year. The emergency efforts in the face of the pandemic including early retirement incentives, furloughs, departmental budget cuts and others may need examination as sustaining efforts rather than one time interventions. In all, the college must continue to take seriously the financial challenges it faces given the uncertainties in the external environment.

Initial steps have been taken to incorporate the results of student learning outcome data to the budget. However, there is little to no evidence that assessment results are integral to budget development and major improvememt is needed in linking assessment, program review data and evaluations of operations to budget decisions to improve quality of the MCC experience. In addition, declining enrollment and retrenched state resources have had a budget impact such that financial "tightening" measures were necessary. It is possible that these efforts may need to continue should the economic and enrollment forcast project a downturn. It is for these reasons the team recommends a focus visit in October 2022 to ascertain the maturity of integrating and sustaining efforts to utilize student learning outcomes as central to budget development and implementation and the sustained strategies for the financial health of the institution.

FC - Federal Compliance

Rating

Does not require monitoring

Federal Compliance Filing Form

- Federal_Compliance_Document_Muskegon_CC_7.15.2020

Rationale

1. ASSIGNMENT OF CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH AND TUITION

Conclusion:

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

The policy and practice for defining credit hours is consistent with federal requirements and good practice. A credit hour is not less than 800 instructional minutes. Contact hour requirements are articulated for lecture, laboratory, distance education, and internship courses. There is no difference in the policy and practice by modality (i.e., credit hours are defined and required in the same way for face-to-face and online courses).

The institution's academic calendar includes three semester terms, fall, winter, and summer. There do not appear to be any compressed terms or other non-traditional formats.

All Associate in Science and Arts (ASA), Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Science and Associate in General Studies (AGS) degrees require at least 62 credits. Program length is determined by the number of credits required for each degree. Certificates vary in the number of credit hours required. Several degree programs were reviewed in the course catalog to determine if credit hours requirements were consistent with stated policy; all were; programs sampled included the Associate in Science and Arts, the Associate in Science and Arts in Criminal Justice/Corrections, the Associate in Science and Arts in Early Childhood Education, the Associate in Science in Engineering, the Associate in Applied Science in Nursing, the Associate in Applied Science in Respiratory Therapy, the Associate in Applied Science in Management, the Associate in Applied Science in Information Technology Support, the Associate in Applied Science in Music Performance Entrepreneur, the Associate in Applied Science in Criminal Justice/Corrections, the Associate in Applied Science, Teacher Aid, the Associate in Applied Science in Automotive Technology, the Associate in Applied Science in Food Processing Technology, and the Associate in General Studies.

A sample of syllabi were requested from the Accreditation Liaison Officer for a total of 26 courses,

each with multiple sections. Classes were selected for sampling that met across terms and were offered online and were selected across a variety of general education requirement areas and major requirements as well as course levels and credit hour values. The list of courses samples was as follows:

ANTH 110 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs.

BUS 123 Business Law I 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs

BUS 260 Principles of Marketing 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs

CHEM 100LEC Fundamentals of Chemistry 4 Cr. Hrs. – 4 Contact Hrs.

CHEM 109A Chemistry for Health Science Lab 1 Cr. Hr. – 3 Contact Hrs

CIS 101EW Introduction to Electronic Spreadsheets 1 Cr. Hr. – 1 Contact Hr.

CJ 101 Introduction to Law Enforcement 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs

CJ 204 Criminal Investigation 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs.

ED 111 Introduction to the Education of Young Children 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs.

ED 220A Early Childhood Assessment 2 Cr. Hrs. – 2 Contact Hrs.

ENG 102 English Composition 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs

GEOG 215 Introduction to Weather and Climate 4 Cr. Hrs. – 5 Contact Hrs

HIST 201 United States to 1877 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs.

MATH 100A Intermediate Algebra 4 Cr. Hrs. – 4 Contact Hrs.

MA 102A L&L Medical Assistant Clinical I   5 Cr. Hr. – 7 Contact Hrs

MA 106A L&L Medical Assistant Clinical II 6 Cr. Hr. – 8 Contact Hrs

NUR 121A Basic Pharmacology 1 Cr. Hr. – 1 Contact Hr

NUR 212B Care of the Family in Physiological Crisis 8 Cr. Hrs. – 16 Contact Hrs

PHIL 101 Basic Concepts of Philosophy 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs

PSCI 111 Introduction to American Government 4 Cr. Hrs. – 4 Contact Hrs.

