

# Northwood Technical College

HLC ID 1864

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OPEN PATHWAY: Reaffirmation Review

Review Date: 9/19/2022

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## Context and Nature of Review

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### Review Date

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9/19/2022

### Review Type:

Reaffirmation Review

### Scope of Review

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

## Institutional Context

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Northwood Technical College, formerly known throughout the vast northwest Wisconsin region, as Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, has a 110-year history in this region of Wisconsin. Its footprint includes campuses in New Richmond, Rice Lake, Ashland, and Superior, with a newly-renovated Health Education Center at the College's former Administrative Center in Shell Lake. This geographic expanse provides the College a unique framework to use innovation to deliver education and training to the region while ensuring the College's mission and vision are retained.

The College is experiencing unique changes and dynamics that affect its current operation and context. The College is rebranding its image to a one-college vision after contracting with an outside consultant to assess the institution's image and brand. The result is a name change from Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College to Northwood Technical College, and the College integrated a mascot as part of the rebranding. Additionally, university transfer is added to the College's programming delivery. Students have access to certificates, associate of applied science, and now associate of arts and associate of science degrees for seamless transfer to the region's state baccalaureate-granting institutions. Virtual services are the norm; branding and marketing support one college, whereas formerly the marketing was for the different locations. The College approaches programs with a one-program mentality with unique programs at the locations. Finally, a restructuring is in process, as "campus administrator" positions are transitioning off the organizational chart, with goals for a decentralized, distributed leadership model to guide the institution.

These dynamics and the "one-college" initiative provide context and cultural backdrop to this Comprehensive Review.

## Interactions with Constituencies

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The following data represent administration, faculty, staff, students, and community members who participated with

the Comprehensive Site Review September 19-20, 2022. Departments/titles as written on the attendance sheets. Employee names are provided but not included in these notes.

## **Monday September 19**

Opening Discussion: Peer Review Team chair and College President/CEO

Site Review Team, College Leadership Team, New Richmond Leadership Team In-Person Session (home campus is New Richmond unless noted in parentheses)

- Institutional Research Analyst
- Director, Grants/Resource Development
- Vice President Student Affairs and Campus Administrator (Ashland)
- Vice President Academic Affairs (Rice Lake)
- Vice President Institutional Effectiveness and Campus Administrator
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator
- Associate Vice President Marketing & Communications, Campus Administrator (Superior)
- Grants Development Manager
- Web/Portal Manager
- Paramedic PD-EMS Clinical Coordinator
- Senior Advancement Officer
- Director, Learning Technologies
- Dean of Manufacturing, Apprenticeship, and K12 Partnerships
- College President/CEO (Rice Lake)
- Vice President Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer and Campus Administrator (Rice Lake)
- Nursing Assistant Program Director (New Richmond)
- Facility Maintenance Supervisor
- Safety and Compliance Coordinator
- Associate Dean
- Associate Dean, Workforce and Community Development
- Enrollment Services Manager
- Dean of Students
- Dean of Business and IT
- Associate Dean

Accreditation/Assurance Steering Session

- Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator
- Vice President Student Affairs and Campus Administrator (Ashland)
- Vice President Academic Affairs (Rice Lake)
- Vice President Institutional Effectiveness and Campus Administrator
- Associate Vice President Marketing & Communications, Campus Administrator (Superior)
- Grants Development Manager
- Curriculum and Articulation Coordinator (Rice Lake)
- Dean, Workforce and Community Development
- Director Curriculum and Assessment
- Director (Ashland) Training and Development
- Early Childhood Education Instructor
- Institutional Effectiveness Research Specialist
- Human Resources Manager (Rice Lake)

### Board of Trustees session

- Board chair
- Board vice chair
- Board secretary
- Board member
- Board member / Foundation Board member
- Board member - virtual
- Board member - virtual

### Criteria 1 and 2

- Vice President Student Affairs and Campus Administrator (Ashland)
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator
- Dean Workforce and Community Development
- 12 - representatives from Academic Affairs
- 2 - representatives from Workforce and Community Development
- 2 - representatives from Human Resources
- 1 - representative from Student Affairs
- 1 - representative from Institutional Effectiveness

### Criteria 3 and 4

- Institutional Research Analyst
- Associate Dean Academic Affairs
- Associate Dean Academic Affairs
- Director Grants/Resource Development
- Dean Academic Affairs
- Paramedic/EMS Program Director
- Dean Academic Affairs
- Senior Advancement Officer
- Nursing Faculty
- Communication Skills Faculty
- Associate Dean Workforce and Community Development
- Director Learning Technologies
- Dean Business and IT
- Advancement/Foundation staff
- 19 Additional Criteria Representatives (Department/Title not provided)

### Criterion 5 and Planning

- Academic Support
- Safety
- Institutional Research/Institutional Effectiveness
- Director Grants/Resource Development
- Grants/Institutional Effectiveness staff
- Virtual Human Resources
- 4 - Virtual Rice Lake
- 2 - Student Services Staff
- Dean Student Services

- Facility Maintenance Supervisor
- 2 - Virtual
- 2 - Virtual Ashland
- 1 - Virtual New Richmond
- District Controller
- Procurement
- User Services Manager
- Administrative Specialist

#### All Faculty Session

- IT/Web Development
- Business
- Automated Industrial Systems
- Automated Packaging
- IT/Cybersecurity
- Criminal Justice Studies
- Medical Assistant
- Welding
- IT/Web Development
- Machine Tool
- Nursing
- Counselor
- Counselor
- General Studies - Math
- Power Sport Repair
- General Studies - Math
- Automated Packaging
- Ag Mechanics
- Mechanics
- Accounting
- Business - Admin Coordinator
- Academic Support
- Academic Support
- Business
- Early Childhood Education
- Public Safety/EMS
- Veterinary Technology

