Chadron State College - NE

HLC ID 1479

OPEN PATHWAY: Reaffirmation Review   Visit Date: 4/24/2017

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Context and Nature of Review

Visit Date

4/24/2017
Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

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

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

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

Scope of Review

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

There are no forms assigned.

Institutional Context

Chadron State College has evolved from its heritage, which primarily prepared teachers, to its present role as the only four-year college serving the western half of Nebraska, a rural area in the High Plains. In 1910 the Nebraska State Board of Education selected Chadron as the site of a normal school in western Nebraska and acquired eighty acres of land south of Chadron. A year later in 1911 Nebraska State Normal School was founded in Chadron.

The State Legislature changed the institution's name to Chadron State Teacher's College in 1921 with the primary purpose of teacher preparation. The institution was granted the authority to confer the baccalaureate degree in education at that time. In 1949, the State Legislature gave authority for the College to grant the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Sciences which allowed students to pursue curricula other than teacher training.
In 1964, the name of the institution was changed to Chadron State College which expanded the purpose not only to prepare teachers but to be a comprehensive institution offering liberal arts and pre-professional programs in a variety of disciplines. Although Chadron is primarily an undergraduate institution, a Master of Education has been offered since 1956. In 1984, a Master of Business Administration was added, and a Master of Science in Organizational Management was approved in 2006.

Western Nebraska is recognized as having a personality that is distinct from the eastern half of the state. As a result of location, this region plays a significant role in efforts of the United States and the world to solve the needs for food and energy while preserving the natural environment and improving the living and working conditions of

people in both industrialized and developing nations. The College mission is committed to addressing the continuing needs for higher education in the High Plains, and to serving a significant number of students from the surrounding states of Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota.

During the 2016-17 academic year Chadron State College's 95 full time faculty, 85 part time faculty, 137 full and part time administrators, and 85 full and part time staff, served 2,030 undergraduate students (1,709 full-time and 330 part time) and 570 graduate students (116 full time and 454 part time) in 52 undergraduate and eight graduate programs.

The College has continued over the past decade since the last HLC comprehensive visit to move forward with important initiatives that advance and enhance the public good for the constituencies it serves. Additionally, Chadron has responded and adapted to the changing environment, while maintaining a stable identity, and remains a connected, important educational influence in higher education throughout the Frontier and Remote areas.

Interactions with Constituencies

President and Cabinet

- President
- VP Academic Affairs
- VP of Administration and Finance
- Chief Information Officer
- VP Enrollment Management, Marketing & Student Services
- Associate VP for Human Resources
- Athletic Director
- Chadron State Foundation Executive Director

Coordinating Committee for Reaffirmation

- VP Academic Affairs
- Director of institutional Research
- Interim Assessment Director, Associate Professor of History
- Chief Information Officer
- Associate VP for Student Services
- Dean of Graduate Studies & School of Business, Entrepreneurship, Applied and Mathematical Sciences and Sciences
- Dean of Curriculum & School of Education, Human Performance, Counseling, Psychology and Social Work
- Dean of Essential Studies Program & Liberal Arts
- Academic Affairs Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator
- Retired English Professor
- Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Professor and Dean
- Interim Director of the Library Learning Commons

CSC Steering Committee

- Associate VP for Student Services
- Senior Director of Student Affairs
- Associate Chief Information Officer
- Student Financials Comptroller
- Director of Admissions

- Director of Records
- Housing & Residence Life Director
- Business Academic Advisor
- Director of Institutional Research
- Director of Transitional Studies
- Dean of Graduate Studies & School of Business, Entrepreneurship, Applied and Mathematical Sciences and Sciences
- Dean of Curriculum & School of Education, Human Performance, Counseling, Psychology and Social Work
- Dean of Essential Studies Program & Liberal Arts
- Institutional Research IT Specialist
- Enrollment, Marketing & Student Services Office Assistant

Faculty - Focus on Serving the Region

- Professor of Earth Science
- Professor of Science
- Professor of Mathematics, Chair of the Department of Mathematics
- Assistant Professor of Business, Head Business Consultant, NBDC
- Professor of Education, Chair of Education Department
- Assistant Professor of Social Work
- Associate Professor of Counseling
- Instructor of Health, Physical Education and Recreation
- Professor of Justice Studies
- Assistant Professor of English
- Professor of Psychology, Chair of Counseling, Psychological Sciences, and Social Work
- Professor of Art, Chair of Visual and Performing Arts

NSCS Board of Trustees and Chancellor

- Academic & Personnel Committee Chair
- Fiscal, Facilities & Audit Committee Chair
- Chancellor of NSCS
- Chair of Board of Trustees

Open Forum: Criteria 1 & 2

- Professor of Business
- Director of Career and Academic Planning
- Lead for Assurance Argument, Retired English Professor
- Senior Director of Student Affairs
- Student Trustee
- Development Officer - CSC Foundation
- Director of Project Strive/TRiO
- Retention Specialist Project Strive/TRiO
- Housing Office Assistant
- Director of Housing & Residence Life
- Assistant Registrar
- Licensed Student Counselor
- Licensed Student Counselor/Disability Services
- Director of Admissions
- START Advisor

- Assist Professor Special Education

Open Forum: Criteria 3 & 4

- Interim Director of Assessment
- Department Chair, Physical and Life Sciences
- Director of Student Activities and Recreation
- Teaching and Learning Center
- Director of Transitional Studies
- Licensed Student Counselor
- Associate Professor and Co-Chair of Applied Sciences
- Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator - Campus TK20 Assessment Administrator
- Retired Faculty/Administrator
- Director of Alumni and Development
- Project Coordinator, International Office
- Associate Director of Housing and Residence Life
- Assistant Director of Residence Life
- Chair, Justice Studies Department
- Coordinator of Veteran Services
- Chair, Communication and Social Sciences
- Director of Institutional Research
- IT Specialist
- Public Services Librarian
- Instructional Technology and Design Specialist
- Director of Records
- Director of Market Development
- Assistant Professor and Chair of Business
- Interim Director, Teaching and Learning

Open Forum: Criteria 5

- Assistant Registrar
- Professor of Science
- IT Specialist
- Director of Transitional Studies
- Director of Market Development
- Director of Alumni and Development
- IT Analyst
- Student Trustee
- Rangeland Program Coordinator
- Retired English Professor (Lead for the Assurance Argument)
- Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator, Campus Wide TK20 Assessment Administrator
- Budget Director
- Public Services Librarian
- Outreach Librarian
- Project Coordinator, Teaching and Learning Technologies
- Faculty, Journalism