PSYC 201 General Psychology 4 Cr. Hrs. – 4 Contact Hrs

RDG 050 Essential Reading Skills 1 Cr. Hr. – 1 Contact Hr.

RT 162CLI Clinical V 7 Cr. Hrs. – 16 Contact Hrs

AMT 129 Introduction to Technology 3 Cr. Hrs. – 6 Contact Hrs

QC 101 Basic Quality Control 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs

TH 101 Theater Appreciation 3 Cr. Hrs. – 3 Contact Hrs.

Review of syllabi from these course sections provided evidence that credit hour practices, student learning outcomes, course descriptions, activities, and assignments were consistent across terms and instructional modalities.

Tuition rates are consistent across instructional modalities and across programs.

2. INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Conclusion:

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

Links to the institution's complaint policy and procedure contained in the institution's federal compliance filing generated error messages. A request to the Accreditation Liaison Officer for these materials and subsequent discussion led to a log of complaints received by the Student Services, Office, President's Office, and Vice President for Academic Affairs Office.

The institution provided further evidence concerning the complaint processes related to student disability support services, sexual violence and harassment, and whistleblower protection were clear and appropriate, providing evidence that the institution appears to be operating in compliance of the expectations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title IX, the Family Educational Records and Privacy Act, and the Michigan Whistleblower Protection Act.

Review of the log of complaints and their disposition and the various complaint policies and processes confirmed that institutional records of student complaints are maintained and attended to in ways that represent good practice and meet federal compliance requirements.

3. PUBLICATION OF TRANSFER POLICIES

Conclusion:

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

Information on transfer policies (both in terms of transfer of credit from and to the institution) is readily accessible and consistent with federal expectations and good practice. The institution maintains written articulation agreements with Grand Valley State University, Western Michigan University, and Michigan State University and with various high schools Information about articulation (both into and from the institution) is readily accessible on the institution's website; this includes the articulated credit application. Details are provided on the website about bachelor's degree programs in which articulation agreements have been established.

4. PRACTICES FOR VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY

Conclusion:

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

Procedures in this area meet federal requirements and represent good practice. Students applying must send their high school or GED transcript directly from the high school to the institution's Admissions Office. Online students can use Docufide or Parchment systems to send a secure high school or GED transcript. At New Student Orientation, new students are photographed for their student IDs. For online students, there is a documented process where a student sends in copies of documents that are used to establish identity. Only after meeting all the rigorous requirements (to the satisfaction of the staff member who oversees the process) is the student identification badge mailed to the student. All students are required to use their institutional email accounts for college business and correspondence. Some online courses require students to use lock-down browsers and cameras, where students are required to show their institutional IDs. The college testing center provides a secure testing environment for online students. When students come to the testing center, they must present their institutional IDs or other appropriate identification before taking a test. The verification of identity process is carried out by trained college staff members. Student personal information is only used for college-related business in compliance with state and federal regulations. There is no additional fee charged to students in order to verify their identities.

5. TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Conclusion:

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

The institution's most recent Title IV program review took place on June 30, 2018. As a result of that review, it is in an approved status through June 30, 2024. It has not been audited or inspected by the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Education since it's last comprehensive evaluation by HLC. The institution's most recent audit review and report of general program responsibilities were provided in the appendices. There were no limitation, suspension, or termination actions or fines or heightened monitoring imposed. The institution has not been the subject of any federal investigation related to any of the required disclosures for Title IV responsibilities.

The link provided in the institution's federal compliance filing to information about campus crime information, athletic participation and financial aid, and related disclosures generated an error message, but was provided upon request by the institution's Accreditation Liaison Officer. Information on campus crime was found on the institution's website and it meets federal requirements and is consistent with good practice.

The institution has not been the subject of any federal investigation related to any of the required disclosures for Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics. The link provided in the institution's federal compliance filing to information about Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics also generated an error message, but was provided upon request by the institution's Accreditation Liaison Officer. It meets federal requirements and is consistent with good practice.

The institution has not had any findings concerning it's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

Information on the institution's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy was easily accessible on the institution's website and meets federal compliance requirements and is consistent with good practice.

