

Following is the report prepared by the Reaffirmation Committee following their visit to Victoria College on September 24-26, 2013. The findings of this visiting committee represent a preliminary assessment of the institution at this time; final action on the report rests with the Commission on Colleges. The report will be reviewed and final action will be taken by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges in June 2014.



**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges**

REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Name of the Institution: Victoria College

Date of the Review: September 24-26, 2013

COC Staff Member: Dr. Marsal P. Stoll

Chair of the Committee: Dr. Burt Harres
Vice President of Instruction/Provost,
West Campus
Pasco-Hernando Community College

Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

Victoria College is located in Victoria, Texas, which is 50 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. The institution lies within a two-hour drive of Corpus Christi, Houston, San Antonio and Austin. The institution was founded in 1925 and its mission is to “provide educational opportunities and services for our students and the community we serve.” The institution is accredited to award the Associate of Arts (AA) degree, Associate of Science (AS) degree, and 14 Associate of Applied Science degrees. The institution’s 2012 fall semester enrollment included 4,464 credit students with 3,736 workforce and continuing education students enrolled during the 2011-2012 academic year.

Part II. Assessment of Compliance

A. Assessment of Compliance with Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

1.1 The institution operates with integrity in all matters. (Integrity)

There is no evidence to indicate that the institution operates without integrity.

B. Assessment of Compliance with Section 2: Core Requirements

2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. (Degree-granting Authority)

The institution is authorized by the Texas Legislature to grant degrees. This legislation is codified in the Texas Education Code, Subtitle G, Chapter 130.208. The Texas Legislature authorizes the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System to establish public junior colleges. This legislation is codified in the Texas Education Code, Subtitle G, Chapters 130.001 and 130.0011. Further, Texas law establishes that the purpose of each public junior college is to provide technical programs up to two years in length leading to associate degrees or certificates. This legislation is codified in the Texas Education Code, Subtitle G, Chapter 130.003(e)(1).

2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing Board)**

The Board of Trustees consists of seven members who are elected by registered voters residing in Victoria County. Each Trustee is elected to a six-year term. The Board of Trustees is authorized to act as the institution's governing board by an act of the Texas Legislature. This legislation is codified in the Texas Education Code, Subtitle E, Chapters 130.082 and 130.104. The Board of Trustees assures that adequate financial resources are available through utilizing its authority to levy taxes (as evidenced by Board of Trustees meeting minutes of September 2012), setting tuition and fees (as evidenced by Board of Trustees meeting minutes of March 2011, and approving the annual operating budget (as evidenced by Board of Trustees meeting minutes of August 2012). This authority is specifically granted under the Texas Education Code, Subtitle G, Chapter 130, Section 51.352.

A quorum consisting of the presence of a majority of the Board of Trustees is required to conduct official business. Board of Trustees meeting minutes from January 2012 through January 2013 demonstrate that its actions are determined by a majority of Trustees and that the Board of Trustees is not controlled by a minority of Trustees. By policy, no Trustee may have contractual, employment, personal, or familial interests in the institution. Each Trustee is required to file an annual Conflict of Interest Statement that discloses any possible conflict situations. Copies of signed Conflict of Interest Statements from each Trustee are evidence that the Board of Trustees implements its policy prohibiting contractual, employment, personal, or familial interests in the institution. Board of Trustees meeting minutes of July 10, 2010 provide evidence that Trustees abstain from voting on decisions where even the possibility of a conflict of interest exists.

2.3 The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. (See the Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.3: Documenting an Alternate Approach.") **(Chief Executive Officer)**

The President was appointed by the Board of Trustees on May 28, 2008. The President's job description clearly describes: (1) that the President's primary responsibility is to the institution, (2) that the President works under the direction of the

Board of Trustees, (3) that the President does not serve as the presiding officer of the Board of Trustees, and (4) the President's relationship with the Board of Trustees. Board of Trustees meeting minutes from January 2012 through January 2013 documents the nature of this relationship.

- 2.4** The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional Mission)**

The mission statement is clearly defined, comprehensive, and appropriate for higher education. It identifies the institution as a public, open admission college that provides associate degrees and certificates, university transfer programs, career and technical education, academic foundations, continuing education, adult education, student support, and cultural and intellectual outreach. The mission statement is specific to the institution, as it was developed by faculty and staff, and approved by the Board of Trustees. It addresses teaching and learning through transfer, career and technical, and compensatory programs, as well as public service through continuing education and cultural and intellectual outreach. Evidence such as the Strategic Plan, College Catalog, Student Handbook, Employee Handbook, Board of Trustees Policy Manual, and the institution's website demonstrate that the mission statement is published and communicated to constituencies.

- 2.5** The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes. The institution has a process in place for the systematic review of its mission statement, goals, and outcomes and provided evidence in the form of meeting minutes and planning summaries that its processes are followed. Planning is comprehensive, integrated, and institution-wide as evidenced by multiple mission-linked planning elements including: strategic planning; operational/unit planning; facilities master planning; budget planning; capital planning; educational program planning; general education planning; technological planning; institutional planning; and distance education planning. The institution's research-based planning and evaluation processes, which have included use of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey, and Personal Assessment of the College Environment, have resulted in continuing improvements. The institution's planning and evaluation processes also demonstrate that it is accomplishing its mission. The institution identified three institutional priority goals (fostering student success, meeting community needs, and ensuring institutional excellence), established key performance indicators and targets for these goals, and

provided evidence of accomplishment of its mission in relation to student outcomes, operational activities, and external recognition of achievements, as evidenced by the fall 2012 Strategic Planning and Key Performance Indicators Final Comprehensive Report.

2.6 The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. (Continuous Operation)

The institution has been in continuous operation since 1925 when it first admitted students as Victoria Junior College. The institution's name changed to The Victoria College in 1949 when the institution moved to its current location. The name was shortened to Victoria College in 2011. In fall 2011, the institution enrolled 4,566 credit students. The institution awards the Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees.

2.7.1 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. (Program Length)

The mission is to "provide educational opportunities and services for our students and the community we serve." The College Catalog describes the Associate of Arts (AA) degree, Associate of Science (AS) degree and 14 Associate of Applied Science degrees. The AA and AS degrees are transferable to universities and include the minimum, state-required number of core courses that total 45 semester hours. The institution demonstrated that all degree programs require a minimum of 60 to 72 semester credit hours (SCH) for graduation. Degree requirements are published in the institution's College Catalog. The institution also provides for certificates, career and technical education and continuing education courses. The institution uses semester credit hours for awarding academic credit towards its degrees and does not have any degree programmatic offerings of less than 60 semester credit hours.

2.7.2 The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. (Program Content)

As evidenced in its College Catalog, the institution is a public, open admission institution whose mission is to provide educational opportunities and services for students and the communities that it serves. In support of its mission, the institution offers the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and 14 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, as well as many certificate programs.

The institution follows the Texas Administrative Code (Texas Code 9.183) which provides guidelines and regulations for all programs approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) rules and regulations. The institution only offers courses that are THECB approved and it follows the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) which includes a list of all the approved general academic courses. It follows the Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education (GIPWE) and the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) for all programs in workforce education. All of the institution's degree and certificate programs are approved by the THECB. The THECB determines the standards for all programs of higher education at public institutions of higher education in Texas. As documented in the College Catalog, Texas Numbering System, Academic Course Guide Manual, Workforce Education Course Manual, and Texas Administrative Code, all degrees and certificate programs offered by the institution are designed to lead students through an increasingly rigorous sequence of courses. Courses in each degree and certificate program are sequenced throughout the suggested program plan so that student learning is progressively more advanced. Courses are offered in a coherent sequence, ensuring that students gain the knowledge and skills necessary for future courses as they progress in their studies. The transfer courses and technical programs are all aligned with the Texas Administrative Code while following a standard for all courses that provide consistent educational outcomes for traditional, hybrid, and online courses.

***2.7.3** In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. **(General Education)**

The institution offers the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and 14 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, as well as many certificate programs. As documented in the College Catalog, 45 of the required 62 semester credit hours required to complete the AA and AS degrees must derive from the core (general education) curriculum. The College Catalog describes the core curriculum as "a set of courses in liberal arts, humanities, sciences, and political, social, and cultural histories that all undergraduates of an institution of higher education are required to complete before receiving a degree." The core curriculum is fully transferrable to and serves as

the core curriculum at all public higher education colleges and universities in Texas. The core curriculum derives from the areas of Communication, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Humanities/Visual and Performing Arts, Social and Behavior Sciences, and Computer Literacy. The AAS degree requires completion of 15 semester credit hours of general education selected from representative areas of the approved core curriculum including humanities/visual and performing arts, social/behavioral sciences, mathematics/natural sciences, and communications.

The core curriculum sequence is designed to ensure breadth of knowledge. The AA and AS curriculum requires completion of nine semester credit hours in communications, three semester credit hours in mathematics, seven semester credit hours in natural science, three semester credit hours in humanities, three semester credit hours in visual and performing arts, six semester credit hours in history, six semester credit hours in government, three semester credit hours in social/behavioral sciences, three semester credit hours in computer literacy, and two semester credit hours in physical education. The AAS curriculum requires completion of three semester credit hours in humanities/visual and performing arts, three semester credit hours in social/behavioral sciences, three semester credit hours in natural science/mathematics, three semester credit hours in communications and three additional semester credit hours in core/general education courses as designated by each AAS degree program. The core courses designed to meet general education requirements are listed in the institution's College Catalog. In order to meet this objective, the institution requires that the core curriculum be completed. The institution provided transcripts in each of the three degree areas which demonstrated adherence to this policy.

Degree and certificate programs are sequenced to ensure progressively advanced student learning. Degree requirements are defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The institution engages in a three-year program review cycle to ensure cohesiveness and effectiveness of the curriculum. The institution also uses input from advisory committees and professional accreditation standards to ensure coherency between its curriculum and workforce requirements.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the College Catalog, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Assumptions and Defining Characteristics, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Essential Core Curriculum Information, General Education Portfolio, and Core Curriculum webpage. Interviews were conducted with the Vice President of Instruction, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment, and the Coordinator and Instructor of Vocational Nursing Program - Cuero in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirm the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

2.7.4 The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (See the Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach.") **(Course work for Degrees)**

The institution provides instruction for all course work required for all degrees its offers. The institution provides a listing of course descriptions in its College Catalog and documents the availability of courses through the course schedule which is published each semester. Current and archived copies of the College Catalog and course schedules are posted on the institution's website. Additionally, the institution provided transcripts for three degree programs which demonstrates adherence to its policy.

***2.8** The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each of its academic programs. **(Faculty)**

The institution employs full-time faculty members to provide educational services for its students and the community it serves. It has a well-defined role for full-time faculty in support of the mission of the institution. It employs 92 full-time faculty members and 153 part-time faculty members to assist in providing the educational services for its students in traditional and distance education environments. During the spring 2012 semester, full-time faculty members provide instructional service for 62 percent of the credit hours produced in traditional classes and 63 percent of the credit hours produced through online instruction. During the fall 2012 semester, full-time faculty provided 48 percent of the traditional instruction and 52 percent of the credit hours produced through online instruction.