Federal Compliance Review Meeting

- Associate VP for Student Services

- Director of institutional Research
- Dean of Graduate Studies & School of Business, Entrepreneurship, Applied and Mathematical Sciences and Sciences
- Dean of Curriculum & School of Education, Human Performance, Counseling, Psychology and Social Work
- Dean of Essential Studies Program & Liberal Arts
- Senior Director of Student Affairs
- Interim Director of Assessment
- Director of Internships and Career Services
- Director of Records
- Chief Information Officer
- Associate Chief Information Officer
- Assistant Director of Financial Aid
- Student Services Comptroller
- Associate VP for Human Resources
- VP Enrollment Management, Marketing & Student Services
- Director of Admissions
- Director of College Relations
- VP Academic Affairs

Area of Focus 2: Planning

    Executive Council:

- Associate Chief Information Officer
- College Relations Marketing Director
- Director of College Relations
- Senior Director of Student Affairs
- President of Faculty Senate, Education Professor
- VP of Faculty Senate, Physical and Life Science Professor
- Athletic Trainer
- Accounts Payable Budget Director
- Assistant Director of HR
- Librarian, Public Services
- Teaching and Learning Technologies Interim Director
- Director of Institutional Research
- Interim Assessment Director, Associate Professor of History
- Associate VP for Student Services
- Dean of Graduate Studies & School of Business, Entrepreneurship, Applied and Mathematical Sciences and Sciences
- Dean of Curriculum & School of Education, Human Performance, Counseling, Psychology and Social Work
- Dean of Essential Studies Program & Liberal Arts
- Interim Director of the Library Learning Commons
- Maintenance Supervisor
- Chadron State Foundation Major Gifts Officer
- Director of Records
- VP Academic Affairs

Drop In Meetings

- Director of Records
- Faculty, Education

- Faculty, Journalism
- Retired English Professor, Lead Assurance Argument
- Office Assistant, Math and Science
- Office Assistant, Business Academy
- Faculty, Journalism
- Senior Director of Student Affairs
- Public Services Librarian
- Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator

Students (21)

NOTE: Many were from student government and the campus newspaper

Major and Year in College:

- Criminal Justice and Legal Studies (Senior)
- Legal Studies (Sophomore)
- Human Biology (Sophomore)
- Human Biology (Junior)
- Elementary Education (Junior)
- Business Finance (Freshman)
- English Literature (Freshman)
- Legal Studies and History (Senior)
- Business Administration, Finance (Senior)
- Business Administration, Accounting, Legal Studies (Senior)
- Communication, Journalism (Senior)
- English Literature (Sophomore)
- Communications, Journalism, Public Relations (Junior)
- Communications, Journalism, Public Relations (Senior)
- Business Administration, Management (Junior)
- General Business, Human Biology minor (Senior)
- Communications, Journalism (Junior)
- Communications, Journalism, Public Relations (Senior)
- Human Biology, Family and Consumer Science (Freshman)
- Human Biology, (Senior)
- Health Sciences (Sophomore

Campus Wide Assessment Committee

- Interim Director of Assessment
- Director of Institutional Research
- Dean of Curriculum
- Director of Transitional Studies
- Associate Professor of Chemistry
- Assistant Professor of Music
- Associate Professor of Health, Physical Education and Recreation
- Student Affairs representative
- Student Representative
- IT representative
- Library Learning Commons

Essentials Studies Committee

- Assistant Professor of English and Humanities
- Assistant Professor of Mathematical Sciences
- Professor of Earth Science
- Professor of Psychology
- Assistant Professor of Education

Individual Meetings

- President
- VP of Administration and Finance
- Chief Information Officer
- Interim Director of Teaching and Learning

Additional Documents

Chadron State College Student Report (received from the HLC)

Chadron State College Budget FY 2016-2017

Selected syllabi for Federal Compliance review

Institutional Update for 2016-2017 (from Chadron during the visit)

Management Letter of the Nebraska State College System for the Year Ended June 30, 2016

Additional Program Assessment Reports

Chadron State College a Century of Service, 2011, by Con Marshall

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Over the years, the CSC mission statement has been revised as the College has transitioned from a teacher education college to a liberal arts institution with a broader scope of program offerings. CSC has appropriately involved campus stakeholders and sought official approvals from the College leadership, and the Nebraska State College System (NSCS) board of trustees. The mission of CSC is appropriately linked to the NSCS which provides statutory guidance regarding the focus and expected service to the Frontier and Remote (FAR) communities. CSC is driven by the mandate to serve the FAR region and embraces its unique role in the state. The relationship to the state and the other colleges in statewide system is clear and has guided the vision and purpose of CSC as they seek to meet their mission and vision.

- Chadron has developed many programs specifically designed to serve students from the western High Plains states. Of note are the TRiO program to serve first generation students, and the START office which provides essential assistance to the incoming student, forty percent of whom are determined to be "under-prepared" for college level work. CSC understands its mission and has created and funded programs and systems to aid student success.

- A culture of mission driven decision making and action exists at Chadron. Flowing from the institutional mission and vision, the various academic programs as well as nonacademic services have created mission statements that guide their efforts.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- CSC's mission and vision statements, as well as their stated core values, can be found in a myriad of documents including undergraduate and graduate catalogs, and their website. In addition, most bulletin boards throughout the College post the mission statement serving as a visible and continuing reminder of purpose and mission. Official and informal documents provide unmistakable evidence of the mission and are included in the CSC accreditation website. Further, the Nebraska Policy Manual contains an empowering state statute related to the mission. It is apparent that the mission is understood and guides the College's actions and planning.

- The current mission, vision and core values have remained unchanged for many years and continues to guide Chadron's planning and decision making. Against this backdrop, the CSC President appointed a Mission and Vision Steering Team in the fall of 2014 to revisit the mission and consider whether it accurately reflected current realities. Minutes from their work report that the mission "might need fine tuning" since it might not reflect current relevance and accuracy. However, a decision was made in May of 2016 to delay the work of the task force until after the HLC comprehensive reaffirmation visit.

- The President and his cabinet provided the HLC review team with a well reasoned rationale for the delay, noting that while the mission statement would likely have some adaptation, it would not have a fundamental shift. Therefore, in light of the fact that collective efforts of the campus had been directed toward preparation for the HLC reaffirmation visit, and based on the workload capacity of the campus community to effectively make changes, it was determined that the mission reexamination efforts would be postponed until academic year 2017-18 to give more focused and deliberate attention to likely minor, but important changes.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- The College offers an American Indian Studies minor in an effort to develop an understanding of the largest minority group in the region.   Students report a remarkable number of clubs (54), most of which reflect diverse interests. Illustrative is the Native American Club, which offers educational events to the public and attempts to support the Native American students.

