

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

Gateway Technical College
Kenosha, WI

October 26-28, 2009

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit to Gateway Technical College was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the institution for continued accreditation, with an additional review of an institutional change request for approval to offer online AAS programs in Graphic Communications and IT Web Developer/Administrator.

B. Organizational Context

Gateway Technical College traces its origin to 1911 when the Racine Continuation School became the first school in the first statewide, comprehensive vocational school system in the nation followed by formation of the Kenosha Continuation School in 1912. In 1971 the present Gateway District was formed comprising the counties of Kenosha, Racine and Walworth and in 1987 the names of the districts were changed from Technical Institutes to Technical Colleges. As one of 16 technical colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System, Gateway serves Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties in the southeastern region of the state. With three full-service campuses in Kenosha, Racine and Elkhorn, three centers and four Applied Technology Centers, the College served 22,789 students in 2007-08 (4,833 FTE). Enrollments have fluctuated only slightly during the past decade with increases in the past two years after declines in each of the five previous years.

The Gateway District, like many areas of the Country, has become a distressed area as a result of the current economic conditions. The area has witnessed a number of plant closures and layoffs with the unemployment rate rising significantly above the national average. In addition, state resources and revenues from the property tax levy have been reduced and the institution has concluded that it should not increase the millage rate in the current economic climate. While Gateway Technical College has reduced spending in three areas to balance the current budget, the college has actively worked to find alternative revenue sources and to enhance programming through partnerships. While facing financial challenges, the college provides important technical programming to re-train individuals and to prepare students, employers and the communities it serves to transition to a new economy.

While positioning itself to provide leadership in the economic growth and viability of its service district, Gateway Technical College has identified a number of internal challenges it must address to enhance its effectiveness. Among the challenges identified by previous visits and the institutional self-study are the effectiveness of organizational changes including a move to a centralized administrative structure, new planning and institutional effectiveness processes, the quality of student services and academic advising, the need to improve upon assessment processes and provision of the technology necessary to support programs and institutional growth. The College is positioning itself to increase the availability of on-line programs and courses.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

The visit included an imbedded institutional change request for approval to offer online AAS programs in Graphic Communications and IT Web Developer/Administrator.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

Team members visited the three full service campuses at Racine, Kenosha, and Elkhorn and met with faculty, staff, students and administrators on each campus. Two Team members also visited the center located in Burlington. Additionally, Team members visited two Applied Technology Centers, the Horizon Center in Kenosha and the Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation (CATI) in Sturtevant.

E. Distance Education Reviewed

As part of the institutional change request for approval to offer new online programs, the

team reviewed the Graphic Communications and IT Web Developer/Administrator programs. In addition, Team members reviewed selected courses in previously approved programs and reviewed the infrastructure to support on-line instruction including technology, library resources, assessment processes and support services. In addition, the Team reviewed the delivery of instruction through ITV and IP Video.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

Board of Trustees (7 attendees)

President

Executive VP/Provost for Academic and Campus Affairs

Vice President Workforce Economic Development Division

Vice President Learning Innovation/Chief Information Officer

Vice President Administration/Chief Financial Officer

Vice President Community and Government Relations

Vice President Student Success

Executive Leadership Council (12 attendees)

Steering Committee (14 attendees)

Associate VP, Student Learning

Associate VP, Research, Planning and Development

Deans' Council (13 attendees)

Student Learning Committee (9 attendees)

Distance Learning Committee (11 attendees)

Community Representatives

Instructional Designer/Student Learning Coordinator

Faculty Bargaining Unit President

LRC Technician (Racine)

Burlington Faculty, Staff, Administrators (11 attendees)

Elkhorn Faculty (10 attendees)

Elkhorn Staff (9 attendees)

Elkhorn Students (17 attendees)

Criminal Justice Faculty (Tour of Police Science Facility in Kenosha)

Racine Administration (4 attendees)

Racine Faculty (15 attendees)

Racine Staff (9 attendees)

Racine Students (17 attendees)

Kenosha Administration (13 attendees)

Kenosha Faculty (14 attendees)

Kenosha Staff (16 attendees)

Kenosha Students (25 attendees)

District Curriculum Committee (12 attendees)

Human Resources Personnel

WIDs Demonstration:

Program Information Specialist, Instructional Designer & Student Learning Coordinator, Program Effectiveness Specialist, Instructor of Communication/Technical Communicator.

WTCS, VP for Teaching and Learning (Phone Conference)

Student Success Staff (All campuses via IP Video) (18 attendees)

WEDD Staff (4 attendees)

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Self-Study + Appendix (Hard copy and PDF)

2008-2010 Gateway Technical College Catalog

Gateway Student Handbook 2009 – 2010

Gateway Faculty Handbook 2009 – 2010

Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Gateway, March 6-8, 2000

HLC letter regarding Change in Evaluation Team's Recommendation Suggested by Readers, July 27, 2000

Report for a Focus Visit 2002
 2005 Progress Report for the Higher Learning Commission
 HLC Report of a Focused Visit to Gateway Technical College (February 2003)
 HLC Response to 2005 Progress Report
 Staff Analysis of Institutional Progress Report (on workforce diversity and planning),
 February 15, 2006
 HLC Response to 2007 Request for Status Change
 Request for Institutional Change-Online Programs
 Report of a Requested Focused Visit for Change, October 29-30, 2007.
 Letter from Gateway acknowledging receipt of Team Report from October 29, 2007 visit.
 HLC letter regarding Change in Evaluation Team's Recommendation Suggested by
 Readers, June 6, 2008.
 HLC Letter to Gateway. July 3, 2008
 Gateway 2009 Progress Report on Comprehensive Planning and Assessment of
 Student Learning for Online programs
 HLC Staff Analysis of Institutional Report, March 18, 2009.
 HLC Response to 2009 Progress Report
 Learning for Online Programs
 Gateway Technical College Organizational Charts 2008 -2009
 Administrative Procedures and College Practices Manual
 Rubric for Core Abilities
 Final Report of the Core Abilities Task Force
 WTCS Requirements for Certification Summary
 Gateway TC Web site – <http://www.gtc.edu>
 Gateway Blackboard Site - <http://gtc.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>
 Online Courses Reviewed :

- 2009FA - 152-155-2W7A - Action-Scripting Flash,
- 2009FA - 152-154-2W7A - Scripting-Perl
- 2009FA – 152-146 - Advanced Databases
- 2009FA – 801-198-2W7A - Speech

 Blackboard Resource Tabs Reviewed- Student Services, Library
 READI Web Site -
http://cws.gtc.edu/departments/distancelearning/READI_Introduction_4_Web.htm
 Organizational Profile – Gateway Technical College
 Graphic Communications Online Approval
 IT Web Developer Administrator Online Approval
 Online Learning Policy
 Brochure – Blackboard, WebAdvisor, & E-mail
 Distance Learning Web Site:
<http://cws.gtc.edu/departments/distancelearning/studentsupport/>
 READI Online Readiness Assessment
 HelpDesk Online Link
 The Gateway Conversation Organization in the Blackboard Community System
 2008 Student Learning Plan Report
 Recent Technology Infrastructure Upgrades, 2008
 PE Online Data Profiles

- Accounting
- Supervisory Management
- Instructional Assistant
- Technical Communications

 Student Learning Plan – Technical Communications
 Student Learning Plan – Accounting
 Student Learning Plan – IT Web Developer/Administrator
 Nodal Delivery Education paper presented at EDULEARN09 Conference
 Community Conversations
 2006 Annual Report
 2007–2010 AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement
 2010-2012 AFSCME-Gateway Ratified Contract Agreement