The institution presented aggregate and program-level data to demonstrate that the number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support its mission and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. Data were presented for all locations and modes of delivery. In the spring 2012 semester, the institution employed 92 full-time faculty and 153 adjunct (part-time) faculty and in the fall 2012 semester, 91 full-time and 137 adjunct faculty. In addition, a description of a faculty member's job responsibilities and teaching load were presented with evidence of such provided in the Employee Handbook along with the job description for both full-time and part-time faculty.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the Full-Time Faculty Job Description, Adjunct Faculty Job Description, Employee Handbook, and

Adjunct Faculty Handbook, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

2.9 The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

The institution provides over 175,000 print items, over 64,000 eBooks, 8,500 audiovisual items, 350 print journal subscriptions, and access to over 35,000 online, full-text journals. All students, including distance education and face-to-face students at all locations, have access to these materials through the Library's webpage. Students have 24/7 access to the College Catalog, electronic resources, and most Library services. Several of the Library's online databases are provided through the institution's membership in TexShare, the state's resource sharing program. The Library collections are guided by the collection development policy which includes consideration of several variables when building the collection including faculty input, budget, age of the material, core subject area, and literary merit.

The Library provides a webpage specifically for distance education students. This webpage lists the various services and resources available to the students. Library brochures are available on all campuses and include a list of the services provided to all students. Distance education and dual enrollment students have access to librarians through e-mail, telephone, or face-to-face. Due to the number of online, off-campus, and dual credit courses offered as well as the use of blended learning in many of the face-to-face classes, the Library's preferred format for resources in most disciplines is electronic. Many of the Library's video resources are provided electronically through Panopto or streamed from a remote site.

An instructional laboratory will soon be available for student use as additional work space. Usage data, circulation data, comparison data, and examples of the Library's planning process were provided in charts and graphs documenting assessment of Library services through student surveys as well as an extensive assessment for the Library through the Strategic Plan.

***2.10** The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that are intended to promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. **(Student Support Services)**

The institution provided examples of how its many programs serve its students and communities, which is in accordance with its mission. Along with the main campus, the institution has two centers and two vocational nursing sites that serve an eight county

area. Some of its programs, services, and activities available to students include admissions and records, academic advising, career planning, counseling, a dual-credit program, disability services, financial aid, intramural sports, library services, new student information sessions, student activities, recruiting, testing, transfer services, tutoring, veteran affairs, and workshops. Students enrolled in traditional face-to-face courses, dual enrollment hybrid courses, and online courses can access these services through various modes including face-to-face, e-mail, telephone, and the institution's website.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed sample documents such as the 2012-2013 College Catalog, the 2012-2013 Student Handbook, program guides, a brochure about library services and resources for students, a 2013-2014 View Book and Career Planner, and various forms. Interviews were conducted with the Vocational Nursing Program-Cuero Coordinator/Instructor, the Administrative Assistant for the Vocational Nursing Program-Cuero, the Registrar, the Director of Pre-College Programs and Recruitment (the Title V Activity I Director for "CARS"), the College Recruitment Specialist, the Director of the Student Center and Student Activities, the Tutor Coordinator, the Testing Coordinator, the Academic Advisor for Career Services, the Academic/Disability Advisor, the Director of Advising and Counseling, the Manager of the Gonzales Center, the Manager of the Calhoun County Center, the Financial Aid Director, the Vice President for Student Services, and the Vice President of Instruction, in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

2.11.1 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or Standard Review Report issued in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a system-wide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or Standard Review Report) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial Resources)**

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution provided audits, financial statements, a review of the budget process, an overview of internal and external funding, and information concerning enrollment trends to suggest the institution has the financial base and financial stability to support its mission. The institution provided

audited financial statements for the fiscal years 2008 through 2012. The institution's fiscal year begins on September 1 and ends on August 31. The institution is audited by an independent accounting firm. There were no audit findings and no concerns expressed as to compliance or internal control. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee identified that the institution did not provide a required separate statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant related debt.

The institution's budget process is initiated at the planning unit level, reviewed by division deans and directors, reviewed by the Vice President of the respective planning units, compiled by the Director of Finance, and finalized by the Administrative Council and President. Distance learning is budgeted at the unit level and is an integral part of the instructional department budgets. The budgets as presented are comprehensive in nature. In accordance with state law a copy of the annual operating budget is submitted to the Governor before December 1 of each year.

The institution has increased tuition and fee rates in recent years to offset declines in state appropriations. The institution has also benefited from increases in full-time equivalent (FTE) semester credit hours and contact hours. Adjustments to spending patterns to reflect changing revenues are reflected in the comprehensive detailed budget. The institution's Board of Trustees reviews financial information at its regularly scheduled meetings and is also responsible for setting ad valorem tax rates which are an integral part of the revenue budget.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found in the Focused Report that the institution provided a separate statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant related debt, and conducted interviews with the President and Vice President, Administrative Services in support of the institution's case for compliance.

2.11.2 The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. (Physical Resources)

To assist the institution in determining adequacy of its physical resources, a Master Plan is used to guide future renovation and construction of facilities as well as manage deferred maintenance needs. The 2000-2009 Master Plan was updated for 2011-2020. Development of the plan was guided by a committee comprised of faculty, staff and students and includes four major components. The four components include an overview of the existing facilities, projected growth and demand, technology, and strategic issues. The Master Plan is comprehensive in nature and reflects a serious commitment to physical facilities that best serve the changing needs of the institution. The institution's Strategic Plan includes a goal of maintaining the physical infrastructure.

The institution's main campus is located in Victoria, Texas. An Adult Basic Education Center, the Liberty Street Industrial Training Center, and the Leo J. Welder Center for

the Performing Arts are also located in Victoria. The main campus consists of 17 buildings on approximately 60 acres of land. The main campus contains classrooms, science laboratories, computer laboratories, offices, a student center, sports center, art and music studios, library and other special purpose areas. The Adult Basic Education Center consists of one brick building (6,365 square feet) and a modular building (1,792 square feet). The Industrial Training Center is comprised of two buildings. The Welder Center for Performing Arts consists of a 21,200 square foot auditorium building and an 8,800 square foot annex.

The institution's other locations include the Gonzales Center in Gonzales, the Calhoun County Center (primarily non-credit course offerings) located in Port Lavaca and two vocational nursing teaching sites located in Cuero and Hallettsville. The main campus and off-campus sites include facilities for instruction and student support services. The institution also offers dual enrollment courses at 26 area high schools. The public school systems are responsible for operating and maintaining the high school sites.

Projects currently in progress include: (1) the Fine Arts Center renovation and expansion to provide improved instructional spaces, (2) the Gonzales Center expansion to add welding and construction trades, and (3) construction of a new building to house the Cuero Vocational Nursing Program. In 2012, the voters of Victoria County approved a \$22 million general obligation bond that will support the construction of an Emerging Technology Center.

2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**

The institution developed an acceptable QEP. See part 3 of this report for details.

C. Assessment of Compliance with Section 3: Comprehensive Standards

3.1.1 The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution's operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution's constituencies. **(Mission)**

The institution's mission statement is comprehensive and addresses certificates, associate degrees, and transfer credit for baccalaureate degrees as well as workforce education, continuing education, developmental education, and adult basic education. The mission statement is periodically reviewed as part of the strategic planning process and is current, having been last reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2013. The institution's operations are guided by the mission statement, with linkages to the mission evident in the annual plans (departmental mission statements

and initiatives) as well as the operational profiles for academic programs. The institution provided documentation of changes to its developmental (foundations) education programming made to support its mission statement. Evidence reviewed, including the Strategic Plan, College Catalog, student and employee handbooks, Board of Trustees Policy Manual, and the institution's website, shows that the institution's mission is communicated to its constituencies.

3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

Texas Education Code 51.352(d)(e) assigns the institution's governing board with the responsibility of selecting and evaluating the President. The most recent selection process concluded in May 2008 with the appointment of the current President. The Board of Trustees contracted with Executive Resources Consulting Service to conduct a nationwide search for the new President. Although Executive Resources Consulting Service provided professional search services, documentation provided clearly shows the Board of Trustees made the final selection. Board of Trustees' meeting minutes from August 2009, September 2010, and August 2011 demonstrate the Board's involvement in the annual evaluation of the President.

3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure: **(Governing board control)**

3.2.2.1 the institution's mission

Texas Statute (TEC 51.352) authorizes the Board of Trustees' authority to govern the institution. The institution's mission statement was developed collaboratively by faculty and staff as part of the strategic planning process. This collaborative effort is documented in the February 2009 meeting minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee presented the proposed institutional mission statement to the Board of Trustees. Board of Trustees meeting minutes from March 2009 document that it provides final approval for the institution's mission. The Board of Trustees reviews the mission statement periodically. The last such review is documented in Board of Trustees meeting minutes from February 2012.

3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution

The Board of Trustees approves the institution's annual operating budget and also approves an annual audit of the budget. The most recent annual operating budget was approved by the Board of Trustees in August 2012 as evidenced by Board of Trustees meeting minutes from that month. Board of Trustees meeting minutes from January 2012 through January 2013 document that it routinely reviews the operating budget. The Board of Trustees assures that the institution's finances are audited on an annual

basis. The most recent annual financial audit was approved by the Board in November 2011 as evidenced by Board meeting minutes from that month.

3.2.2.3 institutional policy

Legislation as codified in the Texas Education Code 51.352(b) authorizes the Board of Trustees to provide the policy direction of the institution. Board of Trustees policy defines the procedures it uses to develop and adopt policy. Board of Trustees minutes from May 2012 demonstrates that it exercises its authority to develop and adopt institutional policy.

3.2.3 The governing board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Board conflict of interest)**

Board Regulation 005, Paragraph 4 contains the Board of Trustees institutional policy on conflict of interest. The policy specifically defines what constitutes a conflict of interest. Each Board of Trustees member is required to file an annual Conflict of Interest Statement disclosing any possible conflict situations. Copies of these signed statements from each Board of Trustees member are provided as evidence that it implements this policy. Board of Trustees meeting minutes of July 10, 2010, provide evidence that its members abstain from voting on decisions where even the possibility of a conflict of interest exists.

3.2.4 The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies, and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

Board Regulation 005, Paragraph 2-A contains the Code of Ethics by which each Board of Trustees member is expected to adhere. This code includes a statement that each Trustee will "render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups." Upon taking office, each Trustee is required to sign a statement declaring that he or she "has not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contribute, or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment for the giving or withholding of a vote at the election." Board of Trustees meeting minutes from July 2010 show that Trustees abstain from voting on any motion where even the slightest appearance of a conflict of interest may appear. All Trustees completed training on conflict of interest as evidenced in the Board of Trustees meeting minutes of October 2012.

3.2.5 The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. **(Board dismissal)**

The institution's Board of Trustees members are considered to be county officers. As such, the Texas Constitution, Article 5, Section 24 states that Trustees may be removed

for, "Incompetency, official misconduct, habitual drunkenness, or other causes defined by law." Board Regulation 003, Section 4 defines incompetency, official misconduct, and intoxication. Board Regulation 003, Section 4 also adds conviction by a jury for any felony or for misdemeanor official misconduct, and nonattendance of Board meetings as reasons for the dismissal of a Trustee. Actions for removal of a Trustee must be brought before the judge of the district court holding jurisdiction, except that any court convicting a Trustee of a felony or official misconduct shall order immediate removal. No Trustee of the institutions has ever been dismissed.