#### All Staff Session

- Associate Dean Academic Affairs
- Associate Dean
- Dean of Students
- Manager of Enrollment Student Services
- Student Services staff
- Student Services staff
- Business office
- Director Grants/Resource Management

- Institutional Effectiveness Technician
- Admissions Advisor
- Financial Aid Advisor
- Institutional Research Analyst
- Senior Advancement Officer
- Contracting
- Marketing
- Safety and Compliance Coordinator
- Bookstore staff
- Bookstore staff
- Academic Affairs Technician
- Academic Affairs staff
- Continuing Education staff
- Institutional Effectiveness/Research
- Director Learning Technologies
- PD Nursing Assistant
- Dean Manufacturing Apprenticeships and K12 Partnerships
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Coordinator
- Career Specialist/Recruiter
- Student Services staff

#### Student Session

- Ag Diesel (3 students)
- Automation for Industrial Systems (3)
- Veterinary Technology (2)
- Rice Lake (2)

#### iTLC (online and distance learning) session

- iTLC staff
- 8 - faculty representatives
- 2 - deans
- Institutional Effectiveness/Professional Development
- Associate Dean
- IT

#### Assessment Session

- Communication Skills faculty
- 7 - Instructors
- EMS Training Manager
- Dean of Students
- 2 - Instructional Designers
- Associate Dean
- Director Curriculum and Assessment
- Dean General Education and Academic Support
- Academic Affairs Technician
- Dean Health Sciences

### Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Session

- Associate Dean Workforce and Community Development
- Director Grants/Resource Management
- Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Coordinator
- Gerontology/Aging Services Professional
- Communication
- Human Resources Coordinator
- Counselor - Ashland
- Director Human Resources
- Vice President Academic Affairs
- Vice President Institutional Effectiveness

### **Tuesday September 20 - New Richmond**

#### Community Engagement/Community Partners session

- City of New Richmond
- St. Croix County
- Immaculate Conception
- Hudson High School
- St. Croix Economic Development Corporation
- Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley
- JA Counter/Alera Group
- Security Financial Bank
- WESTconsin Credit Union
- Westfields Hospital
- Derrick Construction
- New Richmond Chamber of Commerce

#### Curriculum Committee session

- Director of Curriculum
- Academic Affairs rep
- Academic Affairs technician
- Instructional Designer
- Curriculum and Articulation Coordinator
- Academic Affairs Curriculum and Scheduling
- 7 - Virtual participants

Federal Compliance Review--Federal Compliance members were in attendance and asked to leave to allow for a conversation related to fiscal matters, Met with

- Vice President/Administrative Services/CFO
- Director, Financial Aid

#### Faculty Qualifications session

- Vice President Academic Affairs
- Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and ALO (New Richmond Campus Administrator)

- Dean of Manufacturing, Apprenticeships, and K12 partnerships
- Human Resources Coordinator
- Director Training & Development
- Director of Human Resources

#### Closing Session - College Leadership Team

- President/CEO
- Vice President Academic Affairs
- Associate Vice President Marketing
- Vice President Student Affairs
- Vice President Administrative Services
- Vice President Institutional Effectiveness

#### **Tuesday September 20 - Rice Lake**

##### RICE LAKE Regional Leadership Team

- Director Technical Services
- Network Administrator
- Student Services Campus Solutions Coordinator
- Academic Support Director
- Facilities Maintenance
- Dean
- Vice President Academic Affairs
- Financial Aid Director
- VSA
- MES
- Director Facilities and Procurement
- Systems Engineer - Systems
- Institutional Effectiveness Research Specialist
- Vice President Administrative Services/CFO
- Fire Services Program Director
- Associate Dean Continuing Education
- Traffic Safety Manager
- Associate Dean Continuing Education
- Dean Academic Programs
- Associate Dean Academic Programs
- Dean of Students
- Administrative Services staff
- Director Human Resources
- Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator
- Administrative Specialist/Supervisor
- Staff member

##### ASHLAND Regional Leadership Team

- Vice President Student Affairs
- Dean of Students
- Dean of Public Safety



- Dean Workforce and Community Development
- Facilities Manager
- Administrative Specialist
- Director of Curriculum
- Manager of Enrollment
- Assistant Director Financial Aid
- EMS Training Manager
- Associate Dean Health Sciences
- Director of Enrollment Services

#### Rice Lake Faculty session

- Accounting
- Early Childhood Education
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Communication
- MA Program Director
- General Studies
- MA instructor
- College Health
- Instructional Designer
- ADN Nursing
- Math
- Administrative Coordinator
- Paramedic instructor
- Criminal Justice
- Human Services Associate Instructor
- Social/Behavioral Science instructor
- MAP/HOP
- IT instructor
- Welding instructor
- 4 - faculty (no department)

#### Ashland Faculty session

- MA Instructor
- Faculty
- Math
- Academic Support
- General Studies
- General Studies
- CTA
- EMS/Health, Business

#### Rice Lake Student Support session

- Director Academic Support
- Career Specialist
- Counselor/Accommodation Specialist
- Student Services Assistant

- Student Services Assistant
- Academic Coach
- Veteran Student Advocate
- Student Services - Credit for Prior Learning
- MES
- College Health

#### Ashland Student Support session

- Counselor
- Financial Aid Advisor
- Admissions/Advisor and Student Life
- Counselor
- Math Specialist
- Learning Tech Specialist
- iTLC/LRC
- Student Services
- Student Services Assistant
- Academic Technician
- Career Specialist
- MES
- Academic Support
- Financial Aid