2007–2010 GESP Collective Bargaining Agreement
2010-2012 GESP-Gateway Ratified Contract Agreement
2007–2010 GTEA Collective Bargaining Agreement
2010-2012 GTEA-Gateway Ratified Contract Agreement
WTCS Fact Book (Facts 05, Gateway District)
Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey 2008
Student Handbook 2009-2010
Vision 2012 Summary Goals report
WTCS Website
Community Connections 2009
Community Connections 2008
Gateway Good News 2009
Gateway Good News 2008
2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report
2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report
2008–2009 Budget
2009-2010 Budget
Single Audit Report 2007
Single Audit Report 2008
Sample Faculty Innovating with Technology (FIT) Grant Forms, Summaries, Applications
2008 Completed Student Learning Plans collection
2007 Completed Student Learning Plans collection
2006 Completed Student Learning Plans collection
Assessment Rubric for Core Abilities
WIDS File - Computer Programming RPG/IV course
WIDS File - Family Theory and Practice
WIDS File - Technical Writing: Grant/Proposal Writing course
Curriculum Process Users Guide 2009-2010
Faculty Mentoring Handbook
WTCS Alignment Processes document

WTCS System-Wide Curriculum Guidelines for AAS/AAA Degrees
WTCS Requirements for Certification Summary
Professional/Personal Faculty Development Plan
Faculty Development Plan Fact Sheet
Standards for Instructor Development
Core Abilities Task Force Recommendation
Embedded Core Ability Measures
2007-2008 FIT Report
IE Employee Development Goals Matrix
Inventory of Employee Development
President's Opportunity Scholarship 3-31-2009
General Studies Department Program Purpose Statements
WTCS General Education System Courses
Welding Bootcamp Program Overview
Five Year Certification Renewal Plan
2008–2009 Course Transfer Guide
Articulation Agreements
WIDS Software Link
2007-2008 Minority Student Success Project Grant Report
2006-2007 Minority Student Success Project Grant Report
2005-2006 Minority Student Success Project Grant Report
Gateway Technical College District Board Meeting Minutes 2009
Gateway Technical College District Board Meeting Minutes 2008
Gateway Technical College District Board Meeting Minutes 2007
Gateway Technical College District Board Meeting Minutes 2006
Gateway Technical College District Board Meeting Minutes 2005
Gateway Technical College Foundation Summary of Activities

American College and Universities Presidents Climate Commitment
Graduate Follow-Up Surveys (2004-2008)
Graduate Follow-Up Studies (2004-2007)
Economic Impact Report
Personnel Files of 32 Faculty
Personnel Files of 6 Administrators
Report from Closing the Loop Lists

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

Gateway Technical College conducted a comprehensive self-study which was designed to engage the entire college and its communities, evaluate the institution, make recommendations to improve institutional effectiveness, and develop evaluation and communication strategies which would be sustained beyond the visit. The process began in 2006-07 and included wide-spread involvement of the College and the community. According to the membership rosters of the committees, at least 76 individuals representing all constituent groups served on the nine committees that guided the self-study process. The Communication Committee used a variety of print and electronic pieces to keep the constituent groups informed about the process and the documents.

A unique aspect of the Gateway process was the use of Appreciative Inquiry and community conversations to involve both internal and external stakeholders to gather input from success stories. Appreciative Inquiry stressed the positive which allowed celebration of successes and the opportunity for framing future directions of the College. Because the report accented the positive, it did not appear as evaluative as may be desired with relatively few recommendations for improving the institution. However, interviews with the Steering Committee and administrators revealed that the process had yielded a "Closing the Loop" list and several task forces were already charged to address findings and make improvements. Therefore, the stated Gateway purpose of an evaluative process was realized.

The various Criterion Committees under the direction of the Steering Committee did an outstanding job of collecting and documenting evidence relative to the Criteria and the Core Components. Further, the institution provided the Team with an electronic version of the Self-Study which had links to supporting documents in the resource room. This format was extremely effective and greatly facilitated the work of the Team.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The Team found that there was widespread knowledge about the self-study process and the report among all constituent groups. Discussions with groups and individuals demonstrated integrity of both the process and the report as they confirmed evidence and findings in the report and there were no material disagreements with the report. A wide variety of opportunities were provided to solicit comments from the entire college community.

Gateway appears to have achieved its goal of preparing an evaluative self-study that could guide improvement into the future. Because the process was inclusive and open, it fostered more communication. The Steering Committee expressed the belief that the process used had helped to empower people as evidenced by the response to begin making changes even before the report was finalized.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The Team considers the response of the organization to previously identified challenges to be adequate. Seven challenges were identified from previous visits and the college has made significant progress on all seven although the self-study report indicates that the institution is continuing to address several of them.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Requirements were fulfilled.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

See Appendix I

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a. The Team reviewed the mission documents and discussed various aspects of the mission and the vision with a variety of groups including the Board of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and students. The Team found that the college mission is clear and concise. Mission documents including the mission statement, vision, purposes, strategic directions/ends statements and values are widely published and disseminated in numerous places including the college catalog, the student handbook, the faculty handbook, the advisory committee handbook, and online on the College website. Gateway Technical College's mission statements identify constituency groups it serves (students, employers, and communities) and includes them in reviewing the mission to ensure that the College identifies their needs and are meeting them. Interviews with internal constituent groups revealed that the mission is clearly understood and embraced by each group. Further, there was ample evidence that the mission was tied to the planning process, budget allocations, and the strategic directions/end statements. Board minutes indicate that the Board actively reviews the mission and that some revisions have been made to the documents to make them more relevant to the constituencies the College serves. The mission documents clearly delineate the institution's commitments to those that it serves and the focus on mission insures that the College is working to meet the expectations that it has established.
- b. Discussions with the Board of Trustees, administrators, and a Wisconsin Technical College System administrator and a review of Board minutes confirmed that there are effective governance and administrative structures in place to enable the institution to fulfill its mission. Policies establish clear delineation of roles and responsibilities for each level of governance and minutes and interviews demonstrate that the policies are followed in practice. The Board has implemented the Policy Governance Model and its commitment to following this model is exemplary. Board members clearly articulated the tenets of the model during discussions but Board minutes provide numerous examples of instances where the Board applied the model. Further, the Board evaluates its performance after every meeting and one question it asks is if it followed policy governance. There is widespread evidence that the governance and administrative structures are effective and that the College is governed and administered with integrity. The governance and administrative structures and processes have served the institution well in the past and could be crucial in helping the organization meet challenges it will face in the near future.
- c. The College addresses diversity in three mission documents; the College's Strategic Directions/Ends Statements, College Purposes, and College Values.

Gateway recognizes and addresses the diversity of its students and the community and is being proactive in responding to the needs and changing demographics of the area. The College has identified at least nine policies that are related to promoting diversity. The College provides bilingual staff to assist students with limited English proficiency in key areas. The Team learned of a number of programs to promote diversity among students including the Multicultural Program which helps recruit and retain minority students. Employment data indicate that Gateway has made progress in increasing the percentage of minorities among the faculty and staff. The College has demonstrated that it recognizes the importance of serving diverse populations in order to effectively accomplish its mission and it has been proactive in providing programs to accomplish its purposes.

- d. The self-study and reports of past Commission visits indicate that Gateway Technical College has experienced some instability in administrative leadership in the past which impacted many areas of College operations. The self-study report cited changes in administration and governance as one of the significant changes that had occurred at the College since the 2000-2001 visit and provided numerous examples throughout the document of how the current leadership team had stabilized the College and provided the impetus for many of the advancements of the College. Interviews with the Board of Trustees, community representatives, and constituent groups verified that the current leadership team, led by President Albrecht, is a strength of the College. Changes have been implemented in the administrative structure to make the institution more efficient and to make the institution more responsive to community needs. The Team heard numerous examples of the commitment of the leadership team to more clearly articulate the College's mission internally and to deliver programs and services to implement that mission.
- e. The Team found evidence in documents, policies, and practice that Gateway Technical College upholds and protects its integrity. Survey results indicate that both the internal and external community believe the College's actions are consistent with its mission. The College's fiscal management policies and bond rating demonstrate integrity in fiscal actions. Gateway has appropriate academic honesty policies in place and has taken appropriate measures to protect the integrity in distance education classes.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- a. In 2006, Gateway changed from a campus-based to a centralized administrative structure to unify all campuses and centers with a goal of increasing institutional cohesiveness, consistency across campuses, and efficiency of operations and to better focus on academic programs. In 2009, the dean positions of the College were restructured. The self-study report indicates that the new organizational structures have improved college operations, efficiencies, and communications and interviews with various groups generally confirmed these conclusions. However, interviews with faculty and staff reveal that there are still some uncertainties about the organization structure. As might be expected, the uncertainties are most pronounced on the distant campuses or centers. Some faculty reported uncertainty about who they reported to and some staff expressed concern that they had less opportunity for input in the new structure. While the issues are not major at this time, the institution should address the uncertainties and continue to enhance communications as recommended in the findings of the Criterion 1 chapter of the self-study. The new organizational structure has the potential to improve campus operations and to enhance services to students but the stakeholders must understand the structure and their

role in it to realize the potential. (Core Component 1d)