3.2.6 There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.
(Board/administration distinction)

Texas Statutes as codified in the Texas Education Code 130.082(d) and Board Regulation 006, Section 1 provides that the Board of Trustees is responsible for policy making, fiscal stability, and establishing the mission of the institution. Texas Education Code 52.352 and 130.082 further define the Board of Trustees' responsibilities as providing policy direction and adopting such rules, regulations and bylaws as seem advisable and appointing the institution's President. The President's job description clearly shows that he is responsible for implementing the policies of the Board of Trustees. The organizational chart shows that the President is the only institutional employee who reports to the Board of Trustees. The Employee Handbook is designed to further distinguish Board of Trustees policy from institutional practices and procedures developed to implement its policies. Board Regulation 002, Section 2, Paragraph E-16 state that the Board of Trustees will approve employment of faculty and staff only upon the recommendation of the President. Implementation of this policy is evidenced by Board of Trustees minutes from August 2012. One example of board/administration distinction can be found in the institution's emergency management plan documented in Board of Trustees meeting minutes of January 2012, which led to the development of an Environmental Management System Campus Plan. The Board of Trustees approved the training budget to implement this plan as reflected in Board of Trustees meeting minutes of December 2012. The institution provided other numerous examples demonstrating a clear delineation between the Board of Trustees policy making role and administration's role in implementing Board of Trustees policies.

3.2.7 The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. **(Organizational structure)**

The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure. The organization of the institution is structured so as to effectively and efficiently implement the policies approved by the Board of Trustees. The organization structure is designed to delineate the responsibility of the implementation of Board of Trustees policies. This structure is evidenced by the organizational chart. The President is the only institutional

employee who reports to the Board. Four Vice Presidents, an Executive Director, and two Directors report directly to the President. Each of these seven positions is responsible for specific functional areas including instruction, administrative services, student services, and institutional advancement/external affairs.

***3.2.8** The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience and competence to lead the institution. **(Qualified administrative/academic officers)**

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that on its organizational chart (Administration) and in CS 3.2.10 of its Compliance Certification Report, the institution defined its administrative and academic officers to include the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors. A review of job descriptions and resumes provided shows that the President, Vice President, and Deans are qualified for their position responsibilities through education and experience. The institution did not address the qualifications of its Directors.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found in the Focused Report that the institution provided job descriptions and resumes of its Directors as evidence that each individual possessed the experience and competence to fulfill his/her role within the institution. Interviews were conducted with the President; Vice President Instruction; Vice President, Student Services; and Vice President, Administrative Services in support of the institution's case for compliance.

3.2.9 The institution publishes policies regarding appointment, employment, and evaluation of all personnel. **(Personnel appointment)**

Employment policies, regulations, procedures, and practices are published in the Employee Handbook and administered through the institution's Human Resources Department. To ensure access, these policies, regulations, procedures, and practices are disseminated through the institution's website to provide all employees immediate access to current information with printed copies being made available upon request. Completed position request forms, signed selection committee commitment forms, and new hire authorization forms were provided to document the implementation and enforcement of this employment process. Employees are evaluated routinely according to regulations outlined in the Employee Handbook. Examples of completed forms were provided to indicate the implementation of the evaluation of personnel.

3.2.10 The institution periodically evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators. **(Administrative staff evaluations)**

The institution periodically evaluates the effectiveness of all staff including its administrators. The administrative team consists of the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors. The President evaluates the Vice Presidents and other direct reports. Employees, including Deans and Directors, are evaluated annually in the

spring semester by their immediate supervisor. The process includes a self-appraisal, face-to-face meeting, and written comments by the supervisor. A private discussion is held to discuss personal growth and institutional improvement. Completed evaluation documents are maintained by the Human Resources Department. Evaluation examples for individuals in the position of Vice President, Dean, and Director were provided to substantiate the implementation of the institution's policies regarding periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of its administrators.

3.2.11 The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. **(Control of intercollegiate athletics)**

The institution does not participate in intercollegiate athletic programs. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.2.12 The institution demonstrates that its chief executive officer controls the institution's fund-raising activities. **(Fund-raising activities)**

The President's job description and the organizational chart both show the President is responsible for institutional fund-raising activities. The President must authorize all institutional fund-raising activities. Board of Trustees policy stipulates that all funds and in-kind donations must support the institution's mission. The institution provided a form documenting a request to pursue a grant to fund a museum showing the French colonization of coastal Texas. This completed form clearly demonstrated the process used to gain Presidential approval for such fund-raising requests. The institution's fund-raising efforts are directed toward grants and contracts. The institution provided numerous examples showing the President's involvement in soliciting funds through grants including a \$1.98 million grant from the M.G. and Lillie A. Johnson Foundation to support the Emerging Technology Center, a \$789,000 grant from the Texas Workforce Commission to support the training of new Caterpillar employees, and several federal grants.

The Victoria College Foundation, Inc. is organized as a separate 501(c)3 for the purpose of soliciting gifts to support scholarships, faculty and staff development, technology, capital needs, and other institutional initiatives. The Executive Director of the Foundation reports to the Vice President of College Advancement and External Affairs, who in turn, reports directly to the President.

3.2.13 For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs: (1) the legal authority and operating control of the institution is clearly defined with respect to that entity; (2) the relationship of that entity to the institution and the extent of any liability arising out of that relationship is clearly described in a formal, written manner; and (3) the institution demonstrates that (a) the chief executive officer controls any fund-raising activities of that entity or (b) the fund-raising activities of

that entity are defined in a formal, written manner which assures that those activities further the mission of the institution. **(Institution-related entities)**

The institution and the Victoria College Foundation, Inc. have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was updated, approved, and signed in January 2012 by the institution's Board of Trustees and the Foundation's Board of Directors. The MOU details the responsibilities of the institution to provide administrative support to the Foundation and the responsibility of the Foundation to maintain assets in support of the institution. The Foundation operates separately from the institution and maintains its own liability insurance and contracts for its own independent audit. Foundation Directors are appointed by the institution's Board of Trustees and Foundation Bylaws require that two, and no more than three, of the Board of Directors must also be members of the institution's Board of Trustees. The MOU states the sole purpose of the Foundation is to support the mission and services of the institution.

3.2.14 The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. **(Intellectual property rights)**

The institution has a clear and well-defined policy relating to ownership of material and intellectual property. These policies are found in Board of Trustees policies, the Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook, and on the institution's website. Students are able to access the information through a web link entitled "Student Rights to Know" and in the Student Handbook. The policy on intellectual rights addresses the development, production, and dissemination of intellectual property by employees. Intellectual property includes, but is not limited to, inventions, copyrightable works, trademarks, and tangible research property. The institution has policies that govern inventions, copyrightable works, syllabi, trademarks and the commitment to protecting intellectual rights. The Intellectual Property Policy clearly notes that public interest is best served by creating an intellectual environment whereby creative efforts and innovations can be encouraged and rewarded, while still retaining for the institution and its learning communities, reasonable access to, and use of, the intellectual property for whose creation the institution has provided assistance. The institution has not had any disputes concerning intellectual property and ownership of material.

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

***3.3.1.1** educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

The institution has 29 educational programs and for each of these programs has identified expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on an analysis of results in its educational programs, including student learning outcomes. The institution has a thorough process for assessment of outcomes in educational programs, as described in the Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment Handbook. Outcomes align with external requirements (such as those prescribed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), a regulatory agency that enacts policy in accordance with the Texas Legislature), external standards (such as those set by the National Board of Nursing), and/or local needs.

Program assessment portfolios reviewed for each educational program included curriculum maps; assessment data including results and determination of the extent to which outcomes were achieved, analysis of impact on student learning, and improvement plans; and three-year program reviews. Where appropriate, assessment results for online students were disaggregated and reviewed in comparison to outcomes for face to face students. The Program Improvements/Changes/CIC Recommendations/Commendations document provided evidence of improvements made based on analysis of assessment results. The institution used a variety of assessment methods to ensure the attainment of learning outcomes. Some of these direct measures included rubrics, embedded questions, exit exams, and portfolios.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the 2012-2013 Program Management Plan Comprehensive Review and Evaluation Report, the Curriculum and Instruction Council meeting minutes (January 2013, September 2013), 2013 program review documents, advisory board minutes (CIS, 2010 and 2011) and curriculum maps, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment, the Director of Distance Education and Instructional Technology, members of the Curriculum and Instruction Council, and faculty members, including one involved with the peer observation professional development initiative, in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.3.1.2 administrative support services

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on an analysis of the results in administrative support services. Evidence reviewed included unit assessment plans and initiatives for the most recent three cycles for Administrative Services, Bookstore, Police and Campus Safety, Finance, Food Service, Human Resources, Physical Plant, Purchasing, Technology Services, College Advancement and External Affairs, College Advancement and the Victoria College Foundation, Inc., Event Services, Grants Development, Marketing and Communications, Instruction, College Information Systems, Academic Foundations, Calhoun County Center, Gonzales Center, Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Career, Health, and Technical Professions,

Distance Education and Instructional Technology, Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment, Quality Enhancement Plan, Science, Mathematics, and Physical Education, and Student Services. Plans contained activities, evaluation methods, expected outcomes and results, as well as an assessment of overall effectiveness of ongoing activities and findings of improvement or need for improvement.

3.3.1.3 academic and student support services

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on an analysis of the results in academic and student support services. Evidence reviewed included unit assessment plans and initiatives for the most recent three cycles for the Advising and Counseling Services, Financial Aid, Pre-College Programs, Admissions and Records, Student Activities and Student Center, Student Support Services (KEY Center), Title V, Testing, and Tutoring units.

Plans contained activities, evaluation methods, expected outcomes and results, as well as an assessment of overall effectiveness of ongoing activities and findings of improvement or need for improvement. Academic and Student Support Service staff annually review and revise, when necessary, unit activities/outcomes, and evaluate the effectiveness of the units.

3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate

Research is not a component of the institution's mission. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on an analysis of the results in community/public service. Evidence reviewed included unit assessment plans and initiatives for the most recent three cycles for Adult Education, Cultural Affairs, and Workforce and Continuing Education. Plans contained activities, evaluation methods, expected outcomes and results, as well as an assessment of overall effectiveness of ongoing activities and findings of improvement or need for improvement.

3.3.2 The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**

See part 3 of this report for details.

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. **(Academic program approval)**

The institution has policies and procedures in place to enable faculty to participate in the approval process for academic credit in its educational programs. The Curriculum and Instruction Council oversees the curriculum development process from introductory of educational programs for academic credit by faculty through the final approval process by administration for submission to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) on behalf of the State of Texas. Faculty hold a majority (12 of 17) of the membership on the Council where the first phase of approval of curriculum begins. The policies and procedures are outlined in the Curriculum Handbook. Minutes of the Council and Board of Trustees document the approval process of curriculum development, curriculum modifications, and deletions of academic credit courses.

3.4.2 The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. **(Continuing education/service programs)**

The mission of the institution clearly states, "Our mission is to provide educational opportunities and services for our students and the communities we serve." The institution provides evidence of fulfilling that mission through the End of Year Summary Report listing the number of students in continuing education by year and by course category. Examples of the institution's continuing education courses include Health Care, Public Service, Workforce Training, Truck Driving, Leisure Learning and Youth Camps. The number of students served and broad range of programs offered are evidence that the institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission.