#### **Rice Lake Drop-In session - Students, Faculty, Staff**

- Science Instructor
- Academic Support Technician
- Academic Affairs Technician
- General Studies/Academic Support
- Associate Dean Nursing
- Administrative Specialist/Supervisor
- Director Academic Support
- Social/Behavioral Science
- Disability Specialist
- ECE faculty
- College Health
- Criminal Justice faculty
- Institutional Research Specialist
- Accounting instructor

## **Additional Documents**

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In its review, the Comprehensive Review Peer Team requested additional evidence be uploaded in the Addendum. These requests were made by the team:

September 14:

- Samples of syllabi (same course) from different campuses and modalities (including online and dual enrollment/concurrent) (3.A.1)
- Proof of forms being utilized (Syllabus; Schedule, Assessments, COS, Learning Plans)? (3.A.1)
- Samples of faculty (full-time, part-time and dual credit/concurrent) performance evaluation forms (3.A.3) (3.C.4)
- Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Plan (3.C.1)
- Samples of Verification of Employment forms (3.C.3)
- Sample of Qualification Expectation Agreement (3.C.3)
- Sample of Student Evaluation of faculty (3.C.4)
- Individual Blackboard Ally course accessibility scores (3.D.1)
- Placement Plan for programs/courses utilizing one (3.D.2)
- The following self-studies (4.A.1): Accounting (Associate Degree); General Studies; Welding (Technical Diploma); Business Administration Specialist (Technical Certificate)
- Examples of how the institution acts upon the findings of the annual program review process
- Institutional or state policies on transfer credit acceptance. Only information provided was presented in a student handbook and on the college website. 4.A.3
- Examples of the program/course development process.
- Examples of how faculty/deans participate in the *continuous refinement, improvement, and updating of curriculum and assessment documentation (as dictated by Administrative Policy I-300)*? A Curriculum Development checklist was provided, but no examples of the checklist being used. Meeting minutes?
- Additional examples of Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs). Only one example was provided – Evidence that PATs are assessed.
- Examples of Direct measures of assessment being used to support/improve learning. Data collection? Evidence of the Intervention implementation process.
- Employability Essentials process--working on this process for 12 yrs (since 2010). No evidence of data usage available.
- Evidence that course, program, and collegewide outcome assessments align with the WTCS General Education principle.
- Evidence that the co-curricular process was approved by the ASL team.
- Evidence to respond to this feedback: The college relies heavily on the annual program review process, but evidence of self-study utilization/development is limited. Only a summary tracking document is presented without developed self-study narratives to determine the process of how improvement plan objectives are selected. Direct assessment data is readily presented; most data used for improvement plans seems to be indirect – e.g., completion – from the data dashboard.

#### September 27:

- Upload accreditation confirmation letters for each of the college's accredited programs. The College indicates 11 programs are accredited, but three are following licensing requirements from a licensing agency rather than from a third-party accreditor. The team requested evidence letters to confirm licensing or specialized accreditation.

## 1 - Mission

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

### 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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1A1

Northwood Technical College is a multi-campus operation sharing a common mission, summarized as "Learning First" at all locations: New Richmond, Rice Lake, Ashland, and Superior Wisconsin locations. The college, formerly known as Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (circa 1987), renamed Northwood Technical College (2021), conducted an extensive and inclusive process in order to validate and confirm the college mission, vision and values in 2001-2002 (detail provided in "Strategies to Obtain Broad-Based Input" document). At that time, documentation provided a road map of intentions, such as, "As a college, we need to systematically & consistently internalize and use statements developed." and "We need to assess on a regular basis the use of the mission, vision, and values statements." The Board of Trustees (BOT) 2018-2021 Strategic Planning Activities and Timeline and the Board Monitoring Schedule (3/21/22) show review and discussion at the BOT level of the Mission, Vision, Values, and Learning Tenants (MVVT). Statements that the MVVT review process was conducted at "public forums and other meetings to solicit stakeholder input" were included. Mission agenda items and meeting minutes that were provided as evidence indicate processes to document the 2-year review process were sparse, and campus conversations during the comprehensive review visit confirmed a lack of involvement by instructors, students, or staff members in shaping the mission. While all members of the community understand the mission and

their part in implementing processes and actions, the materials provided and conversations conducted suggest only the senior leadership and board have a voice in the review that takes place every other year.

#### 1A2 and 1A3

The MVVTs are easily located on Northwood Technical College's website and speak to current philosophies and values evidenced nationally throughout higher education. For example, the college has a focus on meeting students where they are individually: i) mission-- "...we are committed to making each and every experience with us meaningful and professional"; ii) vision-- "...empowerment ...we value an engaging and supportive environment that inspires learners to achieve their personal and professional goals"; iii) vision-- "...innovation - we value flexible delivery options and embrace the latest theories and technologies to meet individual learners' needs"; and iv) learning college tenants-- "...each individual is expected to be both a learner and a teacher." Other elements speak to excellence (quality), integrity, diversity, collaboration, student success, communication, and the benefits (and safety) when taking risks when learning. The College is committed to students and student learning.

