

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students
of

Rockland Community College
Suffern, NY

by
An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
and a visit to the campus on:
March 26 – March 29, 2017

The Members of the Team:

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REPRESENTATIVE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Deborah L. Moeckel Assistant Provost for Assessment and Community
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AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT:

President:

Dr. Cliff L. Wood

Chief Academic Officer:

Dr. Susan Deer

Provost/Executive Vice President

Chair of the Board of Trustees:

Mr. Martin C. Wortendyke

I. Context and Nature of Visit:

Institutional Overview:

Rockland Community College, State University of New York, is located 25 miles northwest of NYC. The majority of its students transfer to four-year colleges, and many find immediate employment upon earning their associate's degree or certificate. The College also offers others, from preschoolers to senior citizens, the opportunity to learn something new.

RCC is the only public higher education institution in Rockland County. It has served as an educational resource for Rockland since 1959, offering small classes, personal attention and caring faculty. In addition to the main campus in Suffern, the College operates a center in Haverstraw and the Herbert Kurz Automotive Technology Center in Orangeburg. About 9,000 people are enrolled in credit and non-credit courses, and over 200,000 visit the campus each year for cultural, recreational and commercial events.

Located in the historic and scenic Hudson Valley only 25 miles northwest of New York City, picturesque Rockland offers the best of all worlds, including recreational and cultural attractions and easy access to the educational and artistic resources of the city.

The College offers 50 programs in the humanities, social sciences, arts, technologies, business, health professions, mathematics and sciences, including 40 associate's degrees and 10 one-year certificate programs.

Enrollment of about 7,000 full- and part-time students includes 125 international students and more than 2,000 students over 25 years old.

Self-Study Process and Report:

The College used a comprehensive self-study model.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, the certification supplied by the College, and other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation in Characteristics of Excellence.

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, the certification supplied by the College, and other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits. The Team further affirms that the institution meets relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 related to distance education, transfer of credit, and credit hours.

IV. Evaluation Overview

The Team found that Rockland Community College was in compliance with all of the accreditation standards. The self-study with supporting documents provided sufficient documentation to demonstrate compliance. Campus interviews verified compliance.

V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Standard 1: MISSION AND GOALS

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Rockland Community College's mission, adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2007, is “. . . Facilitating the achievement of education, professional and personal goals, Rockland Community College offers quality higher education and lifelong learning in an atmosphere that embraces academic excellence, diversity, innovation and global awareness.” The College provides ample, and appropriate evidence and analyses that the mission is at the heart of all it does. In addition, the mission, vision and diversity statements provide the basis that drives the college's strategic planning. The Mission, and Vision, Statements are prominently displayed on the College's Web Site, Student Handbook, and other college publication.

The College's Mission Statement, as stated above, is 10 years old. The team observes that during this 10-year period, the Mission Statement was not reviewed and/or reaffirmed on a regular basis. In addition, the Team believes the current Mission Statement does not accurately reflect the spirit and passion evident during interactions with faculty, staff and students.

The College's Strategic Plan, “Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Forging a Dynamic Future”, is comprised of 4 broad goals, all aligned closely with the Mission Statement. The Strategic Plan is located on the College's web site, and each broad goal is supported by measurable and achievable short term goals. Assessment measures are included within each of the broad goals, either as benchmarks from which to grow, or as targets to achieve.

As a member of the SUNY system, RCC's work is also aligned with the SUNY Community College Mission and Vision Statement, as presented in the Spring of 2016 by the SUNY Vice Chancellor of Community College and Education Pipeline.

RCC's Diversity Statement, approved in 2015, serves as a foundation for the College's Diversity and Inclusion Plan. The Diversity Plan, approved institutionally and at the SUNY Central Office in the Fall of 2016, identifies appropriate goals that will provide an environment and a learning experience promoting inclusion and respect for all. In addition, there are assessment mechanisms included in the plan, which will enable RCC to measure its progress toward its overall goal of Diversity.

Significant Accomplishments:

In 2016, RCC was one of 150 community college's included in the initial round of The Aspen Institute selection process, which speaks to the work the institution has accomplished over the past 10 years.

In addition, the institution was successful in its involvement in the 2017 Aspen Prize Siemens Technical Scholars program, resulting in four scholarships in STEM fields.

Consistent with the Strategic Goal of Advancing the College, RCC added a location to serve its community, opening an Automotive Technology Center in Orangeburg.