- b. The previous Team Report in 2000-01 had cited diversity in hiring practices as an area of concern. The Team reviewed data about the demographic composition of the faculty and noted that progress had been made in increasing the percentage of minorities among the faculty. In addition, the Team reviewed Affirmative Action and hiring plans and confirmed that the policy framework is in place to continue to employ a diverse faculty. However, with the rapidly changing population demographics cited in the self-study report and common throughout the country, this is an area that requires continuing attention and a proactive approach from the organization to achieve its goal of having a faculty and staff which mirrors the ethnic composition of the communities it serves. (Core Component 1b)

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up is recommended.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1 Evidence that Core Components are met

- a. With the development of Vision 2012 and associated operational plans, Gateway Technical College has demonstrated significant progress in long- and short-term planning. Both print documents and interviews with faculty, staff and administration revealed that the plan was developed through a comprehensive, collaborative process and that various stakeholders understand and support the plan. The goals contained in Vision 2012 are consistent with Wisconsin Technical College System goals and strategic directions. Board of Trustees minutes demonstrate that the Board was very involved in the development of Vision 2012 and monitors progress toward goal attainment via periodic progress reports from Gateway administration on the College Ends Statements. Gateway Technical College now has a planning process in place that should allow it to prepare for and respond to future challenges and opportunities.
- b. Gateway maintains approximately 1,000,000 square feet of owned and leased, state-of-the-art, attractive teaching and learning space. Both print documents and staff interviews indicate that facilities planning, while often initiated at the site level, follows a prescribed process in which proposed capital projects are ultimately considered within the context of total college facilities needs. Partially due to legal constraints on facilities maintenance and construction (i.e., voter referendum required for all projects over \$1.5 million), Gateway has successfully

partnered with business and industry to build a number of technology centers. The College facilities, in general, and the technology centers, in particular, are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment which facilitates effective teaching and learning. The approximately \$4 million per year allotted to facilities maintenance is adequate to assure that college facilities constitute a superior physical teaching and learning environment.

- c. Gateway has sufficient financial resources to support its educational programs and to reach its target goal of 6,000 FTE by 2012. Written evidence and conversations with the CFO and Budget Council revealed that Gateway has an FY 2009-10 operating budget of about \$72 million and reserves of approximately \$17 million. While state aid funding has been dwindling during the current recession and may continue to decrease, the college has untapped local taxing authority available to develop and sustain quality educational programs while keeping tuition affordable by Wisconsin standards. The board monitors Gateway financial status monthly via a "budget dashboard" which shows year-to-date-revenues and expenditures. The sound financial condition and the fiscal processes which are in place should allow the College both to weather the current economic downturn and to grow.
- d. Gateway has accommodated enrollment growth without drastically increasing full-time personnel thus improving its overall efficiency as measured by FTE-to-employee ratio. The written evidence and conversations with staff show that the number of college full-time employees has grown just over five (5) percent since 2000 while student FTE has increased over 60 percent based on FY 2009-10 year-to-date activity. In addition, the full-time employee mix has changed to accommodate enrollment growth and changing patterns of instructional delivery and institutional practices involving increased use of technology. The direction that the Gateway administration has taken, decreasing administrative and secretarial/clerical positions while adding faculty and technical paraprofessional positions should position the college well to deal with future growth and challenges.
- e. Gateway has consolidated much of the responsibility for, and coordination of, evaluation and assessment in a recently created office of institutional effectiveness. Examination of institutional documents, especially the "Completed Student Learning Plans" collections, shows excellent progress toward defining, and in many cases measuring, student learning outcomes. Gateway's annual "Program Effectiveness Report" contains trend data on four measures of program effectiveness and one measure of program efficiency. Conversations with faculty members indicated good awareness of these measures. The evidence further indicates that Gateway has up-to-date trend data on a number of institutional (educational) outcomes such as course completion rates and graduate job placement and earnings. The Gateway board receives frequent updates on both student learning outcomes and educational outcomes.
- f. With the development of Vision 2012 and associated planning and budgeting processes Gateway has positioned itself to fulfill its mission through targeted, aligned activities. Under the current planning process, the College has done an exemplary job of aligning mission, strategic planning and budget. Evidence indicates that Vision 2012 goals are well aligned with both Gateway's mission and with its strategic directions/ends statements and that Gateway stakeholders understand the nature of this alignment. Annually, with Vision 2012 as the touchstone, Gateway scans its environment to inform staff budget requests. The preliminary budget goes through successive refinements with the Budget Council and Executive Leadership Council culminating in board approval and subsequent monitoring. The college reports being pleased with its Adaptive Planning Software which facilitates the link between planning and budgeting. Gateway's

adoption of the Policy Governance model and the Gateway board's knowledge, enthusiasm, involvement, and willingness to monitor help assure vision, mission, and strategic directions alignment.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- a. Gateway Technical College established the Institutional Effectiveness division in 2006 to enhance research and planning. Under the leadership of this office, the institution collects data from a wide variety of sources and has greatly increased the amount of data which is available. The self-study report and numerous documents available in the resource room demonstrate that the College is now effectively gathering data on a wide range of areas affecting the College including economic and demographic trends, educational outcomes such as persistence and graduation rates, institutional effectiveness measures such as student satisfaction, and assessment of student learning reports. However, interviews with college personnel and the self-study report indicate that the institution is not using the data as effectively as it should. Many people who were interviewed were either not aware that such data existed or were unsure of how to easily access it. While the College did an excellent job of making data reports readily accessible in electronic format to the Team, very little of the information is available on the web site for internal or external stakeholders. The College needs to develop processes to improve the dissemination of data. Further, the institutional effectiveness office needs to help all offices understand how to access data and assist end-users with using data in decision-making. (Core Component 2c)
- b. Interviews with staff and administrators and institutional documents indicate that the institution lacks a comprehensive technology plan. Both the self-study report and campus interviews indicate that there is a conflict involving centralized vs. decentralized planning and acquisition of technology. Goal #5 of Gateway's Vision 2012 strategic plan demonstrates that the College is committed to enhancing technology and using it effectively. However, achieving this goal and other initiatives such as enhanced on-line instruction are dependent upon the college's technical infrastructure. A formal technology plan is necessary to insure that resources are used effectively and efficiently to support College programs and services. The current lack of a comprehensive technology plan is evidence that additional linkages are needed between planning and mission and could impede the ability of the institution to effectively prepare for the future. (Core Component 2d)