6. PUBLICATION OF STUDENT OUTCOME DATA

Conclusion:

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

Information of student retention, graduation, and transfer rates was linked in the assurance filing and was also easily accessible on the institution's website. This information meets federal requirements and is consistent with good practice.

7. STANDING WITH STATE AND OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES

Conclusion:

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

In addition to HLC, the institution maintains accreditation relationships with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (COARC), the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).MCC had an affiliation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) which has since expired. However, the college is reapplying for this accreditation in March 2021 Information on the websites of each of these associations confirmed the institution's applicable programs remain in good accreditation status. In addition, the institution provided a link that established its legal authority within the state of Michigan.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met With Concerns
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met With Concerns
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	
FC	Federal Compliance	Does not require monitoring

Review Summary

Focused Visit(s)

Due Date
10/31/2022

Visit Focus
The team recommends a focus visit to review the college's progress in the following areas:

The establishment of viable, integrated cycles of assessment at the program, general education and co-curricular and non-curricular levels; the identification of processes for analysis of assessment results and institutional practice for sharing analyzed data with examples indicating assessment has led to change or improvement in instruction and/or co/non-curricular activities. The results of this more mature process should include insights and actions incorporated by MCC as a consequence of evidence/outcomes of assessment that resulted in innovations/curricular improvements or service enhancements. (4B)

Review implementation of specific linkages established between assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations with planning and budget development and implementation. Included in the visit should be a review of data gathering, newly established processes (if applicable) and how specific evidence and results of assessment were central in budget development and considered/incorporated in planning and budget cycles/decisions. Further, the visit should ascertain the processes and results of MCC's focus on its financial health status.(5C)

Conclusion

Muskegon Community College is a nearly 100 year old institution serving the counties of Muskegon, Ottawa and Newaygo counties with programs and services that have a clear student and community focus on achievement and success. The institution embarked on an integrated strategic planning process beginning in the 2016-2017 year which resulted in five overarching goals , 7 Key Performance Indicators and 100+ objectives. The new Vision Statement "An Educated, Inclusive Community" sets a vision by the Board and MCC to reach out to the community in new and innovative ways. Focus on student success is at the center of MCC's efforts and the participation in Achieving the Dream since 2010 has enhanced the persistence/retention/graduation effort of the College.

Faced with a pandemic in early 2020, the College immediately and with some astute agility transformed all of the instructional and support functions to remote and online access, provided needed technology in the form of laptops and hot spots to students, expanded professional development for faculty and staff to quickly and expertly learn to teach in the fully online environment and weathered a financial set back in the form of reduction from the state of Michigan in FY 2020 and an uncertain one in FY 2021. Those demonstrable steps, the communication that accompanied them, the ability to "pull together" resources (fiscal, human, technological) in an immediate manner

attests to MCC's intention and action of their mission that students come first and their success is the most important and critical function with which the College engages.

MCC continues to be challenged with several characteristics of a continuous quality institution. With over a five year trend in declining enrollment, the college has had to take steps to reduce, preserve and prioritize budget items; increase tuition and fees to students; examine staffing models including for faculty; and assess the financial health of the institution through a new lens. The effort to diversify staff to reflect a diverse student body is still in its infancy. And the focus on general education, program, course, and co/non-curricular assessment of student learning is not complete despite having this issue documented in the last comprehensive accreditation review in 2010 and a monitoring report submitted to the Commission in 2013 on assessment. It is for those reasons that the team recommends a focus visit in October 2022 that: (4B) reviews the college's progress in the following areas: the establishment of viable cycles of assessment at the program and general education levels; the full implementation of assessment for co/non-curricular assessment; the identification of processes for analysis of assessment results and institutional practice for sharing analyzed data with examples of how assessment has led to revision, change or improvement in curriculum or co-curricular programming; and (5C) Review implementation of specific linkages established between assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting. Included in the visit should be a review of data gathering, newly established processes (if applicable) and how specific evidence and results of student learning outcomes assessment were considered/incorporated in planning and budget cycles/decisions and the financial health of the institution.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation
Eligible to choose