Consistent with the Strategic Goals of Fostering Student Success and Building the Organization, RCC has continued to expand the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The Center, now 10 years old, has provided support for enhancing the professional growth of faculty and staff.

Recommendation:

The College should develop and implement a periodic review of its Mission Statement, ensuring all stakeholders are involved in the review.

Standard Two: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The college has seven interrelated plans embedded in the strategic plan each with an appropriate assessment process. The Strategic Plan was written as a five -year plan from 2014-2019. The Institutional Effectiveness Plan was produced by the RCC Campus-wide Assessment Committee in September 2016 as were the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Guidelines. The RCC Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Five-year Plan from 2012/2013 was replaced by the new Institutional Effectiveness Plan. Other plans include a Retention Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Master Plan, Resource Development Plan and Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

It appears that the college has a well-defined decision making process which uses data based on assessments for institutional renewal. The college's key strategies are related to the mission. Strategic goals and outcomes data is provided for the key strategies. Examples were provided that indicate how each of the seven plans are imbedded in the Strategic Plan. Data gathered is used to inform the budgetary process for resource allocation. Key performance indicators are used to inform decision-making. However, there is little direct evidence of how often these indicators are themselves updated

Based on committee membership the planning process appears to have input from college stakeholders. Data from the Planning Committee and Campus-Wide Assessment Committee are used to develop funding recommendations to the President regarding allocation of the Strategic Innovation Fund. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness has the responsibility for assessment and their data are shared with college decision makers. For example, data from this office is included in the college's various plans and core outcomes data is provided on the college's intranet.

Each plan has an assigned committee whose responsibility is to insure that implementation occurs. The plans are interrelated for example the Academic Master Plan and Facilities Master Plan inform the Technology Master Plan. There are no established timelines for the evaluation of these recently developed plans to assure that necessary changes are made on a timely basis

The TracDat program was started in September 2016 and is still in the implementation stage.

Recommendations:

Provide for the regular periodic review of key performance indicators in order to develop strategies to achieve strategic plan outcomes.

The college needs to develop a sense of urgency in the development of action plans which need to be specific, measurable and time-bound in order to be effective.

Standard 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The allocation of institutional resources has been appropriately deployed. Strategic planning priorities are established and identified as part of the budget process. Previous annual audits have been conducted resulting in clean opinions however the fiscal year audit for 2016 has not yet been completed and therefore was not available for the team's review. Recently, the College has operated within its budget parameters after several years of use of fund balance. State support comprises 25% of the budget, county support 25%, and tuition and fees 40%. This differs from the statutory intent of 40% from the state, 33% from the local government and 27% from tuition. Current enrollment declines and Rockland County's changing demographics coupled with state and county support below statutory intent has intensified fiscal pressures. Additionally, SUNY recommends that each SUNY college have a fund balance of a minimum of 5% and up to 15% of the operating budget. At the end of FY2015, Rockland's fund balance was 4.66% of operating expenditures. These pressures highlight the need for an effective and efficient mechanism to utilize institutional resources to achieve the College's mission and goals and the need to identify alternative sources of revenues.

The President's Executive Cabinet meets monthly to review trends and to decide on the reallocation of resources and programs initiatives for each budget cycle. Plans exist to secure \$12 million in grants. Comprehensive technology and facility master plans have also been developed.

Concerns exist regarding future limited revenue streams and the College's limited unrestricted net assets (fund balance). Alternative sources of revenues have been aggressively pursued through the Grants Office. From July 2013 through January 2017 the Grants Office has successfully raised over \$17 million. One level of fiscal well-being is the level of unrestricted net assets. The State University of New York issued a general guideline in 2003 that each community college should work to establish unrestricted net assets ranging from five to fifteen percent of its operating expenses measured annually based on audited

financial statements. Unrestricted net assets demonstrate that the College has sufficient resources to carry out its mission and weather unanticipated revenue declines or expenditures.

The Facilities Master Plan was updated in 2013. As funding becomes available, capital improvements have been made based upon priorities including the new Automotive Technology Center.

Significant accomplishments:

The College is commended for its efforts in creating alternative revenue streams.

Successful grant funding has enabled the College to invest in technology, renovate facilities and expand the campus.

Suggestion:

Continue to aggressively pursue grants and fundraising efforts to alleviate pressure on the operating fund.