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up is recommended.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The

organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a. The college continues to make significant progress in the area of assessment since its 2000 visit and the 2003 Focused Visit. Conversations with faculty and review of assessment documentation confirmed that the College is committed to assessment at the course, program, and institutional levels. The College provided evidence of its progress with the collection of the completed student learning plans. A review of the assessment plans and a meeting with the Student Learning committee show that assessments are conducted in most classes. The Institutional Effectiveness team collects the data and publishes an annual report that is reviewed by faculty, chairs, deans and other administrators. The annual student assessment process requires faculty to complete a student learning plan where they identify learning outcomes, analyze learning successes and barriers, review ways to improve student learning, and create plans for improvement. An e-portfolio project has been piloted in several programs. In 2007, the college added a requirement for programs to submit narrative follow-ups on action plans prior to taking subsequent measures of student learning. As part of the Student Learning Assessment process, programs develop and evaluate action plans to address shortcomings with the most common refinements being changing teaching techniques and methods. The college has demonstrated its commitment to the assessment process by investing in additional support staff to provide assistance to faculty in assessment and a data management system to track assessment results with greater accuracy. A review of assessment documents and discussions with faculty members confirmed that the processes which have been implemented and the Institutional Effectiveness Staff and Instructional Designer have facilitated their ability to track, analyze, and use assessment data to improve instructional effectiveness. Gateway Technical College has demonstrated that its assessment process is maturing as emphasis is shifting from a focus on reporting of data to a focus on action prompted by assessment results.
- b. Discussions with administrators, the Student Learning Committee, and faculty and review of assessment documents in the resource room provide evidence that the College has improved development of learning outcomes both at the course and program level during the last ten years. Three key elements which have contributed to the development of improved outcomes are the use of the Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS) model, collaboration with Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) institutions to align curriculum, and adoption of industry standards when feasible. Program-level learning outcomes are developed at the state and local level and College faculty serve on State-wide, program-specific development teams. A review of the WIDS documents revealed that almost all courses have course descriptions and competencies documented in WIDS. The wide-spread use of WIDS and faculty participation on state-wide committees are indicators of faculty participation in assessment processes.
- c. Student responses to questions on the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventories indicate that one of the college's strengths is the students' satisfaction with instruction. In student meetings, students noted that they were pleased with the quality of the faculty, with classroom instruction, the faculty's great willingness to be of continuing assistance to them, and with the easy accessibility of the faculty. The College demonstrates that it values and supports effective teaching by requiring all WTCS full-time and adjunct faculty to have a minimum of 12 months of non-teaching work experience, by providing a mentoring program for new faculty and by requiring full-time faculty to participate in a formal professional development process within the first five years of

employment. Further, Gateway's emphasis on quality of teaching and learning is demonstrated by its commitment to training and development of instructors in the area of instructional technology through assistance provided by the Instructional Designer and the Faculty Innovating with Technology (FIT) project grant. The college recognizes outstanding teaching with the President's Faculty Excellence Award which is presented annually to one faculty member from each of the three campuses.

- d. Student responses to surveys and meetings with faculty and students demonstrated that Gateway has established effective learning environments. The college offers students a variety of learning opportunities at the three main campuses and at the teaching centers with students having access to distance learning courses, ITV courses, IP courses, and videocourses. In addition, a number of programs designed for specific populations such as multi-cultural programs and the Displaced Homemaker Project and Nontraditional Occupational Program provide supportive learning environments for those groups. Student, faculty and staff testimony provided evidence that Gateway meets its obligations to learning technology in support of its mission. These testimonials included students' appreciation for faculty use of Blackboard software and further testimony from students that the system was easy to use and assistance was available from their instructors. Online academic support, particularly on nights and weekends, is a challenge that the college is beginning to address although reports from staff, faculty, and students indicated that the technology offered adequately meets both the academic and work-related needs.
- e. Discussions with students, faculty and staff confirmed that the College has appropriate learning resources to support student learning and effective teaching. Learning Resource Center personnel indicated that students have access to a wide range of learning resources offered through the library including a variety of databases, electronic books, public-access computer terminals, intercampus and interlibrary loans, and an online catalog with access to collections of the WISPALS Library Consortium. Students at Burlington, CATI, and the Horizon Center have little if any access to a physical library but they utilize the virtual library. The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventories showed student satisfaction with library resources to be significantly above the average for national community colleges and a strength of the College. According to the Self-Study, a review of the technology, and comments from faculty and students, the College provides updated technology services and resources to support improved pedagogies. Open computer labs for general student use are available at all campuses and centers with students indicating that this is one of the college's strengths. Discussions with faculty, students, administrators, staff, and community representatives offered additional strong evidence that effective teaching and student learning are central to the operation of Gateway.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Formal processes are in place to evaluate faculty performance and to stimulate faculty professional development during the first five years of employment including mentoring during the first year and the use of Professional Development Plans (PDP). During discussions with faculty, however, many faculty members indicate that they do not receive regular guidance or feedback unless they actively seek it after the initial PDP is completed. Although formal student evaluations are administered by all full-time faculty in two classes a year and by adjunct faculty in one class per year, the results of the evaluations are intended for feedback about student perceptions of teaching and, according to the self-study, have limited utility. Discussions with faculty and administrators

indicated that past efforts at faculty evaluation had not been very productive. The lack of formal evaluation of faculty after the faculty member receives certification does not promote effective teaching. The faculty and administration should develop a meaningful faculty evaluation process that provides feedback to faculty and promotes improvement in teaching effectiveness. (Core Component 3b)

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

The self-study report indicated that Student Services was reorganized in 2007 but student satisfaction with services remains low. The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventories showed student satisfaction was significantly below the average for national community colleges in the areas of academic advising and counseling, admissions and financial aid, registration effectiveness, class scheduling, and concern for the individual. Student feedback in group meetings and interviews with staff confirmed conclusions in the self-study about deficiencies in student services. Student services staff expressed frustrations with the revised system including long lines at registration and reported that organization and staffing in some areas of Student Services were concerns. Students cited a number of examples of problems with academic advising. The current delivery of student services has the potential of inhibiting growth in student enrollment which negatively impacts the College mission and could have implications on resources. The institution needs to develop a vision for effective student services and re-engineer its student services delivery system to implement this vision (Core Component 3c).

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; A progress report on a plan to enhance student services is required.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a. The purpose statements of Gateway's mission documents begin with the statements, "Education for work. Education for Life." These two statements are descriptors inherent in all elements of the mission documents and are indicative of the institution's value of lifelong learning for students, faculty and staff. The college catalog and the self-study report provided evidence that Gateway provides a wide variety of educational offerings promoting a life of learning for citizens of its communities. Examples include the Youth Options program and contracts which allow high school students to earn dual credit for both the high school diploma and a college degree, articulation agreements and advanced standing options for high school students to recognize prior learning, agreements with 40, four-year colleges and universities to facilitate transfer of Gateway credits, career enhancement and workforce development opportunities.. A review of the faculty handbook as well as interviews with faculty and staff

provided evidence that Gateway supports and encourages discipline training and professional growth for its faculty and staff by providing activities and participation incentives. For example, Gateway encourages faculty to participate in the "Faculty Innovating with Technology (FIT)," a grant-funded professional development activity and it encourages employees to further their education by offering a tuition reimbursement plan and flexible scheduling. The college further demonstrates that it values life-long learning by publicly acknowledging the achievements of students, faculty and staff in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge through press releases, the *Community Connections* and *Gateway Good News* online newsletters, campus-wide emails, and numerous recognition events. Promotion of lifelong learning at Gateway is clearly evident in commitment, policy, and practice reflecting a commitment to continuous learning.