***3.4.3** The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. **(Admissions policies)**

The institution publishes admissions regulations consistent with its mission as a comprehensive, open-access, public community college. Evidence of this was found on the institution's website, in the College Catalog and Student Handbook and in the Planner. The Admissions and Records Office is responsible for administering admission regulations. The institution provides a checklist of requirements for general admission, dual credit and early admission for high school students, admission for foreign students, course audits, residency requirements, registration processes, assessment testing, scholastic probation, enforced withdrawal, and readmission of academically suspended students. In addition, requirements for programs with selective admissions were also provided with evidence in the College Catalog and examples of admissions packets.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed sample documents such as the College Catalog, Student Handbook, Registration and Payment Schedule handout for students, placement test chart, and various types of informational forms and brochures, and conducted interviews with the Registrar, the Director of Pre-College Programs and Recruitment, the College Recruitment Specialist, the Testing Coordinator and the Director of Advising and Counseling in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 3.4.4** The institution publishes policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. (See Commission policy "Collaborative Academic Arrangements.") **(Acceptance of academic credit)**

As a public, open-admission institution, there are established regulations, practices, and procedures for acceptance of academic credit that are consistent with the mission of the institution. Regulations for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates are referenced in the College Catalog. The institution adheres to state guidelines when accepting credit for transferred courses. Although documentation of policies was provided, no evidence was provided such as a transcript documenting the awarding of academic credit using one of the methods described.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution referenced regulations in the College Catalog and adheres to state guidelines when accepting credit for transferred courses, but failed to provide evidence that demonstrated compliance with its policies. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed sample documents such as student transcripts and degree audit reports and conducted interviews with the Registrar and the Vice President for Student Services in support of the institution's case for compliance and determined that the institution provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it adheres to its published policies for the acceptance of academic credit.

- 3.4.5** The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These policies are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. **(Academic policies)**

The institution's academic policies are established by the Texas Educational Code and administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). These academic regulations and practices are published in the Student Handbook, College Catalog, and on the institution's website, and are accessible to students, faculty, staff,

and other interested parties. The institution has established a periodic review process to keep regulations, practices, and procedures in alignment with its mission and to update its publications to assure sound practices for its transfer, credit, and non-credit workforce educational programs.

3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. **(Practices for awarding credit)**

The institution uses statewide standards established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to determine the amount and level of credit awarded for coursework regardless of format or mode of delivery. These standards are provided to community colleges in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual and the Workforce Education Course Manual. As documented in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual and the Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education Course Manual, a standardization process in Texas determines the amount and level of credit for lecture, laboratory, and technical credit courses.

All courses adhere to the same established award of course credit as stated in the College Catalog regardless of the delivery method. Distance education course standards, college credit, content, and transferability are the same as traditional courses offered on-campus. In addition, faculty have a role in the decision-making process as a part of the Curriculum and Instructional Council, the body which reviews new or revised course offerings, deletions, prerequisites, or curriculum changes, and recommendations. This process is described in the institution's Curriculum Handbook.

3.4.7 The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the Principles and periodically evaluates the consortia relationship and/or agreement against the mission of the institution. (See the Commission policy "Collaborative Academic Arrangements.") **(Consortia relationships/contractual agreements)**

The institution participates in the Virtual College of Texas community through a Virtual College of Texas Consortium Agreement that outlines the responsibilities of host colleges, provider colleges, and provider college instructors. A signed copy of this consortia agreement was provided as documentation.

To ensure educational quality, the institution's Distance Education and Instructional Technology Department has developed a process that requires a review of the course syllabus, including the student learning outcomes, and instructor credentials. A completed Course/Faculty Approval Form was provided as evidence of the implementation of this process.

3.4.8 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**

The institution does not award academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services. **(Academic support services)**

The institution provides various academic support services to assist its students. A description of these services is available to all students on the website, and in the College Catalog and Student Handbook. Examples of these services consist of tutoring, supplemental instruction, TRIO, Library, testing centers, student computer access, Helpdesk, academic advising, disability services, Title V – Emerging Scholars, mentoring, admissions and records, welcome center, student activities, pre-college programs and recruitment, distance education – orientation sessions, mandatory Blackboard training for all new online students, and a college success course. Pre-College Programs staff works closely with dual credit students ensuring that they connect to available resources. Computer laboratories are available at the main campus and at all centers. Appropriate academic support services are provided to all students regardless of location or course delivery method.

3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. **(Responsibility for curriculum)**

The institution's faculty members have primary responsibility for the curriculum through service on the Curriculum and Instructional Council. As noted in the Employee Handbook, the Curriculum and Instructional Council is responsible for identifying the courses in the core curriculum and verifying that those courses address appropriate state-defined competencies, perspective, and objectives. The Curriculum and Instructional Council periodically reviews the core curriculum, and considers proposed changes to it as recommended. Faculty members, through service on various college-wide committees, develop and/or review curriculum content to ensure quality and effectiveness. Curriculum and Instructional Council meeting minutes verify faculty participation in this process.

***3.4.11** For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. **(Academic program coordination)**

As noted on its Organizational Chart, the institution's academic units are organized into four divisions, each led by a Dean. Each department in the division has a Chair with

responsibilities described in a job description. The institution has assigned a Program Coordinator to departments with majors. The institution has a faculty responsibility chart that lists each program including the responsible Dean and the faculty member's name, area of specialization and academic credentials. The chart provides evidence of the academic training and expertise of each person involved in academic program coordination.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the institution's Organizational Chart, Program Chair Job Description, Curriculum Coordinator Job Description, and transcripts of Program Chairs of Nursing, Respiratory Care, Medical Laboratory Technology, Physical Therapist Assistant, Vocational Nursing, Business and Computers, and Industrial Programs and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.4.12 The institution's use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. **(Technology use)**

The institution provides technology to support the programs it offers. Several technology services are provided for distance education, dual enrollment, and face-to-face students at all locations and online. Classrooms are equipped with technology to enhance student learning. Computer Response System, Computer Networking Program, Web Design and Digital Publishing are some of the technologies available for students on all campuses. The institution has established a technology committee which reviews the technology plan to meet the needs of the students, faculty, and staff. Distance education, dual enrollment, and face-to-face students at all locations, as well as online students are trained through New Student Information Sessions, workshops, webinars, online tutorials, and research guides. Students are trained on the use of the Pirate Portal, Blackboard, Library resources and other topics. All students have accessibility and receive training, including those enrolled in distance education and those taking courses at off-campus locations whether by interactive television or face-to-face. The institution provides equipment to link designated classrooms from one campus to another and to high schools where dual credit courses are offered throughout the service area.

Faculty members use Blackboard, Panopto, and Starboard technology to enhance both online and face-to-face instruction. Panopto allows an instructor to capture traditional lectures to enhance online courses. These captured lectures can also be made available to traditional face-to-face students. Faculty members receive technology training every fall during convocation week or at any time as needed. Evidence of technology-related professional development for faculty members was documented by the sign-in sheets that were provided.

Computer laboratories are available for the institution's students to use on all three campuses with internet access and Wi-Fi. A Computer Help Desk is also available Monday to Friday.

The institution's Financial Aid personnel provide information and demonstration of the financial aid tools within the portal and information about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Each student is introduced to the Blackboard system since all of the institution's courses require some online component.

As documented in the College Catalog, the institution requires a three hour computer literacy course (COSC 1301 Introduction to Computing or BCIS 1305 Business Computer Applications) as part of the core curriculum. Completion of the core curriculum is required for both the Associate of Arts (AA) and the Associate of Science (AS) degrees. In addition, a three hour computer course is required for all Associate of Applied Science degrees, with the exception of the Physical Therapist Assistant and Respiratory Care programs.

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. (General education competencies)

The institution adheres to general education competencies as established by the Texas Legislature in Section 01.822 of the Education Code. The oversight of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the content, component areas, and objectives are identified for all Texas institutions of higher education. The institution has identified reading, writing, critical thinking, and computer literacy as the general education competencies that are relevant to all students and assesses the extent to which these competencies are attained in face-to-face and distance education instructional modes by using the ETS Proficiency Profile. The institution uses rubrics and embedded assessment tools in predetermined courses and provided samples of the assessment and analyses of the results to demonstrate the extent to which the general education competencies are attained. Additionally, the institution uses national benchmarks as standards by which to assess its students' progress in attaining its general education competencies.

3.5.2 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (See the Commission policy "Collaborative Academic Arrangements.") (Institutional credits for a degree)

The College Catalog clearly informs students that degrees can only be awarded through the completion of 25 percent of the academic credit acquired through instruction offered by the institution. A sample of graduation audits showed the process by which the institution uses to determine whether requisite credit hours have been completed.

Audits are conducted by the institution's Admissions and Records Office and are initiated by the completion and filing of a graduation application.

- 3.5.3** The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (See the Commission policy "Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.") **(Undergraduate Program requirements)**

The institution follows the policies of The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) which mandates the use of the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual and describes the courses that can be offered. The technical courses that are offered are identified in the Workforce Education Course Manual. The Curriculum and Instruction Council (CIC) identifies courses in the core curriculum and verifies the THECB-defined competencies. The Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees require completion of 62 credit hours while the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees have a range of 60-72 hours, both of which meet THECB guidelines. The AA and AS degree programs include a core curriculum of 45 credit hours and the AAS degree programs require completion of 15 hours in the core curriculum. The College Catalog describes the 45 hours or 15 hours that students must complete. The competencies in all areas are published in master syllabi describing the learning outcomes, assessments and level of expectations for each program. These competencies and courses are reviewed periodically by the CIC. The requirements for each degree are clearly stated in the College Catalog. The programs are evaluated through core curriculum review that describes the educational objectives and learning outcomes in all courses. The institution also publishes an assessment of these programs through publication of "Program Improvement/Changes/CIC Recommendations/ Commendations."

- 3.5.4** At least 25 percent of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate or the equivalent of the terminal degree. **(Terminal degrees of faculty)**

The institution does not award baccalaureate degrees. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

- 3.6.1** The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)**

The institution does not award post-baccalaureate professional degrees. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.6.2 The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. **(Graduate curriculum)**

The institution does not award post-baccalaureate professional degrees. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.6.3 At least one-third of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (See the Commission policy "Collaborative Academic Arrangements.") **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

The institution does not award post-baccalaureate professional degrees. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.6.4 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-graduate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program requirements)**

The institution does not award post-baccalaureate professional degrees. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. (See Commission guidelines "Faculty Credentials.") **(Faculty competence)**

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the credentials of full-time and part-time faculty members who taught during the 2012 fall semester and 2013 spring semester and indicated that eight full-time and part-time faculty members were identified as either not qualified to teach the assigned discipline or whose files did not contain sufficient documentation to validate qualification.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the academic credentials and instructional load assignments for eight full-time and part-time faculty members who were identified by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee as either not being qualified to

teach the assigned discipline or whose personnel files did not contain sufficient documentation to validate their academic credentials. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Focused Report and 2013 fall semester instructional load assignments for these eight full-time and part-time faculty members. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee verified that the two adjunct faculty members who previously taught READ 0301 are no longer teaching this course; that four of the part-time faculty members are no longer employed by the institution; that one full-time faculty member is no longer teaching PHED 1122; and that one part-time faculty member is no longer teaching PHED 1111 or PHED 1123. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction in support of the institution's case for compliance.