Recommendation:

Develop a financial plan that will enable the College to establish unrestricted net assets (fund balance) in the range of five to fifteen percent of operating expenditures per the 2003 SUNY guideline.

Standard 4: LEADERSHIP

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The Board of Trustees maintains responsibility for the College and is the body accountable for oversight of policy and serves as the supervising entity over the President. In addition, other leadership and governing entities function in tandem for the purposes of leadership. These include: the Faculty Senate, Administration and Staff Assembly, the Student Government Association, the Executive Cabinet, and the Labor Relations Council. A 2013 taskforce, created by President Wood, focused on the efficacy of the shared governance process. As such, it appears that shared governance is actively managed at RCCC. Within this process, however, it appears that the voice of the SGA may not be met with appropriate and timely responses by administration.

A review of documentation found clearly articulated roles of responsibilities for each of the leadership entities listed above.

Interviews with Board of Trustee members revealed, and President Wood confirmed that the orientation, training and assessment of Board of Trustee members are conducted informally and without specific frequency. Although the Board of Trustees conducted an annual evaluation of the President during each of his first 10 years, an annual evaluation has not been completed in the last two years. Additionally, the content presented at monthly Board of Trustee meetings appears semi random and without standing agenda items such as Key Performance Indicator dashboards.

It appears that the Board of Trustees and current President, Dr. Wood, have enjoyed a strong and trustworthy relationship as is evidenced by the efficient functioning in many College operations. During Dr. Wood's tenure, the Board of Trustees has delegated many authorizations and advanced empowerments, based on the foundational strength of the Board-President relationship. With the incoming President, the Board of Trustees may wish to review this relationship so as to ensure that the future Board-President relationship commences in a manner that is consistent with the secure advancement of the College.

Lastly it should be noted that currently three of the bargaining units are operating under the terms and conditions of expired labor contracts. These include the Administrators and Staff, Faculty, and CSEA.

Significant Accomplishment:

The College is to be commended for its use of the shared governance model. As recently as August 2015, a new shared governance body was formed, the Administration and Staff Assembly (ASA), to lend voice to administrators and staff members below the rank of Associate Vice President. This group, the ASA, has demonstrated initiative and investment in ensuring positive collaboration with other established shared governance entities.

Suggestions:

The team suggests that the College develop an appropriately accessible centralized repository for all current versions of governing documents to be housed.

The team suggests that the Board of Trustees review all authorizations and empowerment delegated, by the Board of Trustees, to the President ahead of the Presidential transition in June of 2017.

The team suggests that the Board of Trustees engage in frequent review of institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at Board meetings.

The team suggests that the College revisit the voice of the Student Government Association (SGA) relative to SGA recommendations to ensure that appropriate and timely responsiveness is afforded to this shared governance unit.

Recommendations:

The team recommends that the College formalize the orientation, training and assessment of the Board of Trustees ensuring a documented, consistent, and standardized process.

The team recommends that the Board of Trustees engage in annual evaluation and assessment of the President

Standards 5: ADMINISTRATION

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Dr. Cliff Wood serves as the chief executive officer for Rockland Community College. He has the academic background, professional training, and extensive experience appropriate for serving as President of a comprehensive community college in today's competitive, technologically oriented environment. He is supported by three vice presidents, four associate vice presidents, directors, academic chairs, assistant directors and other lower level administrators. All possess the necessary credentials to carry out the missions of their divisions and the general College mission statement.

The self-study report indicates that there are information systems in place that support the work of administrators. The College utilizes Colleague for their comprehensive integrated administrative computing system. Additional information from SUNY, surveys, external listservs and professional organizations provide data for decision making. Organizational charts reflect clear lines of reporting. The College uses multiple venues to disseminate information and gather feedback.

The PACE results indicated concern regarding the 2013 reorganization and the way the information was shared throughout the institution. This result prompted the College to take a fresh look at its shared governance model to facilitate open communication across campus. The survey results also revealed that RCC outscored its peer institutions regarding the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity.

Significant Accomplishments:

Dr. Wood should be commended for his leadership, stability and advancement of the College.

Suggestion:

Review the sufficiency and effectiveness of the 2013 reorganization and in light of fiscal constraints to ensure all organizational needs are met.

Recommendation:

The Team concurs with the self-study recommendation regarding maintaining open lines of communication regarding structural reorganizations, policies and procedures that impact the the campus community by means of the revised shared governance model.