- Vision 2011 identified the broad objective to "introduce and promote global awareness, multicultural perspectives and regional relevance;" and the specific objective to "expose students to and develop an understanding of diversity and multicultural perspectives."   The initiative to recruit international students advances Chadron's effort to provide a diverse environment on campus. Further, trips abroad to world areas such as Cuba provide students with culturally relevant and transformational opportunities for global awareness.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Three educational programs in particular demonstrate Chadron's commitment to the serve the public good of the region - the Rural Health Opportunities Program, the Rangeland Management Program, and the recently added Rural Law Opportunities Program. These three programs unmistakably address the needs of rural Nebraska. The CSC board chair, a longtime local resident, noted the impact of the Rangeland Management Program as a new generation of future agricultural professionals enroll at Chadron to replace an aging population of ranchers and farmers as farming is revitalized in the region. Both the Chadron faculty and board leaders from the Nebraska State College System described the importance of these program for the public good and future success in Nebraska. CSC has intentionally directed resources to make a difference in the region and meet the needs of future generations.

- Examples of connectivity and partnerships with the local community are exemplary. The College has partnered with the city of Chadron to construct and maintain a needed swimming pool which is available for student and community use. In addition, Chadron's indoor track and exercise facilities are open without charge to the community and area public schools. Students report a positive interaction with both of these arrangements. The willingness of CSC to partner and collaborate with the local community in these and other ways is commendable and enriches all constituencies.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Evidence

- Evidence abounds demonstrating that Chadron understands, embraces, and follows its mission in decision making and planning. The College takes mission seriously and effectively manages the state mandate to serve the public good of Nebraska and the Frontier and Remote region.

- The HLC review team encourages the College to follow through with their planned efforts to revisit the mission in the coming year. Further, we recognize that the mission might be further focused and clarified in light of a changing environment and responsive institution. However, we assume that the mission will not take a significant change of direction which could warrant further HLC scrutiny and validation.

- At the Four Year Review cycle for accreditation, CSC should report any mission statement change and describe the process followed including the rationale.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- The Nebraska State College System Board Policies (BPs) specify certain financial, academic, and personnel policies that guide the conduct of the State Colleges. Additionally, various state reporting requirements, such as state audits, nepotism reports submitted to the Board, and annual Statements of Financial Interests that are filed by designated Chadron State College (CSC) employees with the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission are other external mechanisms by which the College verifies the integrity of its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary operations. Review of Board minutes, as well as conversations with employees of the institution, further confirm that these policies and practices are followed and reviewed periodically to ensure they are effective. Internal to the College, policies are well developed and readily available. Employee handbooks address faculty and staff expected behaviors related to integrity and information in student publications, such as undergraduate and graduate course catalogs and other marketing materials, accurately reflect information on costs, academic programs, and other College information. Integrity is not only valued but is also lived at the College with fair and ethical practices evident in its policy materials; their consistent application was verified through conversations with students, members of the workforce, and the leadership of the institution. As an example, a recent athletic situation, self-reported by CSC to the NCAA, violated the College's ethical standards and resulted in substantive personnel changes and new safeguards to ensure that similar actions did not happen again.

- Board policies addressing equal employment opportunity (Board Policy 2700) and harassment (Board Policies 5007 and 3020) set the tone for College practices and policies. Helpful guidelines defining CSC's commitment to nondiscriminatory practices are available in employee and student handbooks and on the website. The NSCS establishes negotiated agreements designating salary and working conditions with various categories of union-affiliated employees. Employment conditions for administrators and certain faculty, support staff, and professional staff not covered by NAPE/AFSCME, NSCPA, and SCEA bargaining agreements are stipulated in NSCS Board Policies found at:

https://www.nscs.edu/directory/1/policy_manual/category/4. CSC's Associate Vice President of Human Resources provides information about Board and CSC policies, employment issues, and grievance procedures for campus employees and students. On-campus interviews confirm that established policies in the Faculty Handbook and in bargaining agreements are effectively adhered to and reflect fair and ethical policies that appropriately address employee concerns should they arise.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- CSC publishes comprehensive graduate and undergraduate catalogs. Catalogs are updated every two years. The next version of the catalog will use html rather than pdf, allowing better navigation and facilitating connections among interrelated items of information. Review of these catalogs shows clearly communicated information about faculty, programs, costs, and both specialized and HLC accreditation. CSC IT reported recently updating the website, double-checking the accuracy of information, improving the calendar, and making the search function more usable. Review of the website reveals that pages are user-friendly, providing students and the public with easily accessible information. Conversations with students also confirm that the START office helps them navigate information about cost and financial aid, and that the information they are given during signing days is clear, accurate, and accessible.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- As a state institution, Chadron State College is governed by the seven member Nebraska State College System (NSCS) Board of Trustees, six appointed by the governor with legislative consent for six year terms, and the seventh by the Nebraska Commissioner of Education who serves as an *ex officio* member. The governor also appoints a full-time undergraduate student from each of the three state colleges to serve a one year term as a non-voting member of the Board, and the student representatives are "accorded full Board membership and participation except for certain personnel and legal matters." Review of Board minutes and conversations with the NSCS's Chancellor and three members of the Board Trustees, indicated well-informed understanding of the activities, needs, and accomplishments of Chadron State College. Presidential reports, as well as Board committee presentations and discussions in which CSC's vice presidents participate, allow for campus accomplishments, concerns, and needs to be adequately heard. The Board holds at least one meeting during each year on the Chadron campus where through both formal and informal interactions the Board members gather internal and external constituent feedback. Board meetings are open to the public, and the agendas and minutes of these meetings are available on the NSCS website: www.nscs.edu. Conversations with faculty, staff, and institutional leadership as well as with the non-voting Chadron Student Trustee, reinforced the team's conclusion that the board's deliberations and decisions "reflect priorities to preserve and enhance" Chadron State College.

- Members of the Board of Trustees successfully preserve their independence and avoid conflicts of interest that might prevent them from acting in the best interest of the College by adhering to Board Bylaws and other policies, such as Bylaws Article XV, which prohibits any Board member "from participating in deliberations that affect his/her personal interests or the interests of any group or organization with which that person is connected." State law further requires a disclosure statement to be filed regarding any personal or corporate partnership, or association interests in which the Board member is directly or indirectly personally interested." Conflict of

interest related to campus employment and other activities is defined by BP 5002.