#### 1A4 and 1A5

The institution's academic offerings align with the stated MVVT, although not every major is available at each location. Website materials describe the academic programs available and indicate the locations where programs are offered with 39 programs currently being delivered online. Additionally, students are provided with a wide variety of delivery methods to meet the individualization referred to in the MVVT. Examples include day, evening, online, hybrid, flex (self-paced), Online Live, and apprenticeships. Student support services and the enrollment profile are consistent with the College's stated mission and are available at all four locations. Services include advising, counseling, financial aid, career planning, support services (academic, technology), library (with extensive online resources and in person assistance for technology and research assistance), health and wellness services (availability varies across campuses - the college health nurse is available through email), safety offices and ADA accommodations. Services are also available virtually and during scheduled times for all students, including those attending classes at Balsam Lake, Hayward, and Ladysmith Outreach centers.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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1B1

Per evidence provided in the Northwood Technical College population summaries 2019-20 WTCS Fact Book: Student Data, the college serves the public good through enrollment of men (~52%) and women (~48%) in a large variety of short and longer length academic program options and apprenticeships. The racial make-up of the student body is reflective of and slightly exceeds the people of color demographic in the region by 3% (enrollment is ~85% white, ~15% people of color). Data for Northwest Wisconsin indicates the region is ~88% white and 12% people of color. Eighteen percent of students served are academically or economically disadvantaged. In 2020-2021 ~95% of graduates/completers were white, while ~7% were people of color. In 2019-20, Customized Instruction & Technical Assistance was provided to industry partners through 916 contracts to 43 companies, and 2,879 community members were served through 422 course training opportunities. The college served 343 high school students through dual enrollment. The graduate follow-up survey demonstrates evidence of the College meeting the mission of student success. Over five years, with a strong survey return rate (~72%) to support the data, an average of ~93% of the students are employed in Wisconsin, and ~64% work full time in a position related to their education.

1B2

As a publicly funded institution of higher education, the program focus and funding model supports the mission of *Learning First*. The budget book provided to citizens and stakeholders is written clearly and outlines specifically how the college is funded along with easily understood explanations about how the economic health of the state and region impacts college funding. Information provided includes which programming initiatives are slated for expanded financial support. For example, Industrial Manufacturing Technician Apprentice (carpentry, electricity, plumbing, millwright, plastics, and cosmetology.), Surgical Technology, Meat Processors Certification, Medication Assistant, and Funeral Service programs are in final phases of approval for increased financial support. The strategic planning goals of transferability, program optimization, perception,

rebranding, and diversity, equity & inclusion are included within the budget book presentation.

1B3

In August 2020, a community survey report provided as evidence with the Clarus Corporation WITC Community Survey Results summarizes input from constituents (community, alumni, current students and employees) on the topics needed for effective strategic planning. These include interest in education and training, including program areas and a wide variety of topics such as course delivery preferences, experiences, and satisfaction. College personnel participate in 17 community-based groups across the regional areas of the four campuses (Community-Based Memberships). Evidence that the College engages its constituents include the Points of Pride Collegewide newsletter, program advisory committee meeting minutes, list of clinical training venues, internship agreements, and the local needs assessment report 2021 (Perkins V). The list of companies served in 2018-2022 by the Workforce & Community Development unit is extensive.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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1C1

The College provided evidence that students on all four campuses participate in student activity clubs and related College-supported career focused organizations. In meeting with the students, the peer reviewers experienced how the College unites students across its different regions and programs by way of BlueJeans technology. Clubs include New Richmond Business Club, SCNAVTA (Veterinary Technician), Institute of Packaging Professionals, Ag-Power-Diesel Club, and National Student Nurses Association. Activities include leadership conferences, industry tours, special partner industry training opportunities, program advisory board meetings, community volunteering activities and other events. Students were surveyed to assess how well participation provided additional learning opportunities in general education skill areas such as communication, writing organization, writing mechanics, use of supporting materials and speaking skills. The student survey indicated approximately 79% of students found participation in co-curricular activities beneficial and extremely beneficial to their learning experiences related to this academic skill development at the college.

1C2

The Evolve XXIII Strategic Goals & Activities strategic plan includes strategies to "Strengthen connections with K12 partners, parents/guardians, community organizations and business and industry to expand awareness of programs and services to meet high school and working adults' needs" and "identify underserved businesses in each region and provide incumbent worker training in areas of critical need". The Perkins V CLNA identifies student populations who would benefit from increased support, and it identifies programs that have a need for a more diverse body of instructors. The college has identified educational barriers (lack of candidates of color who meet advanced degree requirements necessary to facilitate hiring) in meeting goals. Position descriptions are being reviewed to determine when advanced degrees are required based on the essential job tasks. Hiring teams are provided with unconscious bias training, and partnerships with community partners



and advocate groups are maintained.

1C3

Use of a structured professional developing training for staff upon hire includes an On Course framework that aligns with the College tenets: *“All individuals are valued,” “Diversity is respected and embraced,”* and *“Dialogue takes place in a safe, open, empathetic, and respectful environment”*. Each year the staff participate in development opportunities related to the principles of "Interdependence, Personal Responsibility, Self-Motivation and Self-Management, Gaining Self-Awareness and Developing Emotional Intelligence and Adopting Lifelong Learning, and Believing in Yourself." Staff can elect to participate in on-campus training and off-site continuing education in this philosophy. Metrics include employee satisfaction, student satisfaction and student retention and completion. Related Cultural Competencies have been developed for inclusion in position descriptions.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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The mission, Learning First, is easily accessible to internal and external constituents in many formats, to include the College catalog, strategic planning documents, and the College website. The mission, vision, values, and tenants are widely understood and well-articulated by instructors, students, staff, and administrators. Plans, processes, and initiatives are closely tied to the mission and influence the work throughout the College district. Initial development of the mission was highly inclusive while the more recent review of the mission demonstrated limited involvement of staff and instructors, controlled primarily by senior leaders and board personnel.

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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2A1

The mission and related documents for Northwood Technical College were originally developed through a process with input from students, staff, faculty, advisory committee members, business and industry representatives, and community organizations; the documents were first approved by the Board of Trustees on March 11, 2002. The mission and related documents are reviewed and updated (if necessary) as part of the Board of Trustee review process cycle. It is not clear whether input from constituents is gathered for this task or if survey results for other initiatives (Strategic Planning, etc.) are used. Once mission updates have been made by the Board of Trustees, input from internal and external groups would be beneficial before final Board action. The current iteration of each document was updated and approved by the Board of Trustees on June 21, 2021, with one minor change to the mission. The next round of review is scheduled for 2023.