Standard 6: INTEGRITY

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Through interviews with numerous constituencies on campus, it was clear to the visiting team that the current Presidential search process was conducted with the goals of transparency and inclusivity in mind. Each and every constituency interviewed cited an understanding of the process as well as appreciation for how it was conducted.

A review of institutional documentation and verified in interviews with numerous constituencies including all entities of the shared governance process revealed a consistent effort by College leadership, administration, and faculty to work collaboratively and transparently in trying to achieve the mission of the College. Integrity and ethical operations is paramount at the College.

Interviews revealed that the College sporadically reviews its existing policies and procedures on an as-needed, rather than according to a schedule, basis. Policies should be reviewed periodically to ensure policy integrity.

Significant Accomplishment:

The College is to be commended for the transparent and inclusive Presidential search process recently conducted.

Recommendation:

The team recommends that the College formalize the periodic review of institutional policies, ensuring policy integrity.

Standard 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

There are two major areas of institutional assessments. These are to assess the effectiveness of programs and department units and to assess student learning.

The effectiveness of institutional programs includes program reviews and an annual review of planning. The assessment of student learning includes course learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, and general education learning outcomes.

Academic program and service unit assessment is done every five years and follows the procedures in the Academic Program Review Guidelines and the Service Unit Review Guidelines by the Campus-Wide Assessment Committee. In addition, there are Program and Departmental Planning Assessment Guidelines developed by the Strategic Planning Committee which provides guidelines for the annual review of department goals. These department goals are related to the strategic goals and key strategies. The Strategic Planning Committee will review the college-wide plans developed by academic and administrative departments and recommend final prioritization of the plans to the President. This process is designed to be closely linked to the college's budgeting cycle.

The program evaluation process requires that each program be evaluated on a five-year basis. This appears to be somewhat effective in academic years prior to 2013-2014. From 2014 to 2015 no five-year program evaluations were completed. It was noted that this was due to the illness and loss of a staff member. Once replaced the process began again. At the present time a revised process for program assessment has been established and appears to be working.

- The 2010-2015 Title III grant provided RCC with valuable institutional assessments that informed planning and resource allocation plans.
- The move to centralized assessment and data into one office, Institutional Research and Effectiveness provides consistent support for assessment activities. Data are shared via an intranet portal as well as on the website.
- RCC participates in numerous national surveys such as the CCSSE on a regular basis.
- There is a comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan.
- The Campus-Wide Assessment Committee (CWAC) facilitates the review of assessment data into the planning cycle.

- RCC implemented TracDat in 2016. The platform provides for a centralized repository of assessment and planning documents. Efforts to migrate to use of the platform to document use of results to inform institutional improvement are in progress.
- The Core Indicators are linked to Strategic Planning Goals and Objectives as well as to the various plans which have been developed.
- Strategic Innovation Grants offer an excellent opportunity to link assessment to resource allocation.
- RCC provided evidence of assessment plans, rubrics and guidebooks for all various levels of assessment (program, service units). There are examples of assessment results and of the use of those results to inform institutional improvement.
- RCC conducts program review of academic programs and service units on a five-year schedule. The self-study highlights several examples of program review outcomes. There is a scheduled cycle of program reviews each year.
- The process of review is fairly complex and labor intensive, although thorough. Sustainability of the process may be a challenge.

Recommendation:

The College should strengthen and support the established assessment processes and structures in order to foster a true culture of assessment and prevent the processes from resting with one person or office.

Standard 8 STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Admissions appears to be responding to the changing demographics by increasing attention on Early Admits, increasing Dual Enrollment opportunities, focusing on Veterans and their dependents as well as International students. The Honors program, inclusive of a study abroad component, is impressive and the students are able to clearly articulate benefits of the program and related experiences.

The College provides easy access to admissions and financial aid information to prospective students on line and in person through opportunities to visit on campus through Open Houses and faculty supported information sessions. Admissions policies and criteria are easily accessible via college website, also available in print form in an easily followed step by step document. Academic program information is accessible and inclusive of learning outcomes. Credit transfer, Prior Learning Experience, availability of credit for AP, CLEP, recognition and transferability of Armed Forces Credit readily accessible to prospective students.