- The Board delegates to the Chadron State College president the management of the institution and oversight of academic matters to the faculty. BP 5101 indicates the College president is to "provide leadership for academic affairs, student services, fiscal management, facilities development and maintenance, and personnel operations." In turn, the president delegates certain of these responsibilities to the appropriate vice president and encourages input and feedback on the management of the College from various campus constituencies such as Faculty Senate, the Executive Council Task Forces, and academic and support units on the campus. Review of Board minutes and College reports provides clear evidence that appropriate delegation occurs in accordance with these policies.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Since its establishment in 1911 to serve western Nebraska, Chadron State College has embraced its identity as a public institution of higher education and the center of educational, economic, and cultural resources throughout rural and frontier Nebraska. Their Assurance Argument clearly states that "Freedom of expression is one of this institution's core values. Truth in teaching and learning depends upon students' introduction to and evaluation of conflicting viewpoints." This core value is consistent with the College's role and mission throughout the region and the evidence illustrates that this value effectively empowers faculty and staff in their active pursuit of knowledge and the instruction that springs from their scholarly and creative agendas. Evidence supporting this determination includes Nebraska State College System (NSCS) Board Policy 4650, which reflects the Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure articulated by the Association of American Colleges (AAC) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), as well as NSCS Board Policy 2820, which notes that ". . . the State Colleges have a public duty to be at the forefront of our society in providing an open forum for the free expression and exchange of thoughts and ideas." The institution's commitment to freedom of expression is reflected as well in Article III of the negotiated agreement between the NSCS and the faculty bargaining unit.

- The freedom of expression value is extended to CSC students as well through the student newspaper. While the paper's faculty advisor mentors students concerning the expectation of accuracy, integrity, and respect for sound journalistic standards, the student-run paper's editorial staff and reporters are free to report on a full range of campus activities and concerns, including those which have proven controversial at times. In addition, a full range of faculty and student driven activities and programs, from guest speakers to campus life programming, demonstrate CSC's continuing commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Although the main focus of CSC is on student learning, the institution fulfills its obligations to provide information and support for research integrity. As demonstrated in the Assurance Argument, CSC maintains an active Institutional Review Board, and is in the process of developing on oversight committee for animal use. In open meetings, faculty praised the Teaching and Learning Center for providing timely advice and resources both on ethical scholarship and on teaching students to use information responsibly. The team saw clear evidence that the Teaching and Learning Center uses best practices in supporting academic integrity.

- Guidance to students in the appropriate use of information resources is embedded throughout the curriculum. Reviewed course syllabi show evidence of policies on academic honesty. CSC uses the service TurnItIn to assist with enforcement of the plagiarism policy, and conversations with faculty affirmed the use and utility of this service. The strong relationship between the city of Chadron and the college also indirectly demonstrates that students have the opportunity to practice professional ethics. For example, students discussed volunteer experiences, service learning, and internships that allowed them to employ professional standards of behavior. Specifically, faculty described a social work conference where students host annual conferences for the region on timely issues such as opioid use and human trafficking. Such experiences allow students to demonstrate professional ethics, and apply what they have learned about academic integrity.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Evidence

- CSC has both policies and processes that promote integrity in all of the institution's actions. Chadron has a healthy relationship with the Nebraska State College System Board, and the NSCS Office originates many of the necessary policies, and provides essential support for operations. The team found evidence that when problematic situations arise, CSC responds appropriately. The culture of the college includes a deep respect for all individuals at CSC and for all of Western Nebraska, promoting fair and responsible conduct.

- CSC's position as a Frontier and Remote institution gives it a sense of also being remote from some of the ethical challenges facing other institutions. For example, other institutions are currently facing complex situations involving challenges to freedom of speech and academic freedom. Though Chadron does not currently have problems in this area, CSC should maintain good practices of environmental scanning for potential issues.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Chadron State College (CSC) has developed and maintains numerous structures and processes to effectively ensure that their degree programs are appropriate to higher education. Reporting through their Faculty Senate, CSC has an Academic Review Committee (ARC) which is responsible for overseeing the Essential Studies Committee's management of CSC's educational core. The ARC is also responsible for approving and monitoring the curricula of their degree programs including additions, deletions, and changes in degree requirements. Program review, which is mandated by the Nebraska State Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE), takes place every 7 years. In addition, it is commendable that four of CSC's professional programs are externally accredited and reviewed regularly as part of those accreditation processes; these programs include the Education, Social Work, Business, and Music programs, and the Counseling program is pursuing initial external accreditation as well.

- Although CSC's Assurance Argument included a limited number of course syllabi, these examples and subsequent examples reviewed by the HLC team onsite make it clear that expectations of student learning in courses across program curricula are appropriate. In addition, ongoing program review processes, discussed in greater detail under Criterion 4, ensure that student expectations are appropriate to the degree or credential awarded. Chadron State College offers courses at a number of locations including the main campus, as well as online. All courses reviewed demonstrated that learning outcomes are articulated for all courses, regardless of the instructional mode or location, and are approved by the Academic Review Committee as a normal course of their operations.

- The recently constituted Professional Online Standards Task Team is working within the institution's Quality Matters framework and faculty/course certification standards to ensure standardization and integrity for all online programs and courses. This CSC task team expects to have a comprehensive set of standards and accompanying processes in place by 2021, which confirm CSC's commitment to quality and will further ensure that the institution's educational programming maintains consistent effectiveness.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- CSC's Essential Studies Program (ESP) is an evolution of the institution's work springing from their participation in the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning from 2006-2010, as well as their HLC Quality Initiative Proposal, approved in February 2013. Examination of example syllabi provided as evidence for their Assurance Argument as well as those examined onsite, and their expectations published in the current CSC undergraduate catalog, clearly demonstrate that their ESP curriculum supports the institution's mission "to provide a broad, liberal arts, undergraduate education." In fact, the Essential Studies Program remains the first priority of CSC's current Master Academic Plan (MAP).

- These expectations and discussions throughout the HLC review team's visit also provide strong evidence that CSC ESP outcomes focus on broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess. As demonstrated through their published expectations and review visit discussions, the College also values and supports both interdisciplinary and high-impact practices across the ESP curriculum, through an "integrated, coherent learning experience to prepare students for a life of responsible inquiry."

- ESP requirements include three credit hours of capstone experience that "integrates content knowledge, skills, modes of inquiry, and personal/social responsibility learned throughout the ESP." Discussion of these capstone experiences during the site visit and examination of

examples of student work demonstrate that students are engaged in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

- In addition to emphasizing the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work through ESP Student Learning Outcome 10 ("Students will demonstrate knowledge of human diversity and interconnectedness and will analyze the implications of diversity in its various economic, cultural, social or political forms."), diversity is prioritized in CSC's current MAP, under Sub-Priority 1.4: "Encourage study abroad and study away experiences for the students."