2A2

#### Financial

Northwood Tech operates with integrity, following Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the WTCS Financial and Administrative Manual (FAM), and board policies and procedures on fiscal management. Northwood Tech has maintained AAA rating from Moody's Investors Services. Internal practices help to reduce the risk of unethical behavior: segregation of duties related to custody or assets and payroll. Transactions go through at least one level of approval (deposits, transfers, payroll changes, etc.).

To mitigate against unethical behavior, a Statement of Economic Interest is submitted annually to the

Wisconsin Ethics Commissions (Wisconsin Statue Chapter 19.43 and 19.44) that discloses investments and business held by College leadership and the Board.

Monthly financial updates are given to the Board for consideration. An independent accounting firm conducts an annual financial audit and an A-133 audit. In addition, the auditing firm scrutinizes internal control protocols. Over the past 10 years, the College has received unqualified audit opinions.

The College maintains an approved Program Participation Agreement with the DOE and is guided by specific standards and procedures for the receipt, disbursement and reporting of financial aid data and funds.

### Academic

Included in the Student Handbook and on standardized syllabus sections, standards related to behavioral expectations and academic honesty are provided. In addition, the Student Complaint and Academic Appeals policies are found in the Student Handbook. The College uses Respondus Lockdown Browser and SafeAssign to prevent cheating and plagiarism. The College also has Grammarly, which detects plagiarism and assists in writing improvement.

Several programs have outcomes related to ethical behaviors: Criminal Justice Studies, Dental Assistant, Health Information Technology, and Medical Coding Specialist. In addition, Introduction to Ethics: Theory and Application is embedded in transfer degrees.

### Human Resources

At Northwood Tech, the Employee Handbook details employment practices and expectations for College staff and faculty. In addition, several policies have been adopted to promote fair and ethical behavior: Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Violence Complaints Policy and Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment Compliance Policy.

All hiring team members are required to participate in an online Unconscious Bias Training prior to serving on a recruitment team. Guidelines for the recruitment of talent to Northwood Tech are outlined in the Recruitment Process documents. These documents include guidelines for the team, roles and responsibilities of team members, and sample scripts. Standardized forms are used to screen and interview applicants. HR maintains job descriptions, occupational qualifications, and task lists for all College positions.

Once hired, all employees complete an online orientation course that covers Title IX, accommodations, affirmative action and EEO. In addition, all employees complete mandatory trainings on harassment prevention, records retention, FERPA, and workplace safety.

Understanding of the Handbook and Appendices, reviewed and updated semi-annually by the College, is required of all employees upon hire and annually.

To provide feedback and resolve complaints, Northwood Tech has established an employee complaint resolution procedure and process for complaints related to discrimination or harassment. An annual report is completed, analyzed, and submitted to WTCS.

### Auxiliary Functions

Although nothing was listed in the assurance filing, the site team found the following non-exhaustive list of auxiliary functions: food service/café, bookstore, and College health nurse. The team did not note any irregularities regarding operation of these service functions.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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2B1

Northwood Technical College ensures the accuracy of information being relayed to the public and students through multiple forms of communication: The College website, news media releases, advertising, College Viewbook, Impact Magazine, and social media channels. All communication avenues targeting internal and external constituencies are reviewed and approved by the College's Marketing department. A process for updates that funnels through the College marketing department is in place. These statements in the assurance argument were verified by the review team through conversations with the Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications.

The Northwood Tech's College Catalog, updated annually by the College's Curriculum Office and Marketing departments, provides information about academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, governance, and accreditation. Academic offerings on the College website are updated regularly, which includes program descriptions, admission requirements, curriculum checklists, student and graduate outcomes, location and delivery modes of classes, estimated costs, and accreditation information.

The Northwood Tech website, reviewed regularly by various College stakeholders and the Marketing Department, provides information to the public including governance, Board policies, agendas and minutes, financial and budget reports, administrative policies, student policies, accreditation information and staff information. To further ensure the accuracy of information, administrative policies are reviewed a minimum of once every five years; some policies are reviewed annually by the Board. Student Affairs updates all supporting information, student handbooks, and student policies annually.

2B2

Northwood Technical College faculty members are not expected to engage in formal research; the primary focus of a two-year technical college is on career preparation. Student "research" occurs

during work-based training experiences (clinical, internships, and apprenticeships) embedded within technical programs. Oversight of these training experiences is a collaborative effort between the program faculty and experience supervisor. One out of 24 people in Northwood Tech's district are served by the College. The Workforce Development Division offers customized training and personal and career enrichment courses to the community. Program advisory committees support engagement within the community. To better understand community needs and develop partnerships, Northwood Technical College staff serve on 17 workforce boards, economic development corporations, and other community organizations. Many programs provide learning opportunities with essential hands-on experiences within their chosen career fields. In addition, student clubs offer co-curricular student experiences. Over the past three years, 2,836 students completed an internship, practicum or clinical experience.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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2C1

Per Wisconsin Statue, as outlined in the Board Appointment General Information, Northwood Technical College is governed by a District Board consisting of nine members who serve staggered three-year terms: two employers, two employees, three additional members, one school district administrator, and one elected official who holds a state or local office. Each year, three members are appointed by a committee consisting of the county board chairpersons of the counties within the College district. The site review team learned in its meeting with the Board that it has a vacancy due to an unexpected death of a Board member. When looking to fill Board vacancies and as allowed by statute, the College may consider consultation with county board chairpersons to recommend representation that reflects the diversity within the District.