Federal Compliance
Does not require monitoring

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	Muskegon Community College, MI
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Open Pathway Comprehensive Evaluation
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	Visit to include a Federal Compliance reviewer: Dr. William Knight.
	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only the following will travel to campus: Sonia Dalmia. The rest of the team will conduct the evaluation remotely.
DATES OF REVIEW:	10/5/2020 - 10/6/2020

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: No Change

Degrees Awarded: Associates

Recommended Change: No Change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2010 - 2011

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2020 - 2021

Recommended Change: 2030 – 2031

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, Doctoral

Recommended Change: No Change

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Additional Location:

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: No Change

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change: No Change

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway   Open Pathway

Recommended Change: No Change

Upcoming Events

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change: Focused Visit by 10/31/2022. A focused visit on 4B and 5C. 4B: The establishment of integrated cycles of assessment at the program, general education and co-curricular and non-curricular levels that includes a processes for analysis of assessment results for the improvement in instruction and/or co/non-curricular activities. 5C: The implementation of linkages established between assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations with planning and budget development and implementation.

Institutional Data

Educational Programs		**Recommended Change:**
Undergraduate		
Certificate	33	_____
Associate Degrees	51	_____
Baccalaureate Degrees	0	_____
Graduate		
Master's Degrees	0	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____
Doctoral Degrees	0	_____

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

None

Recommended Change: No Change

Additional Locations

Grand Haven Community Center, 421 Columbus Street, Grand Haven, MI, 49417 - Active

GVSU Meijer campus, 515 S. Waverly Street, Holland, MI, 49423 - Active

MCC Downtown Center, 388 W. Clay Avenue, Muskegon, MI, 49440 - Active

MCC Ottawa Center, 16777 Lincoln St., Grand Haven, MI, 49417 - Active

Newaygo County Regional Education Service Center (NCRESA), 4747 W 48th Street, Fremont, MI, 49412 - Active

Recommended Change: No Change

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change:No Change

Distance Delivery

09.0701 - Radio and Television, Associate, Broadcasting

11.0202 - Computer Programming, Specific Applications, Associate, Computer Applications

11.0202 - Computer Programming, Specific Applications, Certificate, Midrange Programming

11.0801 - Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design, Associate, Web Design

11.0899 - Computer Software and Media Applications, Other, Associate, Interactive Media / Gaming

13.1210 - Early Childhood Education and Teaching, Associate, Child Development Associate

13.1210 - Early Childhood Education and Teaching, Certificate, Child Development Associate

13.1210 - Early Childhood Education and Teaching, Certificate, Infant Toddler

13.1501 - Teacher Assistant/Aide, Associate, Early Childhood

13.1501 - Teacher Assistant/Aide, Associate, Early Childhood Instructional Assistant SE

13.1501 - Teacher Assistant/Aide, Associate, Early Childhood Teacher Aide

14.0101 - Engineering, General, Associate, Engineering

19.0709 - Child Care Provider/Assistant, Associate, Family Child Care Entrepreneur

19.0709 - Child Care Provider/Assistant, Certificate, Family Child Care

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, General Education Requirements

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

43.0102 - Corrections, Associate, Criminal Justice Corrections

43.0102 - Corrections, Associate, Criminal Justice Corrections

43.0102 - Corrections, Certificate, Criminal Justice Corrections

43.0107 - Criminal Justice/Police Science, Associate, Criminal Justice Geospatial AAS

43.0107 - Criminal Justice/Police Science, Associate, Criminal Justice Geospatial ASA

43.0107 - Criminal Justice/Police Science, Associate, Criminal Justice Law Enforcement ASA

51.0705 - Medical Office Management/Administration, Associate, Medical Office Management

51.0710 - Medical Office Assistant/Specialist, Associate, Administrative Assistant Medical

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Associate, Management

52.0204 - Office Management and Supervision, Associate, Office Management

52.0207 - Customer Service Management, Associate, Customer Service Specialist

52.0402 - Executive Assistant/Executive Secretary, Associate, Administrative Assistant

52.1401 - Marketing/Marketing Management, General, Associate, Marketing

52.1401 - Marketing/Marketing Management, General, Certificate, Marketing

52.1803 - Retailing and Retail Operations, Associate, Retail Management

Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: No Change

Consortial Arrangements

01.0101 - Agricultural Business and Management, General - Associate - Agriculture Degree - MCC / MSU Agriculture Program

Recommended Change: No Change