- Chadron State College maintains an annual faculty reporting function, their Faculty Professional Activities Report (PAR), which shows active faculty participation in scholarship and creative activity, publishing papers, performing in artistic activities, and presenting at conferences. Moreover CSC students are well-represented in statewide student research symposia and related activities, verifying that faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

- In accordance with NSCS Board Policy 5015 and Board Policy 4420, all adjunct instructors (including dual credit instructors) must meet HLC standards for faculty credentials. Exceptions are made for adjuncts with special skills and experience. The appropriate academic dean(s) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs must evaluate and approve the adjunct's qualifications according to the institution's Tested Experience Criteria. The majority of CSC adjuncts employed by CSC possess at least one of the following, in accordance with HLC expectations: a master's degree in the appropriate discipline, a master's with 18 graduate credits in the appropriate discipline, or documentation concerning special skills and experiences on file. The credentials for all current adjuncts appear in the list of Adjunct Faculty Credentials for 2015-2016 and changes for fall 2016. The list identifies those who do not meet institutional standards and/or HLC guidelines and provides an explanation of their particular circumstances. The NSCS Board Office has filed a request to HLC for an extension that would allow time for three CSC dual credit instructors to meet HLC standards.

- According to their current data, Chadron State College employs 95 full-time, ranked regular faculty members. In the current year, CSC employs 85 adjunct part-time faculty, for an overall faculty-to-student ratio of 16.92:1. While this number has dropped slightly from 18.17:1 from the previous year, it compares favorably to norms for peer institutions. Current institutional data show that approximately 87% of CSC faculty are tenured or tenure-track, a higher percentage than is typical at many institutions. CSC faculty exercise oversight of the curriculum and

expectations for student performance both at the department level and through the Faculty Senate's Academic Review Committee (ARC). CSC's faculty, in concert with their deans, ensure that prospective instructors possess the necessary credentials for full- and part-time faculty positions.

- The NSCS negotiated faculty bargaining agreement also articulates the system's expectations for faculty professional development, governing CSC's responsibilities for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles through support for their professional development. It is worth noting that CSC's commitment to supporting faculty professional development and retaining a highly-qualified faculty has led the College to supplement the negotiated support with additional institutional resources in multiple areas. As noted in their Assurance Argument and confirmed by the HLC Review team onsite, annual department budgets allocate $500 per full-time faculty member for travel related to research, conferences, or other professional development. The CSC Faculty Senate Faculty Development Committee also grants up to $450/faculty member in additional funds, upon application and approval by the committee. In addition, the Faculty Senate President confirmed that the Faculty Senate Research Institute manages an additional fund of $25,000 in support of faculty sponsored research projects. In sum, the institution's commitment to ongoing faculty development is appropriate for teaching-focused institutions.

- Evidence included with CSC's Assurance Argument and confirmed by HLC review team members during their visit confirm that CSC faculty are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures, consistent with HLC standards, as set out in Article VII of the NSCS negotiated agreement with the faculty bargaining unit. The agreement states: "Evaluation shall be consistent with and reflective of the role and mission of the State College System and its emphasis on effective teaching."

- Relative to the HLC's expectation that instructors are accessible for student inquiry, the NSCS negotiated faculty agreement (Article V, section 5.5.1) dictates that full-time faculty hold at least five office hours per week. Sample syllabi included as Assurance Argument evidence, as well as syllabi examined onsite confirm that faculty include their office hours on their syllabi. During the campus tour, HLC review team noted that office hours are also posted outside faculty offices, along with their teaching schedules, and students reported satisfactory connection with their faculty through office hours and unscheduled interactions.

- Examination of evidence included with the CSC Assurance Argument and verified by HLC Review team onsite show that CSC staff members provide student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, facilitated by appropriately qualified and trained personnel. Professional staff development is addressed through Article X of the NSCS negotiated agreement with the staff bargaining unit (NSCPA). According to Article X, CSC pays the cost of initial and necessary update training for each staff position. Professional staff members may also apply for grants from a designated fund ($10,000 for 2016-2017) to support their professional development requests. Based on this evidence, the team concludes that staff are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Chadron State College's range of student services and faculty support are appropriate to the needs of its students and faculty and capably support student learning and effective teaching. Through the Transitional Studies Program and the Learning Center, the College provides a broad array of highly effective developmental courses and tutoring services to CSC students. Similarly, the START Office supports CSC students effectively with a one-stop assistance providing a range of student needs, from financial aid, registration, academic advising, and enrollment. These three offices operate consistent with best practices found throughout the academy and provide commendable support to CSC students and their institution. The Transitional Studies Program, in concert with the START Office, employs sound processes ensuring that students are accurately placed and effectively advised. CSC also encourages faculty to allocate a portion of their office hours to advising students in the START Office, a best practice that was verified multiple times during the HLC review team's visit.

- The evidence submitted in CSC's Assurance Argument, as well as information gained from the CSC website, and student and faculty interviews, all establish that CSC has developed and maintains a strong infrastructure to support student learning, including their library and library resources, various arts venues, science laboratories and their overall instructional spaces. Student and faculty technological needs are similarly well supported through a comprehensive range of information and instructional technology resources, particularly the information and instructional technology staff themselves. This singularly impressive constellation of student services is housed across Student Services, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs and underscores CSC's commitment to ensuring that all of their students have access to the academic and institutional information, preparation, and assistance needed to effectively persist in their studies through graduation.

- The Assurance Argument notes that student "ratings for CSC's 'quality of interactions' and 'supportive campus environment' have risen over the last four years," and interviews with students and staff illustrate the passion and commitment with which CSC staff and faculty serve their students. This dimension of CSC's identity is one of their clearest and strongest institutional characteristics. Consistent with this identity, most of the student services and support services available to residential students are accessible as well to students off campus, at-a-distance. This facilitates student enrollment and related processes since processes are all primarily web-based or through digital communications. Of particular note are CSC's Online Learning webpages, which effectively provide online students with the information concerning processes and services which they need to successfully leverage CSC's technology-driven instructional programming.

- Some data from CSC's student surveys, along with a number of comments offered during the student open forum, suggest that students at times are challenged with inconsistent instructor response in some online courses. The Online Professional Standards Task Team noted above should continue their work to address consistency in the design and teaching of online courses. The Student Academic Issues and Concerns (SAIC) web page, where online learners can find information concerning how to initiate inquiries into their concerns or complaints with these courses, should continue to serve as a source where monitoring occurs to best serve and respond to online learning.

- CSC offers an impressive array of resources and services, which provide students rich and sound guidance in the effective use of research and information resources. Promotional materials examined during the review visit reveal that the Learning Center offers a range of opportunities accessible in multiple modes for students to gain an understanding of how to effectively use information resources in their studies. Similarly, examination of syllabi demonstrates that content concerning the effective use of resources is well integrated in a wide range of courses offered at the College. Of note is the Library Learning Commons, which is a website developed to offer students a virtual one-stop-shop for the range of resources and services. The site provides guidance to students on the ethical and effective use of information resources. The Commons is a well-designed and user-friendly web resource, and many students mentioned its ease of use and effectiveness in support of their coursework.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Chadron State College's Assurance Argument, their University website, and information gained from materials and interviews encountered during the HLC review team's visit all combine to describe a broad and effective range of co-curricular activities and opportunities which offer the College's students an enriched educational environment. These activities include NCAA Division II athletics, international travel, a sound First Year Inquiry (FYI) program, The Big Event (a faculty-organized community outreach program providing service work for local residents), theater productions, music programs, 54 student organizations, and a myriad of additional opportunities for rich student engagement.