All new Board members participate in some form of Board member orientation. By way of the peer review team's onsite discussion with the Board, this *ad hoc* orientation/onboarding varies. Some Board members indicated there is a standard orientation; others stated there is individualized training/mentorship (one-on-one); others indicated onboarding occurs with the Board Chair and the College President. One Board member attends quarterly State meetings and disseminates information to the entire Board membership. Evidence suggests Board members participate with Local and State (bi-annual Wisconsin District Boards Legal Issues Seminar, for example) Board training opportunities, and the College referenced Board development activities through the Association of Community College Trustees leadership opportunities, but the plan, degree, precipitation, and consistency by which Board members participate in such training and how often is unknown. However, the Board would benefit by having a consistent training/ onboarding process for all new members which includes information on budgetary and fiduciary responsibilities. The Board



would also benefit from documented annual trainings for all members to provide legal/policy updates and refresher information on Board requirements, duties, and purview.

The Northwood Tech Board approves College goals, is responsible for the review and adoption of the College's strategic plan and budget, approves College hires and programming, and serves as a liaison to College stakeholders. The Board's fiduciary responsibilities are documented in policies IV.A, C, D, E, and F.

## 2C2

Through the annual review of the College's mission, vision, and values and through the approval and monitoring of the College's Strategic Plan, the Board prioritizes the preservation and enhancement of Northwood Tech. The Board is informed of College initiatives through monthly presentations from internal stakeholders. The annual "Board Forward" retreat with the College President allows for the alignment of Board and Administrative priorities and strategies.

Examples of specific board actions taken to preserve and enhance the institution include review and approval of the College's strategic plan; adoption of the College's budget; approval of policies; approval of the new AA/AS degrees, and the new Electricity Construction Apprentice Program. Board action also resulted in approval of the College name change and rebranding.

## 2C3

Following the Board's Staff Relationship Policy IIIC -- Monitoring College Effectiveness, the Board can monitor College effectiveness through internal reports, external reports, and direct Board inspection. On a monthly schedule, the Board members are apprised of College priorities/initiatives via presentations/reports from internal constituencies (budget updates, enrollment numbers, guest presentations, etc.). An example is the student ambassador presentations from February 15, 2021. Board members also meet with district legislators on a periodic basis.

Minutes of the Northwood Tech Board of Trustees state both internal and external stakeholders are invited to monthly Board meetings (Policy II.L -- Audience Recognition), and their inputs, when relevant, are sought. An example includes the College's rebranding initiative in 2021. The goal was to select a modern name and mascot (something encouraged by the Board Chair) that created broader, long-term brand recognition and appeal within the diverse populations and stakeholders seeking technical college services. Input from multiple internal and external stakeholders was collected and analyzed (surveys, face-to-face meetings, focus groups, etc.). The February 2021 Board resolution submitted to the Wisconsin Technical College Board provides evidence the Northwood Tech Board acted on the rebranding changes, using input from all stakeholders.

As part of the Board's review process cycle, the mission and related documents are reviewed and, if necessary, updated. To provide clarity in its respect to and support of shared governance, the Board may consider input from constituents or survey results from other initiatives (Strategic Planning, etc.) related to such revisions. Once mission updates have been made by the Board of Trustees, additional input from internal and external groups may be beneficial before final Board action. To further capture external stakeholder input, Board members participate in a variety of meetings and events (Joint Review Board meetings), commencement ceremonies, Foundation events, and other campus engagements. The Board minutes identify "Correspondence and Information," giving Board members the opportunity to report on events and meetings they attend.

## 2C4

The Wisconsin Technical College System process for placing a Technical College Board members is by an appointed seat. For a College Board that is appointed, structures guard against both perceived and real conflicts of interest. Per Policy II.I -- Board Member's Code of Conduct, Board members must adhere to specific guidelines regarding specific conflicts of interest, disclosure requirements, and refraining from participation in Board activities. Each Board member is required to file a Wisconsin Statement of Economic Interests with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission annually. Annual trainings on all aspects of legal responsibilities and ethical conduct, which are key to helping ensure Board member independence from undue influences, are available through the Wisconsin District Boards Legal Issues Seminar and other outlets. The extent and frequency of Board participation in these trainings are unknown; all Board members would benefit from annual training related to responsibilities of Board members.

## 2C5

Per Board Policy III.A, III.B, and IV.A, the day-to-day operations of the College are delegated to College President. If incapacitated, the Vice President of Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer is responsible for all executive decisions (Board Policy IV.A). The President is to oversee the day-to-day operations of the College, following the Board-approved mission and strategic plan, with assistance from the College Leadership Team and their respective support teams: President, Executive Assistant to the President & Board; Associate Vice President, Marketing & Communications; Vice President, Academic Affairs; Vice President, Administrative Services; Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness; and, Vice President, Student Affairs. The onsite peer review team discussed in depth the roles of the Board and in what ways those are distinguished from the responsibilities of the Northwood Technical College president. The team encourages the Board and College President to continue this conversation related to expectations and roles, individual Board members stated conflicting information. As the Board has two members with approximately one year of Board experience and the appointment of a Board member is forthcoming, it is the suggestion by the team the entire Board entertain *de novo* training on the role/duties of the Board and the role/duties of the President.

Faculty are largely responsible for academic oversight of curriculum including program updates, program review, practicum/fieldwork coordination, and committee membership (Assessment Team, Program Implementation Team, and Course Evaluation Team). There were many examples of this oversight from faculty in a variety of programs (Criminal Justice, Medical Assistant, IT-Web and Software Developer, etc.).

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Northwood Technical College is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. This is an expectation shared across the College and is supported by the Learning College Tenets: "Diversity is respected and embraced" and "Dialogue takes place in a safe, open, empathetic, and respectful environment." Included as a Key Responsibility in the job description of all faculty is, "Creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive working and learning environment."