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. (Faculty evaluation)

The Employee Handbook describes the evaluation process as one that acknowledges the strengths of faculty members and offers improvement strategies where needed. All tenured faculty members are evaluated every two years by the Division Dean while non-tenured faculty members are evaluated once a year. Adjuncts are evaluated every semester unless they have taught every semester for five years. Adjuncts who meet this threshold are then evaluated every two years. Texas code requires that students evaluate instruction every semester in every course. The student evaluations are incorporated into the faculty evaluation. Each evaluation includes the faculty self-assessment, student evaluation summary, supervisor evaluation, and an unannounced classroom visit by the Dean or Coordinator. The institution demonstrates the evaluation process through a chart that lists all full-time and part-time faculty members with a notation of when they were evaluated. Examples of evaluations were supplied indicating that the institution regularly evaluates all faculty members in a systematic process mandated by institutional and state policies, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

3.7.3 The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. (Faculty development)

The faculty members are expected to maintain professional competency in their field(s) of expertise. Instructional duties include a commitment of ten percent of their time to faculty development to learn new skills or ways to improve instruction. The institution provides a number of methods for faculty to receive professional development credit including online workshops presented by the Virtual College of Texas, and training and development materials sponsored by the State of Texas Academic Resource Link. Additionally, adjunct faculty are required and expected to participate in professional development activities. Professional development activities are linked to the institution's unit planning procedures and faculty evaluation process which has a professional development activities checklist. The institution provided numerous examples of

professional development activities for its faculty and staff. These professional development activities included faculty-led workshops, Blackboard training, continuing education units (CEUs), consultant led presentations, instructional television (ITV) training, and human resources training. Additionally, the institution provided samples of budgets in support of its professional development efforts.

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. (Academic freedom)

The Employee Handbook includes academic freedom policies and procedures and how they relate to faculty members. The Employee Handbook identifies a safeguard in the way the institution's grievance procedure should be implemented if there is an allegation that academic freedom has been violated. The Student Handbook communicates policies, procedures, and guidelines that safeguard and protect the academic freedom of students. These processes include the Grievance Report Form for all employees and the Student Complaint Form. There have been no grievances regarding academic freedom at the institution since the last reaffirmation.

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. (Faculty role in governance)

The Employee Handbook describes the role of the faculty and clearly states that the faculty will be responsible for the program and course content of degree and certificate programs. Faculty members are responsible for determining if the requirements are met in each of these areas. The Faculty Handbook provides job descriptions and expectations of faculty which include participation in the governance of the institution. The job description notes that while the primary role of the faculty is to teach, they are also expected to serve on committees, assume leadership positions, evaluate and revise programs, participate in strategic planning and shared governance, and to participate in the formation and implementation of departmental initiatives. Faculty members participate in governance through the Faculty Forum which has a number of committees such as the Salary and Benefits, Academic Affairs, Professional Development committees. The Faculty Senate is another means for faculty to participate in the governance of the institution through advisory and consultative means. Faculty members also serve on the Curriculum and Instruction, Technology and Student Life committees. The institution provided copies of the Faculty Constitution, Faculty Bylaws, a directory of faculty membership on committees, and minutes of committee minutes to demonstrate the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters.

3.8.1 The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. (Learning/information resources)

The Library facilities and learning/information resources provided are appropriate to support the teaching and service mission of the institution. The Library is a 38,000 square-foot facility (three floors plus a basement) containing individual carrels, study tables, computer workstations, and rooms for group study. A Library instruction lab is being created in the Library with 24 workstations. The Library serves distance education, dual enrollment, and on-campus students as well as students attending the University of Houston-Victoria Campus. There are 44 computers available in the Library, while computers are located in the tutoring centers on all campuses. Computer laboratories are located in the Health Sciences Center, Technology Center, Student Center, and Academic Building.

Students at all locations are able to use the computer laboratories to access Library resources, the internet, and other software. Library resources and most services can be accessed online 24/7 to all students, regardless of location or mode of delivery. Students at off-campus locations may request books to be delivered to their location. Distance education students may access the reference librarian through e-mail, Ask-A-Librarian, and by using a toll-free number. Many of these services are also offered to the community, including dual credit students.

Faculty members use Blackboard, Panopto, and Starboard technology to enhance online and face-to-face instruction. Panopto allows an instructor to capture traditional lectures to enhance online courses. These captured lectures can also be made available to traditional lecture students. Faculty members receive technology training every fall during convocation week or at any time as needed.

The Library also provides interlibrary loans, library instruction, reference and research assistance, facility reservation, and current discipline information for faculty. The faculty can also contact a librarian to request these services through email, Ask-A-Librarian, and by phone.

3.8.2 The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the Library and other learning/information resources. **(Instruction of Library use)**

The institution meets the guidelines of the Association of College and Research and Libraries (ACRL) in Higher Education Standards as a foundation of library instruction as well as the ACRL's Standards for Distance Learning Library Services. The Library offers library instruction through New Student Information Sessions, workshops, webinars, online tutorials, and research guides and online New Student Information Sessions for distance education students. Students are trained on the use of Pirate Portal, Blackboard, library resources, and other topics.

On-demand and scheduled workshops and webinars on the use of library and information resources are provided to the students and faculty. Students and faculty on off-campus locations may also request instruction and the librarian will visit the location.

Self-paced instruction is available through online tutorials and research guides. New database and technology training is also provided.

Students complete an annual survey about the effectiveness of library instruction. Results from 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 revealed the majority of students were satisfied with instruction in library skills such as seeking references, citing sources, and using the Library website.

3.8.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff – with appropriate education or experiences in Library and/or other learning/information resources – to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

The institution's Library has a sufficient number of qualified staff with appropriate educational qualifications and job related experience appropriate for their positions including ten full-time professional staff, 14.5 support staff and 3.67 full time equivalent (FTE) student assistants. The professional librarians have master's degrees from programs accredited by the American Library Association. The librarians and staff participate in a variety of professional development activities to stay abreast of current library trends and to improve their skills. According to the institution's Employee Handbook, librarians and staff members are evaluated annually in the spring semester by their immediate supervisor. The process includes an employee's self-assessment, a supervisor's assessment, and a private discussion to agree on areas of personal growth and improvement. Additional evaluations may be administered at any point as needed.

3.9.1 The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. **(Student rights)**

The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, and the website. An e-mail message is sent to all students at the beginning of each semester informing them of the location within the Student Handbook of student rights and responsibilities. Copies of the Student Handbook are provided in the Student Success class to new students participating in the new student information sessions and students enrolled in the EDUC 1300 Learning Frameworks and SDEV 0301 Strategies for Success, which are both mandatory for first-time college students. Documentation and examples of academic and non-academic complaints were provided on how the complaint/appeal procedure was followed.

3.9.2 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data. **(Student records)**

The institution has procedures in place to protect its student records and rights to privacy. All paper documents and files connected with student records are housed in a

secure environment in all offices that process student records: Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Business, Human Resources, Advising and Counseling, Vice President of Student Services, and Vice President of Instruction, and departmental and faculty offices. The Office of Admissions and Records is responsible for student records which are backed up data through a system of integrated procedures including firewalls, virus protection, and spy-ware blockers maintained by the institution's Information Technology Department. The integrity of computerized student records is validated through backups of the student information system, Banner, and the document management system, Docuware. Audit trails record transactions in Banner from processed data to the source of input. Nightly snapshots are copied to an off-site location. The institution's policy regarding disclosure of student records is available on the website, and in its College Catalog and Student Handbook.

3.9.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff – with appropriate education or experience in the student affairs area – to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

The institution provided an organizational chart that shows the structure of its student services area, and the staff assigned to off-campus locations. The hiring process is designed to fill vacant positions with qualified personnel. Staff members are able to attend conferences and participate in professional development workshops to further enhance their knowledge and ability to perform their position responsibilities. The institution provided a table that included names, titles, credentials, job descriptions, and resumes for its student affairs staff, all of whom were found to possess the appropriate education, experience, and training for the positions they fill. The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff at all locations to accomplish the mission of the institution.

3.10.1 The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability. **(Financial stability)**

The institution provided audited financial statements for fiscal years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. The institution has dealt with declining state appropriations by increasing tuition and fees, enrollment growth, and Ad Valorem tax revenues. In 2010, the institution implemented a technology fee of \$15 per student credit hour to defray the costs of computer laboratory equipment and fund normal technology replacement activities. In 2012, the financial statements reflect a slight decrease in revenues but the institution managed the decrease by holding expenses in line with funding it received. As a show of support for the institution, the voters of Victoria County approved a \$22 million general obligation bond in 2012 that will support the institution's Master Plan, including the construction of an Emerging Technology Center.

The institution has dealt with significant decreases in state allocations. A high of \$9.049 million was received in 2009 with the institution receiving only \$7.415 million in 2012. The reductions reflect declining support for education and general state funding as well

as contributions to state insurance and state retirement matching. The institution also shows a decrease in net assets the past two years. The decrease reflects a decision to transfer endowment assets to the Foundation in 2011 (\$3.307 million) and a funding of deferred maintenance projects in 2012 (\$580,000). Audits reflect no management points or questioned costs.

***3.10.2 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. (Financial aid audits)**

Audits for the past five years indicate no concerns related to the institution's financial aid activities. The independent audits include reviews of the compliance requirements of OMB Circular A-133 and the State of Texas Single Audit Circular. There have been no findings or questioned costs. The institution provided a separate letter from the independent auditor indicating there had been no comments, recommendations, or management letters issued during the most recent five year period. The institution's Board of Trustees contracts with an independent certified public accounting firm on behalf of the institution

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as independent auditors' reports for the fiscal years 2008 through 2012, which contained no findings, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Administrative Services and Director of Financial Aid in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.10.3 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. (Control of finances)

Audits provided reflected no indication of internal control or compliance issues related to the institution's financial resources. The institution's Board of Trustees, President, and Vice President of Administrative Services have primary responsibility for control of institutional resources. The Board of Trustees approved the 2012-2013 budget on July 16, 2012. To assist the Board of Trustees in maintaining oversight, financial statements are provided at the Board's regularly scheduled meetings.

The budget process is initiated at the planning unit level, reviewed by Division Deans and Directors, reviewed by the Vice President of the respective planning units, compiled by the Director of Finance, and finalized by the Administrative Council and President. Distance learning is budgeted at the unit level and is an integral part of the instructional department budgets. The budgets as presented are comprehensive in nature. In accordance with state law, a copy of the annual operating budget is submitted to the Governor before December 1 of each year.

Cash controls include daily reconciliations of cash, accounts receivable and the general ledger as well as monthly bank reconciliations, grant fund reviews, and financial aid reconciliations. Investments are made in accordance with the institution's investment

policy and a report is presented to the Board of Trustees not less than quarterly. Property and liability insurance is provided through the Property Casualty Alliance of Texas.

3.10.4 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. **(Control of sponsored research/external funds)**

The institution has developed a set of procedures to appropriately manage grant funds that it receives. The Director of Finance is primarily responsible for financial compliance and control while the applicable project director is primarily responsible for programmatic requirements. Budget control is maintained through individual funds in the general ledger for review by the project director and finance staff. The Director of Finance reconciles grant funds on a monthly basis, prepares the grant billings, and requests drawdowns. The institution also employs a Director of Grants Development who is responsible for the initial review and execution of grant awards as well as maintenance of records to support grant reporting. The institution provided a separate letter from the independent auditor indicating there have been no comments, recommendations, or management letters issued during the past five years.