- Priority 2 of CSC's Master Academic Plan (MAP) is to "Define, develop, and promote co-curricular activities to foster student engagement," and they are working effectively to meet this priority. The President's Executive Council Co-curricular Task Team has been charged with developing an intentional approach to CSC's co-curricular programming that aligns with the College's overall educational mission. The CSC task team has articulated the following explanation and definition:

  "Co-curricular activities promote student learning outside of academic coursework. Co-curricular outcomes are associated with five components of the college mission:

  1) Career and professional development, 2) Service to the community, 3) Understanding human diversity and globalization, 4) Cultural enrichment and creative activity, and 5) Application of research.

  In concert with academic studies, these activities serve as part of an overall strategy for active student engagement."

- The CSC task team has begun articulating measurable co-curricular learning outcomes consistent with this definition, and the College is well-positioned to continue building on their already considerable co-curricular accomplishments.

- These co-curricular activities are one of the two primary dimensions driving CSC's enriched

educational environment, creating an integrated mission-driven educational experience for CSC students. The second of these two dimensions centers on high impact practices, which require significant student engagement, and the review team found abundant evidence throughout CSC's curricula and co-curricula that these practices are well-integrated into students' educational experiences. The College's core, the Essential Studies Program (ESP) was structured to emphasize high-impact instructional practices, and the review team's examination of ESP syllabi and interviews with faculty and students demonstrate that CSC's work with high-impact practices is both sound and increasingly effective.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Evidence

- Chadron State College's programs are consistent with the College's mission to anchor the educational, economic, and cultural needs throughout the frontier and remote regions of Nebraska. The Essential Studies Program provides a sound foundation for the College's range of academic and professional programs, which themselves well-integrate current trends in the disciplines and professions with the specific community and State needs throughout the region. CSC faculty have preparation appropriate to their teaching responsibilities and are committed to their academic and professional disciplines. Faculty and students are engaged in inquiry and scholarship, as evidenced by ongoing documentation in the annual faculty activities reports. The faculty effectively manage the College's curricula, through the Academic Review Committee and its Essential Studies Committee. Student and support services and co-curricular activities are robust, and the College demonstrates a commitment to faculty and staff development through sabbaticals, online and in-house training opportunities as well as department and university budgets designated for professional development.

- The passion and commitment with which CSC's faculty, staff, and executive leadership serve their students and communities is commendable. Also noteworhty is the extent to which CSC's work both on campus and in their communities is closely mission-driven. The College has long maintained a finely honed sense of its identity, and its students are well-served through the resultant instructional and co-curricular programing as well as a well designed and implemented suite of student services and support services.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Rating

Met

Evidence

- As part of Nebraska State College System Board Policy 4200, the College reviews existing programs every seven years. These reviews focus on connection to mission, program structure, and student demand. Internal curriculum reviews occur every two years with catalog updates. Although not part of traditional program review, annual assessment reports require consideration of student learning outcomes, and allow for resource requests related to trends in the data. Members of CSC's assessment committee confirmed that student learning outcomes and assessment data contribute to the conversations surrounding program review. Collectively, these processes allow meaningful program evaluation.

- As detailed in the Assurance Argument, CSC has clear procedures and policies for transcripting credit. These are created at the college system level and are implemented consistently by Chadron. Examples in the evidence file included policies defining degree requirements (NSCS Board policy 4140), accepting transfer credit (NSCS Board policy 4430), and credit hours (NSCS Board policy 4141). The college has recently reviewed their dual-credit offerings, and while some were eliminated, CSC has renewed their relationship with the Western Nebraska Community College. CSC uses signing days to explain policies to incoming students, and their website makes transfer options transparent. Students noted how effective these signing days are in communicating policy information. Some students noted the meaningfulness of the event and kept the paper copy of the information they received on the signing day.

- CSC tracks student outcomes through an annual placement survey and report. Response rate is low, but respondents report reasonable rates of employment (78%) and graduate school placement (12%). Data on area teachers and leaders are also tracked, collectively demonstrating success of graduates. Faculty report maintaining connections with students post-graduation, providing individual stories of success. These efforts to understand long-term outcomes demonstrate CSC's commitment to preparing qualified students.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- CSC has shown good commitment to establishing transparent student learning outcomes. They worked with the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy 2007-2010, in part to review student learning outcomes for general education. In 2013-2014, CSC implemented a new, more interdisciplinary core, the Essential Studies Program. These outcomes are published in the Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs, and shared within course syllabi. Conversations in the open forum for Criteria 3 and 4 revealed regular occasions for discussion of these outcomes, especially among groups of faculty who all teach the same course.

- Assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes is showing significant growth at CSC. The relatively new university-wide assessment committee acknowledges that data have often been collected without being examined further. However, committee members have devoted considerable effort discussing ways to effectively find patterns and relate the data more directly to student learning outcomes. For example, they have been using data from a Student Services satisfaction survey to improve responsiveness to student concerns. The entire committee has shown commitment to data-driven decision making, evidenced in examples such as changes to placement exams that more accurately evaluate student preparedness.

- CSC has experienced significant obstacles to implementation of previous assessment plans. Program assessment reports show that assessment is uneven both across program and across learning outcomes within the Essential Studies program. Conversations with faculty and administrators described problems with the liaison model of assessment they had initially attempted. Similarly, implementation of TK20 has been rocky, and more challenging for some units than others. Despite these difficulties, CSC has shown dedication to continuously improving their assessment process.   CSC sent 23 representatives to the HLC annual meeting in 2016, in part to help advance the understanding of the need for assessment. Programs with external accreditation have been leading the way in program assessment; for example, business recently used assessment data to confirm that in-person and online classes achieve similar

outcomes. Assessment days occur every semester for all programs, allowing academic units to review data and discuss curricular issues. Though progress has been slow, overall CSC is moving in the right direction with more work still needed.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

- As shown in their Assurance Argument, CSC uses IPEDs procedures for determining retention and graduation rates. Over the last eight years, 5-year graduation rates have varied from 33% to 46%. These rates are noted on the college website, and are similar to national averages for comparable institutions. The Office of Institutional Research provides academic units and student service offices with regular reports, illustrating a commitment to shared responsibility for continuous improvement.