The Employee Handbook outlines protections related to the inquiry, research, teaching, and expression: "The freedom of every instructor to present the truth as he/she understands it in relation to his/her area of competence...is essential to the purpose of the College and society." Faculty also play a key role in developing/determining curriculum. There were many examples of this from faculty in a variety of programs (Criminal Justice, Medical Assistant, IT-Web and Software Developer, etc.). Faculty have freedom to use appropriate teaching methods and assessments for their courses. This was supported by faculty testimonials during campus sessions. The College provides a "Blackboard Ultra Minimum Content Requirements" document for all courses with accompanying Blackboard shells (ensuring consistency across all campuses). The listed information is to be included in all Blackboard course shells. Faculty have the academic freedom to add to the minimum requirements and customize their class based on their programmatic and course needs.

The Student Handbook outlines the Student Code of Conduct, which includes information on behavioral and academic standards at Northwood Technical College. Northwood Tech recently created an Intellectual Property Rights Policy to encourage and support the creativity and intellectual efforts of its faculty and staff. Violations related to the freedom of expression or hindrances to the pursuit of trusts addressed through the Student Complaint Process and/or the Employee Complaint Resolution process.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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2E1

Northwood Tech faculty members are not expected to engage in formal research; the primary focus of a two-year technical college is on career preparation. Northwood Tech's support of scholarly endeavors of students, faculty, and staff is codified in the Student Code of Conduct (requires students to behave ethically in their educational experiences) and the Employee Code of Ethics (guide for acquiring and disseminating knowledge). Further support comes from the Technology Handbook and US Copyright act of 1976. In the event internal and/or external researchers wish to conduct research at the College using human subjects, the Institutional Review Board must approve all aspects of studies -- a role performed in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Institutional research occurs through the Institutional Effectiveness division. Examples include student demographics, satisfaction, program data, retention, persistence, and completion/ graduation. The Institutional Effectiveness division follows data reporting methodologies and data definitions and complies with reporting requirements for IPEDs or WTCS.

Student "research" experiences occur during work-based training experiences (clinicals, internships, and apprenticeships) embedded within technical programs. Oversight of these training experiences is a collaborative effort between the program faculty and experience supervisor. Examples of successful experiences and oversight include the Nursing, Broadband Service Technician Program, and other healthcare-related programs.

2E2

Services to support the ethical learning and research practices of students and staff start in the College Libraries. Trainings on the ethical use of information resources, database use, and appropriate search techniques are available to students and staff through group or individualized

trainings. Proper citing resources are also available for writing-intensive courses. During New Student Orientation, resources about academic integrity -- including the Academic Misconduct Policy -- are provided to students. Grammarly is also available to detect plagiarism and assist in improving writing skills.

Available to all students, the Writing Lab, Math Lab, and Science Lab assist students both in person and virtually. Also, the Academic Success Center provides students with research and study assistance. Although these options are available, it is not clear how many students use the services or how many faculty recommend/require the services. Expectations for students participating in clinicals, internships, or apprenticeships are outlined before the start of the experiences. If issues occur, a collaborative remedy aligning with College and program policies is contrived between the program faculty and experience provider. For faculty, the Respondus Lockdown Browser and SafeAssign resources are used to prevent cheating by students during online exams and can detect plagiarism.

2E3

The College's Student Code of Conduct, Student Handbook, and Academic Misconduct Policy guide students in ethical academic expectations and the consequences of violations. Other resources include the Resource Guide, Course Guidelines, and homework assistance in College-supported Labs. Course expectations related to academic integrity are relayed to students through the course syllabus. Consistency among course syllabi related to institutional policies and supports is ensured by the Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS). Course-specific instruction are given when appropriate in the course syllabus -- English Composition I was given as an example.

2E4

Consequences of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc.) are outlined in the Academic Misconduct Policy - found in the Student Handbook, on the College website, and on course syllabi. Included is an explanation of the appeal process. Use of the Respondus Lockdown Browser ensures honesty during online assignments and SafeAssign ensures integrity by detecting plagiarism in written assignments. Data about academic integrity incidents is gathered and analyzed annually by the College Leadership Team. One incident has been recorded in the past three years. Although policies related to academic honesty and integrity exist, the uniformity of enforcement for both students, staff, and faculty on four campuses is unknown.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

### Rationale

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The mission statement of Northwood Technical College is reviewed regularly by stakeholders of the institution; the current version was adopted by the Board of Trustees in June 2021. The mission statement accurately reflects the goals of the institution and serves as a simple, direct guidance for Northwood Tech.

Northwood Tech operates with integrity in its financial, academic, and human resources. It provides information related to programs admission requirements, costs, length, and course requirements, as well as governance structure and accreditation relationships in the catalog and on the web. Northwood Tech contributes to the educational experience through community engagement and experiential learning.

Although consistent and documented training is recommended, the Northwood Tech Board of Trustees work hard to advance the strategic priorities. The Board serves as a liaison to College stakeholders and is responsible for the review and adoption of the College's strategic plan and budget.

Northwood Tech has policies and practices in place to protect academic freedom and freedom of expression. It also has policies directed at the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by faculty, staff, and students.

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

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

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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

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

### **Rating**

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Met

### **Rationale**

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3A1 and 3A2

Northwood Technical College offers a wide assortment of credentials including technical certificates, technical diplomas (of varying length), and associate degrees. The courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance that are appropriate to the credential awarded. The College ensures that the courses and programs offered meet institutional standards through review and approval by the Director of Curriculum and Assessment and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The process of curriculum review and approval includes faculty academic deans, and the Curriculum Office before being entered into the Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS). Evidence was provided of Advisory Committee minutes which indicate their involvement and recommendations to program and curricular alterations. Northwood Technical College holds specialized accreditations for eleven (11) of its programs and all are currently in good standing.