Placement procedures have been reviewed and revised within the past four years. The College has used Title III and Trio grants to review developmental course work and develop alternative pathways to

gateway courses reducing the time necessary to complete them. The College should be commended on the utilization and implementation of Quant way and the Accelerated Learning Program.

Also attributed to the outcomes of the Title III grant the First Year Seminar has been revised from a three credit course to a one credit course. In the spring 2017 semester the revision is being piloted with students enrolled in ESL courses and will be paired with the developmental English course for the fall 2017 semester.

The College has a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, a Diversity & Inclusion Plan and a Retention Plan. A review of these plans suggests there is overlap and seem to lack time bound and measureable goals.

The Campus Wide Assessment Committee process is promising for addressing assessment shortcomings, however the timeliness of providing feedback to service units so they can address issues and close the loop needs to be considered.

Significant Accomplishments:

The College should be commended for the commitment to the honors program and the study abroad component is impressive.

The College should be commended on the receipt of Title III and Trio grants and the resulting outcomes of Quantway and the Accelerated Learning Program.

Suggestion:

The Team suggests the College insure that recruitment strategies are developed to address the needs of changing demographics.

The Team suggests the College should consider coordinating the various plans (Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Diversity & Inclusion Plan and Retention Plan) in a more cohesive manner to reduce duplication and focus strategies.

Standard 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The Team commends the College on its commitment to their diverse student body by providing services to distinct populations. The Career Services has broad reach beyond the traditional services by addressing specific needs of students with disabilities, Pathways to Success, and Veterans, Combat to Careers. The availability of various religious supports with the recent consideration of expanding to include Muslim students is a strength. Additionally the long standing commitment to the Food Pantry,

most recently enhanced by a large donation from the Faculty, along with the inclusion of the Connection Center are strong supports allowing students to focus on their academics while removing other barriers.

The data related to the Student Orientation, Advisement and Registration (SOAR) process appears to be having a positive impact on students, however there were a variety of opinions related to SOAR and its effectiveness in its current format.

The intentional leadership activities being offered in a creative manner through Student Involvement appears to be a promising practice.

A review of Service Unit Program Reviews (3 three from 2016) and Annual Plans suggest ongoing assessment of student service units has been somewhat sporadic over the past few years and the use of direct measures of assessment have been limited. The College appears to have relied heavily on survey data which has not translated effectively into measureable goals and objectives.

While the students were very complimentary of the College and indicated the College exceeded their expectations in terms of academics and preparation for transfer, they also conveyed frustration with navigating the bureaucracy and did not feel their voices are heard or responded to when concerns were raised.

Significant Accomplishments:

Student success is measured by persistence both semester to semester as well as year to year, non-cognitive, material needs of students are also being met through Connection Center, Food Cupboard, and the Clothes the Deal.

As a result of what was learned through Title III grant Rockland has institutionalized the Academic Success Centers.

Suggestions:

The Team suggests additional research be conducted in relation to the SOAR implementation.

The Team suggests avenues for strengthening communication between administration and students be explored.

Recommendation:

The Team recommends use of direct measures rather than solely survey and anecdotal data for assessment.

Standard 10: FACULTY

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The college appears to have programs and processes that support the hiring of qualified faculty members however, no official qualification policy was available for review. This should be developed to provide transparency in the hiring process. Procedures for periodic evaluation and promotion are in place and available for faculty as part of the Faculty Senate policies. Through the Faculty Senate, it is evident that curriculum review and assessment activities complement the faculty members teaching responsibility. The college employs a large number of adjunct faculty and it was stated that evaluation according to published policies is an area that presents a challenge.

The Retention, Tenure, and Promotion policy is available for faculty and was last updated in 2015. This includes the criteria, process, and frequency of faculty evaluations, which covers the broad categories of Teaching Excellence & Overall Competencies, General Effectiveness & Performance Indicators, and Leadership & Service. The faculty presented a passion for teaching and student success and appear to engage students in a wide variety of learning activities. Multiple faculty have received awards for excellence and published research that is further evidence of their commitment to teaching, scholarship, and service.

The Faculty Handbook, last updated in January of 2017, and the current RCCFT contract clearly explain expected standards, hiring & promotion procedures, roles, rights, responsibilities, and grievance procedures. The faculty have input in the governance of the college through the Faculty Senate's areas of responsibility. These include, academic standards, curriculum, and reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Representatives are elected by their peers from each of the academic divisions, student services, the Library, and adjunct faculty.