3.11.1 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. **(Control of physical resources)**

Audits of the institution do not express any concerns related to the control of physical resources. Assets with a cost in excess of \$5,000 are tagged for inventory purposes. All assets and buildings are insured through the Property Casualty Alliance of Texas.

Physical security is provided by licensed peace officers and civilian security officers on the institution's main campus who respond to concerns as evidenced by detailed crime logs. The officers have portable radio communication with the Victoria County Sheriff's Office, Victoria Police Department, Victoria Fire Department and Victoria Emergency Medical Services for assistance when needed. The Gonzales and Calhoun centers have part-time security officers. The nursing centers are managed by their respective health districts.

The Master Plan addresses future enhancements to the physical plant and provides an assessment of the current physical condition of the facilities. The institution has estimated a deferred maintenance total of \$3.6 million. The largest single deferred maintenance project is replacement of the Library heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems with an estimated cost of \$405,000. The Physical Plant Director has developed a deferred maintenance schedule that allocates approximately \$575,000 annually for fiscal year 2011 through fiscal year 2017.

3.11.2 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. **(Institutional environment)**

The institution has developed a multi-faceted approach to providing a healthy, safe and secure environment for its students, faculty, and staff. Physical security is provided by licensed peace officers and civilian security officers on the main campus who respond to concerns as evidenced by detailed crime logs. The officers have portable radio communication with the Victoria County Sheriff's Office, Victoria Police Department, Victoria Fire Department and Victoria Emergency Medical Services for assistance when needed. The Gonzales and Calhoun centers have part-time security officers. The 26 high school locations utilized as dual enrollment sites are controlled by the particular independent school district, diocese, or private school with which the high school is associated.

Maintenance of the facilities is provided by the Physical Plant Director who reports to the Vice President of Administrative Services. Annual safety and hazardous material training sessions are held for all physical plant staff.

The Campus Safety and Security Committee, comprised of faculty, staff and a student representative, provides institution-wide support and input. The institution's Emergency Response Plan provides direction to the staff for a variety of scenarios including fire, strangers on-campus, medical emergencies, inclement weather and other potential disruptions. The Emergency Response Plan covers the main campus and off-campus locations.

***3.11.3** The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off-campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
(Physical facilities)

The institution's main campus is located in Victoria, Texas. An Adult Basic Education Center, the Liberty Street Industrial Training Center and Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts are also located in Victoria. The institution's other locations include the Gonzales Center in Gonzales, Calhoun County Center (primarily non-credit course offerings) located in Port Lavaca, and two vocational nursing teaching sites located in Cuero and Hallettsville. The main campus and off-campus locations include facilities for instruction and student support services. The institution also offers dual enrollment courses at 26 high schools in the area. The school systems are responsible for operating and maintaining the high school sites.

The institution recently updated its Master Plan with the current Facilities Master Plan serving as a guide for 2011-2020. The development of the Master Plan included input from students, faculty, and staff. The plan is comprehensive in nature and reflects a serious commitment to physical facilities that best serve the changing needs of the institution.

Projects currently in progress include: (1) Fine Arts Center renovation and expansion to provide improved instructional spaces, (2) Gonzales Center expansion to add welding

and construction trades, and (3) construction of a new building to house the Cuero Vocational Nursing Program.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the Campus Master Plan 2011-2020, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Administrative Services and the Director of Physical Plant in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.12.1 The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the Commission's substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. (See the Commission policy "Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions.") **(Substantive change)**

The institution has in place a policy to notify the Commission of all substantive changes and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. Examples of recent substantive change notifications include the addition of an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant and implementation of online degree programs.

3.13.1 The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. **(Policy compliance)**

***3.13.1 "Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies"**

Applicable Policy Statement: Any institution seeking or holding accreditation from more than one U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting body must describe itself in identical terms to each recognized accrediting body with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituencies, and must keep each institutional accrediting body apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting body.

Documentation: The institution should (1) list federally recognized agencies that currently accredit the institution or any of its programs, (2) provide the date of the most recent review by each agency and indicate if negative action was taken by the agency and the reason for such action, (3) provide copies of statements used to describe itself for each of the accrediting bodies, (4) indicate any agency that has terminated accreditation, the date, and the reason for termination, and (5) indicate the date and reason for the institution voluntarily withdrawing accreditation with any of the agencies.

The institution described itself in a consistent manner regarding agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education that currently accredit the institution's academic programs regarding the programs' purpose, governance, curriculum, credentials, personnel, finances, and constituencies.

The On-Site Review Committee confirmed that the institution's Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing Program and Associate of Applied Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant Program are accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education. The Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing Program is accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. The most recent review conducted by this agency occurred on March 7-8, 2013 by the National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission's Board of Commissioners. No negative action was taken by the agency. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the March 27, 2013 letter from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission that provided formal notification that the "Board of Commissioners has granted the institution's associate nursing program continuing accreditation and scheduled the next evaluation visit for Fall 2020."

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program offers an Associate of Applied Science Degree that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. The most recent review conducted by this agency occurred on April 19-24, 2013. No negative action was taken by the agency. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the May 22, 2013 letter from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education and accompanying Summary of Action that indicated that the institution's Associate of Applied Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant Program has been granted accreditation for a period of five years. "The Commission based its decision to grant accreditation status [for a period of five years] on the program's general compliance with the intent of the Evaluation Criteria..." Interviews were conducted with the Vice President of Instruction in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirm the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

No accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education has terminated any of the institution's programs. The institution has never voluntarily withdrawn accreditation with any agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.13.2 "Collaborative Academic Arrangements: Policy and Procedures"

Applicable Policy Statement: Member institutions are responsible for notifying and providing SACSCOC with signed final copies of agreements governing their collaborative academic arrangements (as defined in this policy). These arrangements must address the requirements set forth in the collaborative academic arrangements policy and procedures. For all such arrangements, SACSCOC-accredited institutions assume responsibility for (1) the integrity of the collaborative academic arrangements,

(2) the quality of credits recorded on their transcripts, and (3) compliance with accreditation requirements.

Documentation: The institution should provide evidence that it has reported to the Commission all collaborative academic arrangements (as defined in this policy) that included signed final copies of the agreements. In addition, the institution should integrate into the Compliance Certification a discussion and determination of compliance with all standards applicable to the provisions of the agreements.

Not Applicable

***3.13.3 “Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions”**

Applicable Policy Statement: Each institution is required to have in place student complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well-publicized. (See FR 4.5). The Commission also requires, in accord with federal regulations, that each institution maintains a record of complaints received by the institution. This record is made available to the Commission upon request. This record will be reviewed and evaluated by the Commission as part of the institution’s decennial evaluation.

Documentation: When addressing this policy statement, the institution should provide information to the Commission describing how the institution maintains its record and also include the following: (1) individuals/offices responsible for the maintenance of the record(s), (2) elements of a complaint review that are included in the record, and (3) where the record(s) is located (centralized or decentralized). The record itself will be reviewed during the on-site evaluation of the institution.

The institution has a “Student Complaint/Grievance Procedure” outlined in the Student Handbook. The institution gives an example of how their complaint policy and procedure flows from complaint to resolution. The step-by-step process is stated clearly. The grievance procedure provided is a four-step process. The four-step process includes an informal meeting, formal complaint, review by the Dean, and finally an appeal to the Vice President of Instruction. The decision by the Vice President of Instruction is final. The student is notified of the resolution. Documentation was provided and demonstrated how the complaint/appeal procedure was followed. A list of forms, student complaint log, and a brief description of the grievance procedure was provided. The complaint procedure is well publicized in the Student Handbook and is available in print and on the website.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the 2012-2013 College Catalog, the 2012-2013 Student Handbook, a copy of the complaint log, and a copy of a sample case file, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Student

Services and the Vice President of Instruction in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.13.4 “Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”

***3.13.4.a Applicable Policy Statement:** An institution includes a review of its distance education programs in the Compliance Certification.

Documentation: In order to be in compliance with this policy, the institution must have incorporated an assessment of its compliance with standards that apply to its distance and correspondence education programs and courses.

The institution reviews distance education in all of the areas of the institution. Distance education is not separated into a special category but is analyzed and reviewed in all areas (institutional effectiveness, general education requirements, faculty requirements, Library, financial).

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the College Catalog, the Strategic Plan, the Distance Education Plan, the Library web page, the Tutoring Center web page, and the Campus Facilities Master Plan and conducted interviews with the President, Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services, Vice President of Administrative Services, Faculty Senate Chair, Director of the Library, and students in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the finding of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.13.4.b Applicable Policy Statement: If an institution is part of a system or corporate structure, a description of the system operation (or corporate structure) is submitted as part of the Compliance Certification for the decennial review. The description should be designed to help members of the peer review committees understand the mission, governance, and operating procedures of the system and the individual institution's role within that system.

Documentation: The institution should provide a description of the system operation and structure or the corporate structure if this applies.

The institution is not part of a system or corporate structure. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.13.5 “Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution”

***3.13.5.a Applicable Policy Statement:** All branch campuses related to the parent campus through corporate or administrative control (1) include the name of the parent campus and make it clear that its accreditation is dependent on the continued accreditation of the parent campus and (2) are evaluated

during reviews for institutions seeking candidacy, initial membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation. All other extended units under the accreditation of the parent campus are also evaluated during such reviews.

Documentation: For institutions with branch campuses: (1) The name of each branch campus must include the name of the parent campus – the SACSCOC accredited entity. The institution should provide evidence of this for each of its branch campuses. (2) The institution should incorporate the review of its branch campuses, as well as other extended units under the parent campus, into its comprehensive self-assessment and its determination of compliance with the standards, and indicate the procedure for doing so.

The institution does not have branch campuses that are separately accredited by the Commission. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.13.5.b Applicable Policy Statement: If the Commission on Colleges determines that an extended unit is autonomous to the extent that the control over that unit by the parent or its board is significantly impaired, the Commission may direct that the extended unit seek to become a separately accredited institution. A unit which seeks separate accreditation should bear a different name from that of the parent. A unit which is located in a state or country outside the geographic jurisdiction of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and which the Commission determines should be separately accredited or the institution requests to be separately accredited, applies for separate accreditation from the regional accrediting association that accredits colleges in that state or country

Implementation: If, during its review of the institution, the Commission determines that an extended unit is sufficiently autonomous to the extent that the parent campus has little or no control, the Commission will use this policy to recommend separate accreditation of the extended unit.

The institution does not have an extended unit that is sufficiently autonomous to the extent that the parent campus has little or no control. Therefore, this standard is not applicable to the institution.

3.14.1 A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. **(Publication of accreditation status)**

The institution accurately represents its accreditation status and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in the College Catalog, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook, and on its web site.