- b. Academic, career, and technical education courses and programs reflect a substantial commitment to general education. The nine institution-level core abilities (act responsibly, communicate clearly and effectively, demonstrate essential computer skills, demonstrate essential mathematical skills, develop job-seeking skills, respect self and others as members of a diverse society, think critically and creatively, value learning, and work cooperatively) represent the breadth that is assessed in Gateway courses and programs. All Gateway programs of 45 credits or more have identified the courses which address the nine core abilities. The curriculum infusion and assessment of these components is embedded in the assessment of program outcomes and course competencies. In order to better assess the core abilities institution-wide, a Core Abilities Assessment Taskforce was put in place in Spring 2008 to provide direction, input and guidance for improving the process. Comparisons of Gateway's general education outcomes with the Wisconsin Technical College System expectations confirm that Gateway's general education outcomes mirror the WTCS expectations. Taken in its entirety the available evidence confirms Gateway's commitment to an acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry.
- c. Curricula assessment is an integral part of Gateway's culture. Key business leader testimonials speak to the relevance and usefulness of Gateway's courses and programs to their organizations. Conversations with faculty, administration, and staff further reflect Gateway's culture of assessment with focus on the use of assessment results to make curricular and pedagogical changes to improve learning. Documents, formal meetings, and conversations with faculty, administration, staff, students, and community members confirm that Gateway engages its communities (employers, alumni, and community leaders) in assessing the effectiveness of curricula through program reviews, surveys of employees and students, active advisory boards, transfer relationships with four-year schools, and internships. The College is very committed to ensuring that programs are well aligned with transfer institutions. Much attention is also given to maintaining internal reliability for programs that are partially delivered using industry partners and technology centers. Faculty and staff were very proud of their accomplishments through regular meetings with their education and industry partners to work on program revisions, updates and alignments. Gateway enjoys strong community support and there seems to be a conscious effort to increase mutual participation and communication among Gateway communities regarding awareness of expectations and identification of areas of improvement to ensure the usefulness of the curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.
- d. Interviews with faculty and administrators indicated that Gateway had a vibrant exchange program and efforts are underway to improve the program. Exchange programs with institutions in Germany, China, and Turkey demonstrate the College's commitment to a global, diverse, and technological society. The

exchanges include both students and faculty, and include reciprocal exchanges. The opportunities for students to engage with fellow students and instructors from other countries, especially those with significantly different cultural environments, are especially important in the current economy. The breadth of opportunities and plans to expand it through technology indicate that this is a core commitment at Gateway.

- e. The self-study report and numerous Gateway publications indicate that the College has made a significant commitment to become a leader in sustainable technologies. The Vice President of Community and Government Relations who also serves as the sustainability coordinator indicated that the College is developing new programs to prepare the workforce for green jobs and is taking a leadership role in the community through various sustainability initiatives. Through its academic programs, facility enhancements and policies, Gateway has demonstrated to students and the community its commitment to social responsibility and it is providing learning opportunities that are relevant to a global and technological society.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Prior HLC visits in 2000 and 2003 cited concerns about general studies at Gateway. The College Purposes, part of the College's mission documents, includes a statement on the centrality of general education and begins with the statement: "Education for work. Education for life." The college has worked to differentiate its core abilities from general education. While complementary in many ways, the core abilities and general education have separate purposes and goals for student learning. These differences are more specifically identified through the learning outcomes that have been established in each area. The general education curriculum is aligned state-wide based on faculty input from all 16 technical colleges within the Wisconsin Technical College System. Interviews with faculty and the Student Learning Committee confirmed information in the self-study report that indicated assessment of the core abilities was in the initial stages. Although the core abilities are embedded within the various programs of the college, it has been a challenge to provide a mechanism to assess them as students complete programs of study. A Core Abilities Assessment Task Force was formed in 2008 with the purpose of determining how expectations for the core abilities could be better described and assessed. Two core abilities will be assessed each year beginning in 2009-2010. The overall program for assessment of student learning has demonstrated maturity but Gateway needs to place priority on further measurement and evaluation of the core abilities and general education to ensure that student learning demonstrates the breadth and depth of knowledge necessary for a life of learning.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up is recommended.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a. Gateway's mission statement clearly identifies its constituents to include students, employers and communities. Evidence exists that the institution is analyzing the needs of each constituent group through the use of a variety of formal and informal mechanisms including the Noel-Levitz "Student Satisfaction Inventory" and the Graduate Follow-up Survey. Gateway consistently and effectively uses program advisory committees and the annual "WEDD Impact Evaluation Survey" to determine employers' needs. The college's active involvement in area workforce development planning efforts, PK-16 consortiums, and administrative involvement in local community organizations provide evidence of active and ongoing analysis of community needs. Gateway's commitment to learning from and serving its constituencies is clearly articulated in its "District Board Goals: 2008-2010" document and exemplified by its highly engaged and committed Board of Trustees. The Board's "Committee of the Whole" demonstrates active community involvement and a strategic approach to engaging community constituents in planning and governance. Further, interviews with Board members and Gateway employees provide evidence of a culture that values the relationship between the institution and the community it serves. Gateway clearly demonstrates that it is engaged with its constituencies and learns from them so that it can serve their needs and expectations.
- b. Gateway's Workforce and Economic Development Division engages in active analysis on employer needs through a variety of mechanisms. During the 2008 fiscal year, Gateway's Assessment Center completed 834 employee assessments for local employers who wished to identify the needs of their employees, providing additional evidence of the institution's commitment to analyzing its constituents' needs. The Assessment Center utilizes a variety of nationally recognized tests to identify skills needing to be developed and delivers customized training to meet those needs. Examples of such training include Gateway's "boot camps" for computer numerical control and welding which meet employer and student needs by delivering short-term certificate training to rapidly prepare individuals for the workplace.
- c. Gateway has demonstrated a capacity and a commitment to engage and serve its constituencies through partnerships with the K-12 schools, agencies, and employers. The PK-16 Relations Department has developed numerous successful partnerships with area educators as evidenced by their work with the Tech Prep Consortium and unique recruitment and out-reach activities such as "Career Pathway Days," "College Goal Sunday," and the use of social media to attract and engage students. Partnerships exist to serve a diverse student body including programming with area correctional facilities, and ABE and ELL providers. Gateway's capacity and commitment to engaging employers is evidenced by enrollment increases in its "Workforce and Economic Development Division" credit and non-credit offerings as well as the steady growth in the securing of Workforce Advancement Training funds over the past 5 years. Successful partnerships with local employers exist to include the Waxdale manufacturing site serving SC Johnson employees and the on-site educational offerings available at InSink Erator who report enrollment of nearly 1000 employees in Gateway offerings since 1990. Gateway's Horizon Center is a stellar example of a successful business partnership in which Gateway and Snap-on Tools certify technicians in advanced diagnostic equipment usage. This unique facility is being developed as a district-wide transportation center and is utilized by a number of community constituents including the Kenosha Unified

School District, the Wisconsin Automobile and Trucking Association and local economic development partners.

- d. Ample evidence exists to confirm that Gateway is committed to its mission to “meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.” The institution has developed a number of innovative programs and partnerships that have created an image of a highly responsive partner. Interviews with community partners reinforce that perception and reveal high praise for Gateway’s responsiveness in serving its constituents. Gateway’s extensive partnerships with area high schools is just one area in which they have excelled. Gateway with its partners offers educational programming for at-risk high school students, the “Youth Options” and 38.14 (3) programs which offer college courses to students still in high school and an Alternative High School in Walworth County. Gateway’s Transfer Guide documents transfer/articulation agreements with nearly 40 four-year colleges to whom their students transfer. Gateway demonstrates success in meeting the needs of area employers by delivering a variety of training opportunities to meet workforce development needs. The “WEDD Workshop Report” provides evidence of numerous and diverse program offerings to meet workforce needs such as skill-specific “boot camps” cited above, programming for small business owners/employees, and a variety of customized training offerings. Survey results indicate employer and student satisfaction with curriculum and employment outcomes. A variety of unique community partnerships further demonstrates the College’s responsiveness to meeting constituents’ needs including development of the “Four-Year-Old Kindergarten” to meet the needs of the Racine community, implementation of “Career Pathways” programming to provide community educators with tools for organizing curriculum, and development of the “Law Enforcement Academy” to meet the educational needs of the community’s protective services employees. The responsiveness of the institution to its constituencies is a hallmark of Gateway as evidenced by comments from community representatives in a group meeting and excerpts of the community conversation which was part of the self-study process.
 - e. Enrollment data, satisfaction assessment results and testimonials strongly suggest that Gateway’s constituents value the services it provides. Conversations with students, employees, Board members and community partners all provide evidence of pride and satisfaction with Gateway’s offerings and community culture. Gateway has earned a reputation as a viable and responsive provider of education in its community. Satisfaction survey results demonstrate that Gateway’s students and graduates report levels of satisfaction consistent with students at other community colleges. The “WEDD Impact Evaluation Survey” results provide evidence of strong satisfaction among employees who access Gateway’s training offerings. This satisfaction is further evidenced by Gateway’s record of repeat customers. Though little quantitative data exists to demonstrate community satisfaction with Gateway’s services, participation rates in Gateway’s many community partnerships strongly suggest a perceived value. Community satisfaction is further evidenced by testimonials and conversations with community partners.
2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**
None
 3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up is recommended.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS**A. Affiliation Status** No change**B. Nature of Organization**

1. **Legal status** No change
2. **Degrees awarded** No change

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. **Stipulation on affiliation status** No change
2. **Approval of degree sites** No change
3. **Approval of distance education degree**

Add Graphic Communications and IT-Web Developer/Administrator

These programs were reviewed as part of an imbedded change request and met the standards for effective on-line courses.