- Because retention rates (65% for Fall 2014) are somewhat lower than comparison institutions, CSC has identified improving retention as a primary planning theme. They have created a Task Team to examine and use existing data to encourage retention. One of the most compelling examples of how CSC promotes retention has been the START office, which serves as a "one-stop shop" for students looking for answers about course planning, financial aid, and other fundamental issues. The Transitional Studies program has been a model of using data to help better understand student persistence, correcting misconceptions about what students want from an advisor and making changes to advising procedures. They have also demonstrated that CSC scans for best practices, and are considering stretch and plus-one models for students who need them. CSC demonstrates investment in retaining students by working on the issue from many angles, such as creating a ceremony celebrating the achievements of rising sophomores, having pizza-party advising nights, hosting student-led panels on navigating STEM gateway courses, and more completely documenting information on students who do not re-enroll.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Evidence

- Chadron State College has invested significant human and fiscal resources into understanding the efficacy of their general education program, major programs, and student services. Students, staff, and faculty all show enthusiasm for collecting information and using data for improvement. Retention, persistence, and completion are key issues in the national conversation on higher education, and CSC is clearly working on many different programs to help their students thrive.

- The institution should continue to build capacity in the area of student learning outcomes assessment, finding a plan that best fits their unique needs. As the Essential Studies Program matures, it will be important for faculty to work collaboratively to understand where it serves students well and where it would benefit from alterations. Additionally, while it is not necessary for all programs to have uniform assessment, it will be important to ensure that all programs have data that are internally useful.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- CSC has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations. A review of the HLC Composite Financial Index (CFI) and the essential elements of the CFI indicates that CSC has experienced a steady decline over the last three years in all but one of the indicators (Operating Revenue Ratio), and that all 2016 ratios are below those that existed in 2012. The current CFI score has moved each year from 5.60 in 2012 to 5.10, 3.90, 2.59, and in 2016 to 1.50, but is still within the range of 1.1 to 10.00 that is expected of public institution for no review to occur. Many factors may be influencing the ratios, such as holding revenue bond repayment back-up in the surplus contingency fund, support for strategic initiatives, and losses in Foundation investment returns; however, with the tightened state budget position it may be necessary for the institution to monitor more intently its fiscal behaviors to continue ensuring that it maintains the necessary fiscal resources to support its educational programs.

- Chadron State College and the NSCS Office have well developed processes for budgeting and monitoring expenses which help ensure the necessary resources are available to support its operations. The NSCS Board ensures that core needs (such as salaries, insurance benefits, utilities, etc.) are covered as it allocates the state appropriation for the state colleges. This

creates a sense of continuity for the workforce and key suppliers. Approximately 60% of CSC's expenditure and general expenses are covered through state appropriations. Tuition provides another key revenue source, but is kept low to attract students. The college remains one of the seventh lowest among key competitors in other states. Faculty and staff indicate an understanding of how budgets are developed, have been informed about the current mid-year budget cut in the state allotment of 4% ($746,842), and recognize that the leadership will work to maintain and support current educational programs and personnel. Such cuts are not new to the organization since they managed reductions in 2002-2003 and again in 2009-2011.

- As with most colleges and universities, CSC is seeking ways to support unfunded mandates. The approach is threefold: (1) to gain efficiencies that free up funds through strategic cost reductions, (2) to reallocate resources when feasible, and (3) to utilize funds left over at year end to support educational priorities consistent with the strategic Master Academic Plan (MAP) guided by feedback from Executive Council's Task Teams and other relevant campus constituencies. Examples include reducing redundancies in library databases that allowed renegotiation of vendor contracts, restructuring of positions within certain offices to support increased responsibilities, and decreasing paper usage via technology and providing more efficient copying capabilities. Such efforts have served them well and allowed balances to be built that support sustainability in tight budget times and facilitate reallocation of funds to support key institutional priorities without sacrificing current activities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- In the last four years, a collaborative approach that includes all campus constituencies, as well as NSCS staff and with support from the governing board, has been effectively used to set academic requirements, policies, and procedures. Most recently this occurred as academic deans and AAVPs from each System school established at least once a year meetings to identify common needs and to address professional responsibilities and requirements of interest. Internally, faculty and staff noted in conversations with the visiting team that collaborative efforts, such as those of the Executive Council Task Teams, make work easier and enable people across campus with special expertise or interests to contribute more effectively to institutional efforts to serve the region and its students and to contribute to the overall success of the institution.

- Efforts to engage internal constituencies in setting academic policy and processes have led to changes in academic requirements, such as the introduction of the Essential Studies Program that significantly revised the college's core requirements; more deliberate student, faculty, and staff retention and recruitment efforts; a year-long faculty orientation process that garners praise from its participants and existing faculty; and a sense of ownership in the transformational changes that are occurring in how the College serves its students. Innovative organizational changes to the academic leadership structure with the deans serving as a collaborative body to review faculty performance, recommend academic budget priorities, and other specific cross-campus responsibilities have strengthened efforts at assessment, created a best practice Teaching and Learning Center and led to a greater focus on individual and institutional responsibilities for implementation of the MAP.

- A richly informative conversation with three governing board members and the System Chancellor, who is hired by the NSCS Board of Trustees to manage administrative activities, clearly illustrated their knowledge of Chadron State College. It also highlighted the governing

board's involvement in oversight to ensure that it's legal and fiduciary responsibilities are met and that continued support for performance excellence exists for the College.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- The evolution of planning at Chadron since 2003 has led to a robust, meaningful and well-defined current planning effort that involves all campus constituencies as well as external constituents when appropriate; incorporates a Master Academic Plan (MAP) covering 2014 - 2018, a Campus Facility Master Plan for 2012-2022, and the Chadron Foundation Comprehensive Campaign Plan; and, supports the forward movement of the institution on a deliberate mission-centered path where specific resources are allocated toward mission priorities. The HLC team observed a growing body of evidence that financial and human resources as well as physical plant and technology infrastructure are increasingly being aligned with planning efforts through the budgeting process and organizational changes at the College. Specific examples include the START office, the Library Commons Project, and renewed instructional and co-curricular assessment efforts across the campus.