The college supports professional growth and development through The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, a faculty driven entity that provides a diverse offering of workshops and development opportunities for staff, faculty, and administrators. CETL provides limited funding for outside development activities and travel. The center is very well received across campus and disseminates its schedule to campus constituents.

Significant Accomplishment:

The college is to be commended for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for their support in the advancement and development of faculty and providing a diverse and comprehensive schedule of offerings.

Suggestion:

The team suggests that the college undertake a review of the adjunct faculty observation process to address the current scheduling challenges.

Recommendation:

The team recommends that the college develop a comprehensive faculty qualification guideline and disseminate it to college constituents.

Standard 11 – EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

RCC offers 40 associate degree programs among 3 types of Associate Degrees (A.A. -5, A.S. -19, A.A.S. -16), and 11 certificate programs. Exhibit 11.01, Procedures Manual, provides significant detail on the creation and approval of new programs. Program development is initiated at the department level and follows a prescribed process through departmental, divisional, and college wide reviews prior to being approved by the Board of Trustees. Programs are created through the interactions with Advisory Boards, local Workforce Agencies, and following of employer and community trends.

Program and course goals are stated in terms of learning outcomes. Most focus on the skills and/or knowledge the student will be able to demonstrate. A curriculum map has been developed for the Criminal Justice Program that shows the links from the course to the program to the institutional learning outcomes. Curriculum maps for other college academic programs were not available.

The institution's educational programs are supported by adequate resources, including facilities, equipment, laboratories, library services and staff, and tutoring. It appears the library is appropriately staffed to support student use of the resource. And, it appears that the library's collection, databases and use of technology is appropriate. The library's role in Information Literacy is coordinated with the English 101 course; student learning is assessed through papers and essays. The Academic Success Centers house the Tutoring Center, Science Learning Center and the Reading and Writing Center.

Dual enrollment courses and courses/programs offered at off campus sites appear to be of comparable quality with regard to standards, rigor, instruction, and effectiveness.

Distance learning transitioned to the use of Blackboard in 2016, and at the same time, moved to the SUNY Center for Online Teaching Excellence Quality Review, which is designed to improve all aspects of online courses. It is reported that there is extensive training for faculty interested in teaching a course on line. It is also reported that first time on line students participate in an online mandatory orientation.

Exhibit 11.3 provides examples of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) specific to the Art and Art related programs, Criminal Justice, and English. Similar documents related to the remainder of the academic programs are in development.

Both exhibits identified above provide concrete perspectives on what students will learn and be able to do or demonstrate. Programs are reviewed every six years, per SUNY policy. A review of academic programs occurs every 5 years. Both the College Wide Assessment Committee and the Institutional Effectiveness Office provide support and guidance in this review.

Additional learning opportunities are available through Experiential Learning, Internships, and travel. In addition, RCC provides educational opportunities to accommodate the schedules of adult students.

Significant Accomplishment:

The RCC Innovation Center, opening in 2017.

Suggestions:

Provide ongoing workshops to faculty to address the CCSSEE and CCPSE.

Continue to develop the curricular mapping process that links course to program to institutional outcomes for all academic programs.

Standard 12: GENERAL EDUCATION

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The college appears to have designed general education curricula that aligns with SUNY requirements and is compliant with the 10 SUNY general education requirements for transfer. In 2015 the Faculty Senate approved the institutional requirement that upon degree completion students will have demonstrated proficiency in basic communications, humanities, natural science, and mathematics. In 2016, the general education curriculum was expanded to include critical thinking and information literacy proficiencies. These two are to be infused across the curriculum and it appears these are included on a selection of general education syllabi. The syllabi for various disciplines also show that the general education offerings include the development of ethics, values, and diverse perspectives of students.

The current catalog illustrates a wide range of general education offerings and clearly articulates the goals and requirements of the general education offerings for students transferring to bachelor's degree granting institutions as well as for those entering the workforce.

A plan appears to be in place for the assessment of the general education offerings as a part of the institution's plan for assessing student learning. This includes an annual plan and a five-year program review submitted to the Campus-Wide Assessment Committee. However, there was limited evidence provided that general education disciplines utilize the assessment results to improve curriculum and enhance student learning.

The evidence suggests that the college offers a scope of general education courses sufficient to enhance intellectual growth and demonstrate college level proficiency. Both general education and program faculty discussed the cross curriculum work being done to ensure students have the skills and abilities needed to succeed in their major or concentration.