4. Reports required**Progress Report**

A progress report on a plan for enhanced student services including advising and counseling. Due January 25, 2012

Rationale and Expectations

Rationale: Student satisfaction surveys and interviews with students indicated low levels of satisfaction with most aspects of student services. During interviews, both administration and student services staff expressed concern about effectiveness of student services as it is currently organized. The Team is confident the administration and staff have the will and ability to make needed changes to improve effectiveness. However, in order to assure student access, progress and success, it is important for overall institutional effectiveness that this be addressed immediately. Therefore, a progress report is recommended to ensure that the institution takes the necessary steps to make improvements.

Expectation: The institution must submit a plan to the Commission to insure more effective delivery of student services and design a service model to implement that plan. The plan will include a needs assessment, define a shared vision, establish service standards, map processes, evaluate and potentially re-deploy human resources, provide appropriate training, evaluate effectiveness and establish benchmarks and timelines for implementation.

5. Other visits scheduled None**6. Organization change request**

Gateway Technical College submitted a change request for approval to offer online AAS programs in Graphic Communications and IT Web Developer/Administrator. The Team recommends that the change request be granted. The Team found that the College has appropriate infrastructure, adequate support for faculty in development of the programs and technical

support for end-users, and an effective assessment process for its on-line courses

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action None

E. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for next comprehensive visit: 2019-2020

Rationale for recommendation: Gateway Technical College has demonstrated that it meets the criteria for accreditation through its self-study, interviews with administration, faculty, staff, students, and community groups and evidence gathered for the visit and made available to the Team in the resource room and electronically. Gateway has planning processes in place that should enable it to prepare for the future and to respond to changes. The College has a sound financial base and physical facilities, many of which are excellent, to support the programs. Strong leadership by the Board of Trustees and the President and his administrative team have kept the institution focused on its mission, stimulated engagement with the community, and enhanced responsiveness to its constituencies. Strong technical programs and excellent faculty are preparing individuals for employment and/or further education and the College has a mature assessment process that allows it to measure student learning and continually improve its programs. Gateway Technical College is a positive force in the lives of individuals and communities in Southeast Wisconsin and it is providing leadership to help the region recover from the economic downturn.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

None

WORKSHEET ON Federal Compliance Requirements

INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWED BY THE TEAM:

- 2008-2010 Gateway Technical College Catalog
- Gateway Student Handbook 2009 – 2010
- Gateway Technical College Web Site
- 2010 Schedule of Classes
- Student Complaint Log
- Administrative Procedures and College Practices Manual
- 2008–2009 Course Transfer Guide
- Articulation Agreements
- Online course practices for identity verification
- Financial Aid Policies
- Financial Aid Audits
- Gateway Brochures and marketing materials
- Legal advertisements for Third Party Comment
- Third Party Comments submitted to HLC (2)

EVALUATION OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The team verifies that it has reviewed each component of the Federal Compliance Program by reviewing each item below. Generally, if the team finds substantive issues in these areas and relates such issues to the institution's fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation, such discussion should be handled in appropriate sections of the Assurance Section of the Team Report or highlighted as such in the appropriate AQIP Quality Checkup Report.

1. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition: *The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
Comments: None

2. Student Complaints: *The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
Comments: None

3. Transfer Policies: *The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
Comments: None

4. Verification of Student Identity: *The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identify of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
Comments: None

5. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities: *The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program. The team has reviewed these materials and has found no cause for concern regarding the institution's administration or oversight of its Title IV responsibilities.*

- **General Program Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Financial Responsibility Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies:** *The institution has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*
- **Contractual Relationships:** *The institution has presented evidence of its contracts with non-accredited third party providers of 25-50% of the academic content of any degree or certificate programs.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and recommends the ongoing approval of such contracts.
Comments: None

6. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials: *The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.
Comments: None

7. Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards: *The institution has documented that it discloses its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence. Note that if the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is currently under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor in the past five years, the team must address this in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report and provide its rationale for recommending Commission status in light of this information.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

Comments: None

8. Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment: *The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments. Note that if the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comment relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report.*

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

Comments: None

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

Gateway Technical College
Kenosha, WI

October 26-28, 2009

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Mr. J. Michael Koon, Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development, West Virginia Northern Community College, Wheeling, WV 26003 (Chair)

Ms. Beth Adams, Vice President of Student Services, Lake Superior College, Duluth, MN 55811

Mrs. Judy R. Colwell, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa, OK 74653

Ms. Mary Therese (Mimi) Elwell, Mathematics Professor, Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Dr. Leo Hirner, Director-Distance Education Services, Metropolitan Community College-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO 64111

Dr. Gregory P. Smith, President, Central Community College, Grand Island NE 68802

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I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Gateway Technical College is a forward-looking institution that is providing programs and leadership to help individuals and the region recover from economic distress. The counties in Southeast Wisconsin which the College serves have been hard hit by the economic downturn with unemployment rates much higher than the national average. Although state and local revenues have been reduced, enrollment at Gateway has increased as the College has developed innovative programs and approaches to help students gain skills needed for the high-tech workplace that is evolving. The College has demonstrated that it is committed to forming partnerships to help it address community needs. Both the Board and the President have stressed community outreach and the dynamic leadership team lives the mission statement of collaborating to ensure economic growth and vitality to address changing needs.

Gateway Technical College has an involved and dedicated Board, administration faculty and staff that are committed to providing quality service and programs to their communities. The Board is intimately involved in College activities and processes such as planning and the Community Conversations but it operates under the Policy Governance Model and it is not intrusive. It appears that President Albrecht has revitalized the institution by focusing on the needs of the community and he has developed a leadership team that is effectively addressing the challenges the College faces. Under their leadership, the College has implemented a strategic planning process that should help it prepare for the future. The faculty provide quality programs and have demonstrated their commitment to improving learning through implementation of an effective assessment program. The staff of the College are proud of the role the College plays in the community and in student lives and are dedicated to helping the students succeed.

Like any institution, Gateway Technical College has areas where improvement is desirable. The College has effectively identified those areas, however, through its planning processes and the self-study process and is taking steps to address them. The College has positioned itself to be a leader in the region and has personnel, resources, programs and processes in place that should enable it to accomplish this goal.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

The HLC Team of peer reviewers offers the following advice to the institution to assist them as they respond to the challenges facing the institution. The advice presented in this section are suggestions based upon the experience and expertise of the Team which are intended to stimulate the College constituencies to consider ways to improve various areas of the College. These suggestions are offered for the advancement of the institution and no formal action is required by the College in regard to them.

A. Student Services

Through interviews with administration, student success staff, and students, it became clear to the Team that the College faces significant challenges in Student Success (student services) area. Academic advising, counseling, registration, admissions, and customer service were all cited as problem areas. This finding did not come as a surprise to anyone associated with the Student Success area or the administration. Surveys conducted by the institution clearly indicated that the Student Success area was not as effective as desired. There have been recent attempts to address some of the concerns, including reorganization, but they have been largely ineffective. In fact, some of the changes may have exacerbated the problems. The Team recommends that Gateway conduct a systematic review of its Student Success area in order to analyze the problem areas and develop solutions. The Team also recommends that the process be a collaborative process involving

the constituencies that are affected. There is a perception among some of the Student Success staff that their expertise and input have been given minimum value in past reorganizations and it is important that all parties take responsibility for the current status and embrace changes if improvements are to be made to aid the students. It is clear to the Team that everyone at the Gateway wants to improve the Student Success area and the Team offers the following recommendations as possible starting points in the process to address the concerns.