D. Assessment of Compliance with Section 4: Federal Requirements

- *4.1** The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations, student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals.
(Student achievement)

The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission using a variety of internal and external measures of success. The institution has identified student success outcomes (achievement goals), as well as key performance indicators and targets related to access and retention, skills attainment, student learning outcomes, graduation, transfer, employment, and continuing education and workforce training. Benchmarks and targets were identified using a variety of sources including the peer cohort of medium-sized community colleges in Texas, National Center for Education Statistics data for this same cohort, the National Community College Benchmarking Project, and Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory. Many of the targets are aligned with the State of Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Closing the Gaps Strategic Plan. The institution included in its narrative a description of assessment results compared to established targets. Student achievement data are widely disseminated and available to stakeholders through a variety of reports including the accountability performance report to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the yearly report to the state Legislative Budget Board, the Fact Book, end-of-year reports, and the Strategic Planning and Key Performance Indicator Report.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees Student Success Committee meeting minutes, achievement data distributed through program review documents and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment, and members of the Curriculum and Instruction Council in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- *4.2** The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded.
(Program curriculum)

The mission of this public open admission institution is to provide educational opportunities and services to its students and community. The curriculum is designed to support the mission by providing associate degrees, certificate programs, and career

and technical education. Additional curricula support comes through the design of programmatic efforts in adult education, academic foundations, student support, and cultural and intellectual enrichment. The institution follows the requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Rules and Regulations for program development and implementation. The Curriculum and Instruction Council is responsible for reviewing, revising, and deleting curriculum and then submitting it to the administration for final approval. All career technical and education programs align with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education. The institution's institutional effectiveness processes ensure the curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the institution's College Catalog, Degree Inventory, Texas Administrative Codes 4.28, 9.184, and 9.93, Texas Education Code Chapter 61 Subchapter S, Curriculum Handbook 2012-2013, and the Academic Course Guide Manual, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment (the former Chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Council) in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

***4.3** The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. **(Publication of policies)**

The institution publishes its academic calendar, grading policies, and refund policies in both printed and electronic formats such as the College Catalog, Student Handbook, registration guide, and on the web site. Grading and refund policies are available to students and the public in print form and electronically through the College Catalog and website. The academic calendar is published in the College Catalog and Student Handbook. The institution's students receive federal financial aid through each student's account (Award Payment Schedule) which provides evidence of implementation of its refund policy.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed a one-page flyer that lists the important dates for student withdrawals, the academic calendar, the 2012-2013 College Catalog, the 2012-2013 Student Handbook, and various forms, and conducted an interview with the Registrar in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

***4.4** Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. **(Program length)**

The institution adheres to the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Rule 9.183 Degree Titles, Program Length, Program Content which clearly outlines the program length at each award level including degrees, certificates, enhanced skills certificates, and other

specialized certifications. The TAC requires the inclusion of 42 semester credit hours of core curriculum content in the Associate of Science and Associate of Arts degrees and 15 hours in the Associate of Applied Science degree programs. The institution awards degrees ranging from 60 to 72 credit hours. These programs and their requirements are published in the institution's College Catalog.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the institution's College Catalog, Texas Administrative Code 9.183, Guidelines Instructional Programs Workforce Education 2010, Academic Course Guide Manual 2013, Curriculum Handbook 2012-2013, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Instruction, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment (former Curriculum and Instruction Council Chair), and the Coordinator of the Vocational Nursing Program in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

***4.5** The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. (See the Commission policy "Complaint Procedures against the Commission or its Accredited Institutions.") **(Student complaints)**

The institution has procedures for addressing written student complaints including disciplinary, academic, nonacademic, equal opportunity, sexual harassment, and discrimination. The procedures for all student complaints are outlined in the Student Handbook. Documentation and examples of academic and non-academic complaints were provided on how the complaint/appeal procedure was followed.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as a copy of the complaint log, a sample case file and related forms, and conducted interviews with the Vice President of Student Services and the Vice President of Instruction in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

***4.6** Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. **(Recruitment materials)**

A list of publications is used by the institution for student recruitment such as the College Catalog, Student Handbook, academic program search brochures, View Book, and many program fliers. College committees are established as needed to review publications for accuracy and recommendations such as the Publications Review Committee and the Website/Portal Committee. Recruitment materials are provided in print and on the institution's website.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the institution's View Book, the 2012-2013 College Catalog, academic program brochures, various

flyers, and copies of the institution's "Career Focus" magazine, and conducted interviews with the Director of Pre-College Programs and Recruitment, the College Recruitment Specialist, the Testing Coordinator, the Director of Advising and Counseling, the Registrar and the Financial Aid Director in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- *4.7** The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended. (In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U.S. Department of Education.) **(Title IV program responsibilities)**

The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. Audits provided do not include recommendations or concerns related to Title IV programs and do not reflect any recent issues or concerns related to internal controls. The current Program Participation Agreement expires on June 30, 2018. In addition, the Commission on Colleges has not received information from the United States Department of Education to suggest non-compliance with program responsibilities.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as the independent auditors' reports and the independent auditors' reports on compliance, none of which expressed any concerns, and conducted interviews with the Director of Financial Aid in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- *4.8** An institution that offers distance or correspondence education documents each of the following: **(Distance and correspondence education)**

- 4.8.1** demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

The institution offers distance education courses and interactive television courses. It verifies that the student who enrolls in the course, completes the work, and receives academic credit through a number of ways such personal information, personal identification numbers, proctored examinations in nationally approved testing centers on each campus and at identified locations. Additionally, verification in interactive television courses for academic credit comes through the employment and use of proctors who are trained to manage the classroom and to administer tests.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed various documents, and conducted interviews with the Cuero Site Vocational Nursing Program Coordinator/Instructor, the Registrar, the Testing Coordinator, the Manager of the Gonzales Center, and the Manager of the Calhoun Center in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

4.8.2 has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.

The institution adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Regulations and manages its records according to the Retention Schedule for Records of Public Junior Colleges as mandated by the Texas State Library. Additionally, the institution secures student records by utilizing security transcript paper. The integrity of computerized records is validated through the Student Information System in Banner. Employee access to information is controlled and monitored by the institution through the issuance of secure user identifications and passwords.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed various files containing student records, toured the Student Records Office (including the vault), and conducted an interview with the Registrar in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

4.8.3 has a written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

The institution does not currently require any additional charges or fees associated with verification of student identity for distance or correspondence education courses.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed various documents such as the 2012-2013 College Catalog, 2012-2013 Student Handbook, and various student handouts, and conducted an interview with the Registrar in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

***4.9** The institution has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs that conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education and to Commission policy. (See the Commission policy "Credit Hours.") **(Definition of credit hours)**

The institution uses statewide standards established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for a credit course. "In general, one semester credit hour is awarded per 16 contact hours of lecture instruction and one semester credit hour is awarded per 32 to 48 contact hours of laboratory instruction." The institution recognizes the work represented by a student as equivalent to not less than one hour of classroom/direct faculty instruction

with a minimum of two hours out of class student work for approximately 15 weeks of a semester. As stated in the College Catalog, all courses adhere to the same established award of course credit regardless of the delivery method, including traditional classroom lecture classes, online classes, or interactive television classes.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed sample documents such as class rosters, degree audit reports, credit student transcripts, and attendance tracking records, and conducted an interview with the Registrar in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

E. Additional Observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution. (Optional)

Part III. Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

A. Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) entitled "Operation SEAL (Students Engaged in Active Learning) the Deal" is centered on creating a culture of active student engagement on-campus through training for new students and professional development for faculty and staff. New students will be introduced to the learner-centered educational environment in "Basic Training" which will take place in the New Student Information Session (NSIS). This process was formerly an information session that was a series of presentations for new students. NSIS will be reformatted to introduce students to both active learning and the institution, through a series of activities that will move students throughout the campus and to teach them about the institution. There will also be a series of assignments that students will perform to introduce them to the institution's Learning Management System – Blackboard.

Faculty and staff will be able to learn active engagement strategies through a voluntary, multi-layered, and multi-part professional development sessions called "Boot Camp." Faculty and staff who complete a professional development session in six categories (learning styles and active learning, technology, management, communication, assessment, and motivation) will receive a "Boot Campus" certificate and a stipend.

There are three levels of "Boot Camp" in which faculty and staff can participate. Selected faculty will participate in advanced professional development for active learning or the SEAL Academy. The SEAL Academy is a semester long experience in a community of practice. In the summer and after completing the SEAL Academy, faculty will work individually with the staff in Center for Academic and Professional Excellence (CAPE) to transform their courses utilizing newly acquired skills. In the following fall, faculty will implement the transformed course.

The On-site Reaffirmation Committee met with the primary stakeholders who will be developing Basic Training, Boot Camp, and the SEAL Academy. Present at this meeting were the Director of Advising and Counseling, Alternative Media Specialist, Administrative Assistant III, Instructional Technology Specialist, Dean of Academic Foundations and Student Success, and Curriculum and Instruction Specialist. After this meeting, it should be noted that the institutional commitment to the CAPE and the QEP is demonstrated by the fact that the President of the institution relocated his office and other senior administrative offices so that the building space could be converted into the CAPE. The CAPE has two instructional rooms complete with technology such as laptop hook ups, large screen LCD screens for presentations, a lounge area, and recording studio where instructors can record audio and video presentations for students. The CAPE was created over the summer and its staff is actively working on attracting faculty

into the facility. A popcorn machine and a cotton candy maker were purchased to create a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere.

On the outside of the CAPE is a custom welded replica of the SEAL logo which was produced by students in the institution's welding program and is one piece of evidence how diligently the institution has worked to embed the QEP in to the institutional climate. While walking across campus, members of the On-site Reaffirmation Committee noted several students wearing SEAL tee shirts. Members of the On-site Reaffirmation Committee also noticed that inside of the stalls of the men's and women's restrooms were newsletters called "News Flush." The "News Flush" announced that Thursdays are SEAL tee shirt days and encouraged everyone to wear their SEAL tee shirts.

B. Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

1. **An Institutional Process.** The institution uses an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) "Operation SEAL (Students Engaged in Active Learning) the Deal" directly relates to prior institutional planning. The QEP supports Priority Goal 1, Foster Student Success, and Priority Goal 3, Ensure Institutional Excellence, in the institution's Strategic Plan. Topic selection involved a broad-based effort. The QEP Topic Selection Committee, a 14-member group representing faculty (seven members), staff, administrators, and the Board of Trustees, met over a period of eight months to identify the QEP topic. (Appendix A, Table 2) Illustration 1.1 of the QEP details the process for topic selection that included data review, a faculty/staff survey, and literature review. The QEP Topic Selection Committee sought input from approximately 1,030 stakeholders.

Through the initial data review, the QEP Topic Selection Committee narrowed 16 general ideas to six concepts. The concepts were studied further through the lens of trends, areas of concern, and direct and indirect institutional data. In addition to data review, the QEP Topic Selection Committee solicited ideas and opinions from the institution's faculty and staff through a drop box and a College-wide survey, Give Us a Piece of Your Mind, which generated more than a thousand responses. A final step in identifying key issues involved the development of abstracts by faculty subcommittees. Three priority areas were targeted in these abstracts: technology, communication, and critical thinking.

Specific institutional needs emerged through research. General education competency assessment results and the ETS College Proficiency Profile revealed deficiencies in critical thinking. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) (Table 1.5) and the Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) Center Course Evaluations (Table 1.6) of the QEP indicated a need for improvement in student engagement and active learning. The research provided evidence that the focus of the

plan, critical thinking and active learning, is clearly tied to institutional need and could directly improve student performance.