Suggestion:

The team suggests that the Campus Wide Assessment Committee compile and analyze general education assessment results and how they are used to improve teaching and learning.

Standard 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The College engages in myriad related educational activities that are consistent with the mission of the institution. Several initiatives aim toward the universal goal of mission achievement, increasing enrollment, and serving the students of the College.

Of note is the College's recent opening of the Herbert Kurz Automotive Technology Center serving a unique need for the local and distant residents of the geographic area served by the College. The visiting team found the Center and its programming to be unparalleled in the industry and a shining beacon of what innovative spirit and human resources are capable of. This Center should serve the College well in almost every facet imaginable.

The College's efforts at distance education, developmental coursework, community services are also well run and are all aligned with the College's mission. Efforts are currently underway at developing fully online degree programs locally and at the OPEN SUNY level.

Lastly, the visiting team noted an innovative spirit across many of the faculty and staff who, in many cases, are advancing the College through creative and often non-compensated efforts.

Significant Accomplishment:

The College is to be commended for the rapid creation of the Herbert Kurz Automotive Technology Center and the outstanding design and promotion of this location. The programs and certifications being offered through the Center are serving a unique need in and around the Center bringing opportunities to non-traditional students including forging business partnerships leading toward employment for graduates.

Suggestions:

The team suggests that the College revisit current and proposed e-Learning offerings focusing on fully online degree programs. These programs could be leveraged to increase enrollment.

The team recommends that the College review the policies and procedures around course scheduling at the Haverstraw and Automotive additional locations to ensure optimal scheduling facilitating increased enrollment.

Standard 14: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Rockland Community College has a plan to assess student learning that is well documented and organized as evidenced by its Review of Academic Curricular Areas Manual of Procedures (2013) and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Guidelines (2016). Some evidence is provided that the outcomes data is used to inform decision making at the college. It is clear that faculty are involved in the process and have worked together to produce clear and realistic guidelines for the assessment of student learning.

The college is involved in many activities surrounding the assessment of student learning. These include Course Learning Outcomes (CLO's), Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's), General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO's), and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO's). Through curriculum mapping the learning outcomes of each course are connected to one or more PLO's and PLO's are mapped to ILO's. These plans have the support and collaboration of faculty, but at times lack coherence. For example, major input for these plans came from the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee as evident in its Review of Academic Curricular Areas Manual or Procedures (2013) as well from the College-Wide Assessment Committee in its Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Guidelines (2016). The information in these plans is consistent with the information in the college's Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan (2016).

The plan for the assessment of all degree programs is related to the college's strategic plan and key strategies. There is a clear rubric for the evaluation of programs regarding the design, implementation and impact stages of program assessment. The impact stage refers to the degree to which the assessment results have been used for program improvements. (p 31,32 Institutional Effectiveness

Plan). All courses and programs must be assessed at least one time within a five-year period. However, there is a lack of a unifying timeline which would provide a more comprehensive picture of how student-learning assessment is related to the assessment of degree programs.

The plan for program assessment by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee requires an academic review document for each degree. Specifically, this requires the evaluator to include links between institutional and program goals and links between program and course goals. Programs that award a degree or certificate must also seek a review of their final report by two external reviewers.

Examples of course and program reviews are provided. For example, assessment of the English department's developmental curriculum was used to inform the decision to change the approach to teaching developmental English. To improve the curriculum, the faculty adopted the Community College of Baltimore County's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) model. The use of this model was evaluated and the faculty decided to modify the developmental curriculum in English.

As of September 1, 2016 the data from the form used to annually create the program/department plan and assess progress toward achieving its goals and objectives could be directly entered into TracDat. Training on how to use TracDat is provided. As was noted in the review of Standard 7, in 2014-15 most assessment activities throughout the college ceased when a staff member fell ill. While there appears to be general acknowledgement that responsibility for assessment cannot, and should not, fall to an individual or department, the transition is still in process.

Significant Accomplishment:

The team commends the college on its requirement of two external evaluators for program evaluations and one external evaluator for unit evaluations.

Recommendations:

The College should assemble and provide a comprehensive picture of student learning assessment at RCC. Proportion of compliance should be documented.

The College should strengthen and support the established assessment processes and structures in order to foster a true culture of assessment and prevent the processes from resting with one person or office.