- The VPAA after consultation with faculty and review and evaluation of 2011-2014 planning efforts, determined that the institution would best be served by (1) the development of the Master Academic Plan (MAP), (2) a focus on fewer strategic initiatives, and (3) greater involvement by faculty in identifying and providing feedback on MAP priorities. This has resulted in energized faculty involvement in support of MAP initiatives collectively, and also expanded individual support via faculty performance review goals linked to MAP priorities. Most recently, these efforts were extended with the formation of an Academic Strategic Planning Committee which was charged with engaging in "systematic and integrated academic planning ... aligned throughout the campus" - an effort which will formalize what had been occurring. Additionally, non-academic units are now aligning their goals with MAP priorities. In virtually all HLC team discussions with faculty and staff during the visit, reference to the MAP was frequent and enthusiastic. The MAP has created a focus on a few meaningful key goals which will have a significant impact on the future of CSC. The HLC team concludes with

confidence that planning is working at Chadron State College.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Rating

Met

Evidence

- Chadron State College is utilizing several methods that enhance learning in meaningful ways from its operational experience. SharePoint© use has established the beginnings of a knowledge management system to facilitate information sharing and documentation. This approach together with the assessment processing of Tk20, allows timely access for all constituencies to review existing MAP activities, program reviews, assessment reports, and other information on institutional projects. Chadron has recognized the need to ensure accuracy, easy access, and currency to College and NSCS policies which are managed by the Presidential Policy Committee. This has resulted in the design and development of a policy website to meet those needs, which was recently deployed. The unique collaborative nature of decision-making the HLC team found across the campus and the collaborative work of the Deans effectively impact learning and improve institutional capabilities at CSC. Finally, on-going efforts to increase efficiencies in processes encourages sharing of lessons learned so as to take advantage of potential cost savings that enable reallocation of resources to improve institutional effectiveness overall and within departmental units.

- The campus recognizes the importance of evaluative feedback and is in the early stages of documenting and analyzing evidence on the performance of the organization. Existing documentation, such as financial reports to HLC, audit reports, academic program reviews, and tracking of activities such as college relations, equipment replacement, and the Learning Center provides some insights into plan and operational success. However, most data and information identified in the Assurance argument and while on campus consisted of qualitative assessments or quantitative counts rather than SMART (specific, meaningful, achievable, relevant or results-focused, and time sensitive) measures or indicators. Identifying and incorporating some key performance measures related to its planning priorities may strengthen existing CSC efforts to assess its progress toward plan goals and help indicate whether the current activities are achieving the desired results or if a change of course is warranted to improve performance.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Evidence

- Chadron State College carefully and with dedicated deliberation allocates its resources, develops appropriate organizational structures and practices, and promotes effective processes to support the fulfillment of its missions and improve the quality of its educational offerings. During formal planning efforts it recognizes and seeks to respond to future challenges, such as budget cuts, and identifies opportunities that will serve it effectively in the future, such as reorganization of academic leadership roles to create a unique and effective role for the academic deans.

- Throughout the visit the collaborative approach that pervades the College was noticeable. As a result of collaboration there is greater involvement of faculty and staff in institution building and some erosion of the silos that are often found in higher education. This has enabled CSC to stretch its resources, both financially and overall, in ways that create efficiencies and take advantage of opportunities such as the Essential Studies Program, Teaching and Learning Center, and START office. Each of these brings vitality and progress to the meaning of "living your mission."

- The HLC team encourages leaders at CSC to continue to foster this collaborative effort and to explore new ways to track progress on its performance to plan so that the human and other resources that impact plan success are utilized in the most effective manner possible. Benefit may also derive from regular and more frequent review of the drivers of change in the higher education environment.

- Chadron has good reason to be proud of its success in meeting the difficult task of making what is often thought of as sterile planning a thing of the past and in its ability to make plan implementation a responsibility that is enthusiastically embraced by all on campus. A very strong foundation has been laid on which to build a best practice planning effort.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	Met
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	Met
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	Met
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	Met
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	Met

Review Summary

Conclusion

Two key factors drive the HLC team recommendation for Chadron State College's choice of Pathway in the coming decade; both are centered on the College's strong sense of identity and clarity of mission.

The first and primary factor is that Chadron State College continues to unquestionably understand the history and traditions behind its longstanding mission, and is guided by their mission for both long term strategic and short term operational guidance. The HLC team's review of all criteria for accreditation found that the College has over the past decade faithfully advanced mission-driven initiatives that intentionally advance and enhance the public good of the communities and constituencies the College serves throughout the region. CSC has intentionally embraced collaboration and transparent communication across campus - a key institutional value that has enabled their steady focus on mission over time.

The second factor driving the HLC team's recommendation is the evidence that while the College has responded and continues to adapt to changing environmental contexts, no significant mission changes have occurred nor are major shifts planned or foreseen.

The following statements summarize several key suggestions/observations made throughout the team's review.

- (Criterion 1) The team encourages the College to follow through with their planned efforts to revisit the mission in the coming year. Further, we recognize that the mission might be further focused and clarified in light of a changing environment and responsive institution. However, we assume that the mission will not take a significant change of direction which could warrant further HLC scrutiny and validation.

- (Criterion 1) At the Four Year Review cycle for accreditation, CSC should report any mission statement change and describe the process followed including the rationale.

- (Criterion 2) Many universities across the nation now face situations that are ethically complex and are even further complicated because they play out in the public eye. The team suggests that Chadron continue their current good work, while staying current with shifting trends in higher education.

- (Criterion 3) The passion and commitment with which CSC's faculty, staff, and executive leadership serve their students and communities is commendable. Also noteworthy is the extent to which CSC's work both on campus and in their communities is closely mission-driven. The College has long maintained a finely honed sense of its identity, and its students are well-served through the resultant instructional and co-curricular programing as well as a fine suite of student services and support services.

- (Criterion 4) CSC should continue to build capacity in the area of student learning outcomes assessment, finding a plan that best fits their unique needs. As the Essential Studies Program matures, it will be important for faculty to work collaboratively to understand where it serves students well and where it would benefit from alterations. Additionally, while it is not necessary for all programs to have uniform assessment, it will be important to ensure that all programs have data that are internally useful.

- (Criterion 5) With the tightened state budget position it may be necessary for the institution to monitor more intently its fiscal behaviors to continue ensuring that it maintains the necessary fiscal resources to support its educational programs.

- (Criterion 5) Most data and information identified in the Assurance argument and during the team's campus visit consisted of qualitative assessments or quantitative counts rather than SMART (specific, meaningful, achievable, relevant or results-focused, and time sensitive) measures or indicators. Identifying and incorporating additional key performance measures related to its planning priorities may strengthen existing efforts to assess progress toward goals, and help indicate whether the current activities are achieving the desired results, or if a change of course is warranted to improve performance.

- (Criterion 5) Chadron has good reason to be proud of its success in meeting the difficult task of making what is often thought of as sterile planning a thing of the past, and in its ability to make plan implementation a responsibility that is enthusiastically embraced by all on campus. A very strong foundation has been laid on which to build a best practice planning effort.

While the above suggestions and observations may warrant institutional attention, overall the HLC team found that the College has continued over the past decade to move forward with important initiatives that advance and enhance the public good for the constituencies it serves. Additionally, Chadron has responded and adapted to the changing environment, while maintaining a stable identity, and remains a connected, important educational influence in higher education throughout the Frontier and Remote areas.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation
Eligible to choose

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.