2. **Focus of the Plan.** The institution identifies a significant issue that (1) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and (2) accomplishes the mission of the institution.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) "Operation SEAL (Students Engaged in Active Learning) the Deal" is supportive of its Mission, Values, and Strategic Goals to foster student success and ensure institutional excellence. Two QEP goals and four QEP outcomes were created. These goals and outcomes focus on improving critical thinking through active engagement and transforming student learning through professional development opportunities focused on active learning.

The institution has a clear, specific strategy to achieve its QEP goals, and the assessment plan is appropriate to determine achievement of the identified goals. The institution has incorporated formative and summative assessments into a plan that will help identify students' growth or change over time and the factors that influenced that change. Assessments, which focus on student learning, faculty development, and the implementation process, occur at course, program, and institutional levels.

The QEP focuses on a primary student learning goal: Improve critical thinking through active learning. Two student learning outcomes are associated with this goal:

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Students will actively engage in courses

Specific direct and indirect methods have been identified that reflect the intended outcomes. These methods include the ETS Proficiency Profile, rubric-scored course assessment, student learning outcomes/critical thinking competency assessment, IDEA assessment, CCSSE, and CCFSSSE.

A second goal, transform student learning through professional development opportunities focused on active learning, is associated with faculty-focused outcomes:

1. Faculty will demonstrate inclusion of active learning techniques and activities in the learning environment
2. Faculty and staff will reflect on ways to engage students through their roles at the institution

Specific data collection instruments have been identified to determine if this goal has been achieved. These tools include a rubric-scored syllabus review, IDEA assessment, CCSSE, an inventory of the integration of active learning into courses, faculty reflective learning log, and faculty/staff survey.

The implementation process, which includes Basic Training, Boot Camp, and SEAL Academy activities, is assessed using a variety of methods appropriate to the goals.

Within Basic Training are two student learning outcomes. One relates to active learning and critical thinking and a second relates to student awareness of student support. Assessment methods are embedded assessments, but are not yet developed. All assessments of activity goals relate to the goals and reflect the activity outcomes.

3. **Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan.** The institution provides evidence that it has sufficient resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.

The institution has a clearly focused plan that demonstrates and identifies critical areas of institutional needs. The faculty, staff, and other stakeholders were involved in identifying the areas of need for the institution. The institution has the technology and other resources to implement, sustain and complete its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), entitled, "Operation SEAL (Students Engaged in Active Learning) the Deal." The QEP focuses on active learning and critical thinking and certainly models the educational values and mission of the institution.

4. **Broad-based Involvement of Institutional Constituencies.** The institution demonstrates the involvement of its constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the Plan.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) "Operation SEAL (Students Engaged in Active Learning) the Deal" clearly demonstrates broad-based involvement of its constituents in the development and proposed implementation of the plan. The QEP Implementation Committee included representatives from across the campus and the community – including full-time and part-time faculty members, an academic advisor, administrative staff (who is also a student), and information technology staff. The QEP Topic Selection and Development Committees went to great length to involve the entire campus community in its initial discussions. The QEP Topic Selection Committee utilized support from the Marketing and Communication Department to develop a QEP web page where faculty, staff, and students were able to view meeting minutes, contact information, timeline, and submit suggestions and ideas via a drop-box. Once the institution selected a topic, the QEP Development Committee conducted surveys and focus groups of full-time faculty members and delivered a QEP presentation to employees at convocation.

5. **Assessment of the Plan.** The institution identifies goals and a plan to assess the achievement of those goals.

The institution identified meaningful goals and has established a plan to measure student learning outcomes and overall Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) effectiveness. "Operation SEAL (Students Engaged in Active Learning) the Deal" has two primary goals:

1. Use active learning strategies to engage students in their courses while developing students' proficiency in critical thinking.
2. Transform student learning through quality professional development

The institution has a plan to assess the achievement of the QEP goals and activities. The two goals will be assessed using direct and indirect methods as well as quantitative and qualitative measures.

The plan to assess each goal, which includes outcomes, assessment methods, targets, and those responsible, is clearly outlined in Table 5.1 and the general assessment timeline is provided in Table 5.3 of the QEP. Timelines are not consistently indicated for each target. For example, the target for the direct assessment of student learning outcomes in PSYC 2301 General Psychology is 70%, but it is not indicated when this target is expected to be met. Activity assessments are shown in Table 5.2 of the QEP. All methods are appropriate for assessing the activity outcomes. Two direct methods are described, but have not yet been developed.

Assessment tools are adequate to measure the identified goals. Direct assessment of student learning includes the ETS Proficiency Profile, Rubric-Scored Course Assessment, and Student Learning Outcomes/Critical Thinking Competency Assessment. Direct assessment of professional development focused on active learning includes the rubric-scored syllabus review and the Active Learning Inventory. The ETS Proficiency Profile, IDEA Center Course Evaluations, CCSSE, and CCFSSE enable the institution to measure performance against national benchmarks.

C. Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

The QEP is based on a thorough data driven approach, related to the mission of the college, and emerges from a well-researched literature review on active learning. The institution conducted an extensive and multi-layered process that lead to the inception of the QEP and the result is a QEP that is creative, innovative, and most importantly, addresses its stated goal to increase active learning. The QEP is based on creating a culture of active student engagement on-campus through training for new students and professional development for faculty and staff.

For further enhancement on the QEP the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee offers the following suggestions for consideration:

1. Develop and design all Basic Training, Boot Camp, and SEAL Academy sessions to not only teach active learning and active learning techniques, but also to model active learning techniques within the session. In other words, do what you are teaching.
2. Create a certificate or perhaps a tee shirt for students in the New Student Information Session to show that they have completed Basic Training or find

other creative ways those students can demonstrate and be proud that they are active learners.

3. Require faculty and staff who have participated in Boot Camp or the SEAL Academy to develop a conversation on-campus or a program in which they "teach" or discuss what they have learned. Creating one program or conversation could be tied to earning the stipend and may help spread the culture of active learning throughout the institution. It is a reasonable expectation to ask that faculty and staff who have benefited from training to help foster the culture of active learning by sharing what they have learned with others.
4. Restructure the stipends in Boot Camp to incentivize completing each level so the stipend increases at each level. Simply shifting the current stipends from \$100 for each level to \$75 for Level 1, \$100 for Level 2, and \$125 for Level 3, it may encourage future participation.
5. Brainstorm ways to spread the culture of active learning through recognition for participating in professional development. For example, participants could earn badges for their office doors or their SEAL tee shirts or "academic recognition" for their regalia at graduation. Explore the signs and symbols the institution could bestow on the people who actively participate in professional development. Determine aspects of the institution's culture that would create a desire to become involved and generate an enhanced commitment to the institution's new culture of active learning?
6. Develop an awards ceremony to encourage excellence in active learning or showcase active learning techniques that highlight students, faculty, and staff who are engaged in active learning. Identify ways to incentivize and transform extrinsic motivations for participation into intrinsic and meaningful reasons for faculty and staff to participate in a culture of active learning.
7. As faculty and staff members become experts in active learning, consider ways in which the institution could disseminate its expertise into the community, thereby fulfilling the third part of its mission which is to serve the community. For instance, the institution could use the newly trained faculty and staff to conduct workshops for local teachers or create a conference for individuals who might wish to come and learn about active learning. These activities not only keep active learning in the conversation and culture at institution, but also help spread the culture and might generate additional revenue for the institution.

Part IV. Third-Party Comments

To be completed by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

If an institution receives Third-Party Comments, the institution has an opportunity to respond to those comments and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviews the response as part of its comprehensive evaluation of the institution.

The Committee should check one of the following:

No Third-Party Comments submitted.

Third-Party Comments submitted. **(Address the items below.)**

1. Describe the nature of the Comments and any allegations of non-compliance that may have been part of the formal Third-Party Comments;
2. Indicate whether the Committee found evidence in support of any allegations of non-compliance.

If found to be out of compliance, the Committee should write a recommendation and include it in Part II under the standard cited with a full narrative that describes why the institution was found to be out of compliance and the documentation that supports that determination. In this space, reference the number of the Core Requirement, Comprehensive Standard, or Federal Requirement and the recommendation number cited in Part II.

If determined to be in compliance, explain in this space the reasons and refer to the documentation in support of this finding.

APPENDIX A

Roster of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee

Dr. Renea Akin, Chair
Associate Vice President of Learning Initiatives
West Kentucky Community and Technical College

Ms. Cynthia Allen
Vice President of Finance and Administration
(Retired)
Eastern Shore Community College

Dr. Tara L. Atkins-Brady
Director, Institutional Research, Planning and
Institutional Effectiveness
Piedmont Virginia Community College

Dr. R. John Brenner
Professor of Sociology/Human Services
Southwest Virginia Community College

Dr. Bruce Crawford
Vice President for Instructional Services
T.A. Lawson State Community College

Ms. LaShannon N. Hollinger
Director of Library Services
Alabama Southern Community College

Dr. Jane G. Hulon
Vice President of Instructional Services
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Dr. Ray Perren
President
Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

Mr. Andrew B. Wood
Dean of Student Services
Holmes Community College

SACSCOC Staff Coordinator

Dr. Marsal P. Stoll
Vice President
SACS Commission on Colleges

Roster of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee

Dr. Burt Harres, Chair
Vice President of Instruction/Provost,
West Campus
Pasco-Hernando Community College

Ms. Annette L. Accomando
Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs
Nunez Community College

Ms. Celia T. Hurley
Vice President of Institutional Advancement
Central Carolina Community College

Dr. Matteel D. Jones
Vice President of Student Services
Greenville Technical College

Dr. Jim Lowe, Jr.
President
Bishop State Community College

Mr. James E. Peters
Assistant Professor/Director of QEP
Cleveland State Community College

Dr. Marc C. Tarplee
Vice President, Business Services
York Technical College

Mrs. Mary G. Walton
Director, Instructional Support and Distance Learning
Carteret Community College

Dr. Stacy A. Jacob
Assistant Professor of Student Affairs in Higher
Education
Slippery Rock University

SACSCOC Staff Coordinator

Dr. Marsal P. Stoll
Vice President
SACS Commission on Colleges

APPENDIX B

Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs Reviewed

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee toured the off-site location (lecture classroom, clinical lab, computer lab, student lounge and storage areas, administrative offices and supply closets) for the institution's Vocational Nursing program located in Cuero and reviewed documents such as the 2012-2013 College Catalog, 2012-2013 Student Handbook, academic calendar, and various historical and programmatic information for students, and conducted interviews with the Cuero Site Vocational Nursing Coordinator, Instructor and the Administrative Assistant of the Cuero Vocational Nursing Site. Through these reviews and interviews it was determined that the institution supports its off-campus students by providing library instruction and tutoring. Furthermore, off-campus students participate in orientation and other academic related service learning and clinical experiences outside of the classroom, including presentations by various Student Services staff, including, tutoring, career services, financial aid, and student activities.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee visited two instructional television (ITV) courses on the main campus. Those courses were HIST 1301 United States History I and ENGL 1301 Composition I. Both courses had students meeting with one instructor via two-way interactive video technology from the main campus and two off-campus sites. The two off-campus sites were the Calhoun and Gonzales Centers located in Port Lavaca, Texas and Gonzales, Texas. Both classes had approximately 20 students on-campus and 8-10 students at each of the off-campus centers. Students could be seen on big screen televisions by both the instructor and other students. Students were able to interact with the instructor from all locations. This instructional modality appeared to be conducive to student learning at all sites.

APPENDIX C

List of Recommendations Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee

The Committee had no recommendations.