- Consider hiring an external consultant to engage the Student Services Team in a review of their departmental mission, vision and goals. The need for a shared vision is evident and the process of creating such a vision needs to be inclusive. The Team believes the process would be more effective and it would be easier to build consensus if it was facilitated by an external and unbiased agent with expertise in strategic planning and Student Services. Gateway could contact AACC or the Higher Learning Commission to acquire lists of potential consultants. In making this recommendation, the Team is in no way implying that the expertise does not exist within the College to make improvements. Rather, the Team feels that past attempts could affect perceptions and a neutral facilitator could more easily get everyone to focus on solutions and not blame.
- Conduct a needs analysis to include a thorough review of existing SSI and CCSSE data, focused group evaluations with students, and consideration of other methods of gathering student feedback on needs and satisfaction with current service offerings.
- Conduct process mapping for areas most associated with student dissatisfaction.
- Reexamine current departmental communication structures to ensure there are opportunities for cross-sub-departmental communication, process reviews, identification/resolution of issues, team building, recognition of successes and ongoing training/professional development of staff.
- Evaluate the current staffing model and explore alternatives to better meet student needs. This should include an analysis of staffing levels, deployment, seasonal coverage needs, supervisory assignments and duties of counselors. An exploration of alternative methods for the delivery of academic advising services is recommended. Additionally, the effectiveness of the "Enrollment Services Associate" model should be evaluated.
- Examine the physical layout of the Student Services offices. Emphasis should be placed on creating a welcoming environment that ensures confidential work spaces for employees who assist students with private data and exchanges.
- Define and implement a consistent process of strategic planning that is congruent with the departmental vision and mission.
- Develop service standards and benchmarks against which to regularly evaluate outcomes.

B. Planning

Technology Planning

It was clear from the documents and site visit that Gateway is facing some challenges with the transition to a centralized administration. One example of the struggles with this transition is noted in the Assurance section, and it involves the need for a comprehensive technology plan. Both the documents reviewed and interviews during the site visit indicated that the campuses managed local technology needs. The move to centralized IT services and budgeting requires that Gateway develop a system wide technology plan.

Gateway is starting down this path with the development of a Technology Standards Committee that is currently developing a series of standard desktop images for

specifics programs and computer labs. The Standards Committee has the potential to evolve into a Technology Advisory Committee that could lead the planning effort. Before simply re-naming or re-tasking the Standards Committee, the membership may need to be expanded to include constituencies not currently represented, especially students.

In addition to an advisory committee, the college needs to compile a current inventory for all locations. While collecting data for the technology inventory, input can also be compiled from all major user groups via surveys and focus groups. To assist with the development of needs; an equipment rotation policy; and other elements of a comprehensive plan, the college should also investigate what policies and plans peer institutions have in place. Gateway is also strongly encouraged to complete a thorough review of IT literature to identify current themes and priorities.

Once a draft Technology Plan has been developed, it should be communicated to all constituencies for one final round of feedback and modification. Of course, developing a technology plan is not a one-time activity, and the final part of the planning process should include timelines for follow up planning. The goal should be a "living document" that evolves with the colleges' strategic plan, not a document that collects dust on a shelf.

Three-semester calendar

The self-study report points to the conversion to a three-semester academic calendar as an indicator of the progressiveness of the institution. The College moved to a three semester calendar to be more responsive to student needs. In addition, it is hoped the three semester calendar will allow the College to be more innovative in scheduling. Conversion to the three-semester academic calendar may ultimately prove to be a wise move. Discussions with students and faculty, however, indicated that it has had a minimal impact thus far. Currently, summer semester offerings are completely contingent upon faculty and individual program willingness to embrace a three-semester schedule and the three-semester calendar has only been implemented in a limited number of programs. In order to be successful in the full conversion to a three-semester schedule, there needs to be more purposeful planning and leadership from college administration. The academic leadership team should consider identifying a few programs where the three-semester schedule can be fully implemented to the benefit of students and should then focus resources on these programs which can be used as demonstration projects. The planning should include not only program development but also the promotion of the three-semester concept. The three semesters need to be clearly mapped for students and courses need to be carefully scheduled so that students can get the courses they need.

C. Finance and Facilities

Foundation

The Gateway Foundation assets are low relative to community support for the College and service area resources, wealth, and assessed valuation. The Foundation undoubtedly lost some momentum with the untimely death of its director. However, documents reviewed by the Team indicate that the Foundation was still not as successful as one would expect for an institution the size of Gateway prior to that event. The College has accurately identified a challenge with a shrinking resource base and has indicated the need to find alternative funding. The Foundation could and should be one of those sources. However, the College needs to make enhancing the Foundation a priority. Because foundations are supposed to be somewhat independent of the institution, there is often a tendency for college administrations to distance themselves from the foundation. Since the Gateway Foundation has suffered a setback, strong leadership is required for it to become effective. The selection of a competent and hard-working director is one part of that leadership. The College administration can help provide leadership by insisting that the Foundation Board set clear goals for itself and the Director. The College has

expertise in planning and it should consider helping the Foundation Board with strategic planning. The College should also assist with professional development of Foundation staff and/or key Foundation Board members to help provide them with the necessary tools to enhance the Foundation so that it can develop resources to assist students and to enhance programming.

Facilities

The self-study reports over 850,000 square-feet of owned and leased space and conversations with administration indicate that this number is now approaching 1,000,000 square feet. Between 2000 and 2008 the number of full-time service/maintenance employees increased by almost 20 percent. In an era of shrinking resources, the college should consider evaluating how much facilities space is really needed. A key part of the evaluation should focus on how it can control operations and maintenance costs. It may be wise for Gateway to place more emphasis on addressing deferred maintenance needs and exploring ways to reutilize existing space than to plan for expansion.

D. On-line programs

Technical Support for On-line Programs

A review of Gateway's online support services found that live technical support was only available to students and faculty during traditional operating hours. Gateway is using a ticketing solution in an effort to collect inquiries outside of these traditional hours; however, support does not review tickets or follow up until the next business day.

Gateway is a Blackboard ASP client, and Blackboard has a history of providing these clients with activity data (not always in the most readily usable format). Compiling and analyzing this data will provide Gateway with a pattern of user activity, and then existing support services can be modified or expanded to meet peaks of activity.

Gateway has been willing to pilot new technologies such as the ticketing system, and there are other productivity tools that can be applied to expanded technical support, such as providing support technicians the tools needed to remotely provide services while off site (especially evenings and weekends). One such example is Google Voice (<http://www.google.com/googlevoice/about.html>), which provides the subscriber with the ability to auto-forward numbers at predetermined times, record voice mail, and send an e-mail alert when a voice message is recorded. This is just one possible solution, and similar services are available through many IP phone systems and Cellular providers.

Re-allocating or expanding personnel is always a challenge, so technical solutions combined with creativity may provide alternatives that meet both student and college needs.

One note of caution, there exists a potential for Distance Learning support to become a catch all for other support needs. Gateway is strongly encouraged to examine all technical support needs and develop a plan to insure that the range of technical support needs can be supported without the burden falling upon one unit.

Pursuit of Blanket Approval for On-line Degrees

Gateway Technical College is currently approved to offer four on-line degrees, and two more should be added to the list as a result of this visit. As Gateway has worked through the On-line Degree approval process on at least two different occasions, it has continued to improve the programming and support services needed and as advised. As of this comprehensive visit, team members found a strong program of support services, training, and design in place. The college has also mainstreamed the assessment activities of on-line programs into traditional processes. It is clear that Gateway has developed a strong culture of support for on-line learning.

As a result of the visit and the subsequent findings, Gateway is encouraged to pursue blanket approval for on-line programs, assuming that the opportunity continues to exist. The on-line landscape continues to evolve through recent actions such as the 2009 re-authorization of the Higher Education Act, thus timeliness is of essence.

E. Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Faculty commitment

The Team found that Gateway had made significant progress in assessment of student learning. However, the self-study report and interviews with faculty and the Student Learning Committee revealed that all Gateway faculty have not “bought in” to assessment of student learning. The strategy of paying lead faculty to coordinate assessment helped move the assessment effort forward and was critical in developing student learning outcomes statements in all programs. However, the strategy has allowed some faculty to abdicate responsibilities for assessment. It is well to remember that in addition to fulfilling accreditation and accountability requirements and increasing institutional effectiveness, participation in student assessment is a professional development activity that should result in improved teaching. The College has made significant progress in assessment in a short period of time but it can easily lose the momentum if only a few faculty are driving the process. The Student Learning Committee needs to explore ways to increase faculty participation in assessment. Some institutions stimulate faculty participation by having faculty periodically share assessment findings at division or department meetings or during an “Assessment Day” activity. If the lead faculty concept is continued, then perhaps a mechanism to rotate faculty through the lead position would enhance commitment.

Use and dissemination of data

Gateway has effective processes in place to collect assessment of student learning outcomes and gathers an increasing amount of trend data on institutional/educational outcomes such as persistence and graduation rates. However, very little of this information is readily available to stakeholders on the college’s web site or in other accessible locations. Gateway may wish to reexamine its policies and procedures with regard to transparency in sharing performance data with appropriate stakeholders. In addition to making data more readily available, the Institutional Effectiveness Team should develop processes to help end-users learn to analyze and use the data in decision-making.

F. Organizational Structure

Gateway has made a conversion from campus-based to centralized administration and the Team found that the change is generally perceived as being effective. However, the Team did learn during interviews that some college employees were not sure who they reported to with regard to some of their job functions. Also, on the Burlington campus a number of employees reported that there was frequently “no one in charge” and they were unsure of whom to contact or what action to take in case of campus emergencies. This is not an uncommon problem in multi-campus institutions and some of the uncertainty is probably partially explained by the relative newness of the structure. However, the administration should take steps to insure that the structure is clearly articulated to all employees. It is not enough to just list or explain the organizational structure though. Administrators should “reach out” to staff and faculty to insure that they understand the structure and their place in the overall structure. Campus administrators often need to be in the community to build partnerships and determine needs which the College should address. In today’s environment with more concerns about safety, it is critical that clear lines of responsibility be established and communicated to all. The administration should go several levels down the organizational chart to ensure that someone is always in

charge on each campus. Information about lines of responsibility could be disseminated in group meetings on each campus but it should also be part of any training the College conducts on emergency preparedness on the campus.

G. Faculty Evaluation and Professional Development

The value of assessment of student learning is that it enables faculty to measure student learning and to make adjustments to improve learning. It is equally as important to evaluate effectiveness of teaching and to provide feedback to faculty to assist them in making improvements. While this concept is central to faculty development throughout higher education, it appears to have become seriously diluted at Gateway. As noted in the Assurance Section, formal processes are in place to evaluate faculty performance and to facilitate faculty development during the first five years of employment. However, after that time the faculty are largely left on their own to measure effectiveness and to make improvements. Students do complete classroom evaluations in most classes but the results are only reviewed by the faculty member. The faculty member is free to choose to make adjustments but he/she can also choose to ignore the survey completely. The Team was told that this situation has been allowed to develop because past efforts at evaluation have not been very successful. This lack of an effective evaluation system should not be acceptable to either faculty or administration. The administration and the faculty bargaining unit should make development of an effective faculty evaluation system a priority. One way to accomplish this would be to create a special task force composed of faculty and some deans. It is clear that the institution desires a process that is not perceived as being punitive. That goal can be accomplished by coupling the evaluation process with professional development. The PDP that is in place would be an effective tool although it is currently mainly used by those in their first five years of employment. Extension of the PDP to all faculty would be a good first step to insuring that evaluation results are coupled with conscious efforts to improve teaching. There are numerous examples of best practices in both faculty evaluation and the use of student evaluations and the institution should investigate these to determine if any are applicable to Gateway. Perhaps the WTCS can produce effective processes within the state but the College may also want to examine resources available through the League for Innovation or other sources..

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

Gateway Technical College is an outstanding institution with a number of strengths. The Team, however, feels that there are a few practices that are exemplary and should be noted. The College should be commended for its accomplishments in the areas noted below.

Gateway's mission statement starts with the words "We collaborate..." The College has truly lived this part of its mission and has built a number of highly successful partnerships. Gateway has effective partnerships with business and industry (SC Johnson Waxdale campus, Snap On Tools program, Law Enforcement Academy), with K-12 (Youth Options, Walworth County Alternative High School, Four Year Old Kindergarten Program), with baccalaureate colleges and universities (articulation agreements, DOL WIRED grant), and with agencies (Walworth County Alliance EDA grant for entrepreneurial training). The partnerships clearly indicate that the College is engaged with the community and that the community values the relationship. Gateway Technical College has established itself as a leader in the sustainability initiative. Not only has the College moved aggressively to establish programs in renewable energy technologies to prepare students for "green jobs" but the College has implemented a number of initiatives which truly make sustainability part of every aspect of the College and a normal way of operating.

The Board of Trustees commitment to and involvement in the institution while still maintaining appropriate governance roles through adherence to the Policy Governance Model is exemplary. The Board is appropriately involved in strategic planning and monitoring of progress through review of the "Ends Statements" but it is not intrusive and has effectively distinguished differences in roles between governance and administration. Although individual Board members are active in recognizing student and College success, the Board has clearly established overall direction for the College and it has taken deliberate actions to assure that the administration is responsible for operations.

Gateway has developed an excellent training program for faculty teaching online courses. The training program is comprehensive and rigorous and it was well-received by faculty. Individuals at Gateway who developed the program based it upon national standards of best practice and quality. This program could serve as a model for other institutions.

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

INSTITUTION and STATE: : Gateway Technical College, WI

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS): Will include an embedded change request for approval to offer these online AAS programs: Graphic Communications and IT Web Developer/Administrator.

DATES OF REVIEW: 10/26/09 - 10/28/09

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

DEGREES AWARDED: A

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: None.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE SITES: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: Prior Commission approval required to offer distance education programs other than the Associate of Applied Science degrees in Accounting, Instructional Assistant, Supervisory Management, and Technical Communication.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Prior Commission approval required to offer distance education programs other than the Associate of Applied Science degrees in Accounting, Instructional Assistant, Supervisory Management, Technical Communication, **Graphic Communications, and IT-Web Developer/Administrator.**

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Progress report on student services, advising, and counseling due January 25, 2012.

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1999 - 2000

YEAR OF NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2009 - 2010

Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2019 – 2020

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Gateway Technical College, WI

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS):) : Continued Accreditation
___ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

		Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate	Associate	38	+ Graphic Communications + IT-Web Developer/Administrator
	Bachelors	0	
Programs leading to Graduate	Masters	0	
	Specialist	0	
	First	0	
	Professional		
	Doctoral	0	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:	Present Activity:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	Burlington (Burlington Center) ; Elkhorn (Elkhorn Campus) ; Kenosha (Kenosha Campus) ; Racine (Racine Campus)	
Sites:	Kenosha (Horizon Center for Transportation Technology) ; Pleasant Prairie (LakeView Advanced Technology Center) ; Sturtevant (Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation) ; Sturtevant (SC Johnson Company) ; Wilmot (Wilmot Union High School)	
Course Locations:	None	
Out-of-State:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	None	
Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-USA:

Present Wording:

Recommended Change:
(+ or -)

Campuses:	None
Sites:	None
Course	None
Locations:	

Distance Education Certificate and Degree Offerings:

Present Offerings:

Associate of Applied Science in Accounting offered via Internet; Associate of Applied Science in Instructional Assistant offered via Internet; Associate of Applied Science in Supervisory Management offered via Internet; Associate of Applied Science in Technical Communication offered via Internet

Recommended Change:
(+ or -)

+ Graphic Communications
+ IT-Web Developer/Administrator