Northwood Technical College articulates its institutional Employability Essentials (EEs), and program learning outcomes in the College catalog and on program-specific webpages and individual course competencies while individual course competencies are delineated in course syllabi. The College also provided evidence of credit hour rigor and standards for credit hour amounts at each program level through the use of the WTCS Education Service Manual and a direct conversion from its 18-week semester to Northwood Technical College's 16-week semester.

3A3

Northwood Technical College delivers instruction to students in a wide variety of instructional modes (defined in the College Catalog) that include face-to-face, online, online live, hybrid, and student choice. Furthermore, the College offers courses at multiple campus locations and partnering high school campuses. A syllabus review was conducted across a wide variety of modalities and locations and consistency in learning outcomes was observed. The use of WIDS further supports consistency throughout the curriculum including the syllabi. Program dashboard data was also provided showing learning consistency among various delivery modes.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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3B1 and 3B2

Northwood Technical College abides by the WTCS General Education philosophy which includes eight broad skill categories (communication, critical thinking/problem solving, ethics, global awareness, inclusive social interaction, mathematical principles, science and technology, and self-determination) that provides a core of knowledge that imparts the common skills, intellectual concepts, and attitudes that every educated person should possess. Furthermore, Northwood Technical College has identified four (4) Employability Essentials (EEs) that serve as the institution's college-wide outcomes and align with the WTCS general education categories. Northwood Technical College offers two general/transfer degrees which include an Associate of Arts (AA) and an Associate of Science (AS) that are designed to prepare students for a bachelor's degree. Additionally, they offer an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) credential which requires the completion of fifteen (15) credit hours which must come from the WTCS General Education list. Each of these credentials/degrees are aligned with the WTCS Education Services Manual (ESM) and to Northwood Technical College's purpose and approved degree levels. The College articulates through its College Catalog and website the purpose, content and intended institutional (EEs) and program-level outcomes for each degree/credential.

As noted above, the AA/AS degrees are designed for transfer to four-year institutions. Evidence provided, including the WTCS ESM, is documentation that the general education program and outcomes are aligned with state of Wisconsin (WTCS) requirements. All learning outcomes

(institutional and programmatic) are listed in the College Catalog.

### 3B3

The credentials offered by Northwood Technical College include knowledge and skills in human and cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion as stated in the College's mission, values, and purposes. Additionally, the recently adopted EE of Practice Inclusivity further emphasizes personal awareness and cultural complexities. The AA/AS transfer credentials include requirements for three (3) credit hours of coursework on diversity/ethnic studies and programs such as gerontology, early childhood education, and human services also have program-level outcomes that speak to inclusive perspectives and the promotion of diversity.

The College also provides student services programming and co-curricular activities that broaden students' knowledge and skills on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee collaborates with other institutional offices to offer employees, students, and community members opportunities to expand their multicultural perspectives through community speakers and workshops. Data from a variety of surveys including Noel Levitz indicate that students are generally satisfied with the institution's responsiveness to diverse and multicultural populations.

### 3B4

As a two-year technical college, Northwood Technical College is primarily focused on career preparation. Scholarly research and publications are not the central focus of the faculty or institution. However, faculty do participate and present at discipline-based conference such as in Gerontology, Law Academy, and Human Services Associate programs. Evidence was also reviewed that indicates that some programs' students have opportunities to contribute to scholarship or creative work. Through the Architectural Commercial Design program, students provided a design for a local event center, Automation for Industrial Systems students created unique case projects, and students in the Welding program repaired a vandalized sculpture.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met With Concerns

### Rationale

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3C1

Northwood Technical College acknowledges that its current composition of faculty and staff do not reflect the diversity of its students or overall district population. However, the institution provided evidence through their Affirmative Action Plan Annual Report that they have put in action several items to increase representation. Currently, less than 3% (including only 2 faculty members) identify as an underserved population as compared to roughly 11.5% of the student body as reported in the Spring 2022 Higher Education Opportunity Act Diversity Report.

Specific actionable items reported by the College include formulating a list of key contacts in local diversity organizations and requiring all recruitment team members to complete unconscious bias training. The DEI committee also meets regularly to continue addressing action items on increasing the diversity of employees.

3C2

Northwood Technical College reports a faculty to student ratio of 1:12 with 154 full-time faculty and an additional 553 part-time/adjunct faculty employed during the 2021-2022 academic year. The

College reports that these numbers have remained relatively stable, and faculty have a strong affinity for the institution with an average of eight (8) plus years of service. The institution has the appropriate level of staffing to carry out classroom and non-classroom activities.

Instructional faculty are expected to allocate thirteen (13) contact hours a week for non-instructional activities. These hours are divided between student contact and other professional responsibilities which may include grading, curriculum management, office hours, and assessment among others.

### 3C3

Northwood Technical College has in place a faculty credentialing policy to determine if existing or prospective faculty members meet the minimum HLC credentialing standards. The Technical faculty credentialing procedure is largely based upon WTCS state administrative code which establishes minimum academic, occupational, and teaching requirements for technical college instructors. The minimum qualifications for their relatively new general education/transfer faculty meet the Commission's guidelines. Additionally, the College's Articulation Handbook indicates that the same standards are used to hire dual credit faculty teaching in area high school academies.

A review of faculty files, including both general education and occupational faculty, was conducted by the reviewers. The Northwood Technical College's Occupational Qualifications by Position document indicates that for occupational faculty, a "Bachelor's degree or equivalent in field or closely related field" is required along with a minimum of two years of occupational work experience and in many cases additional licensure or certification. The onsite peer team reviewed both a Welding and an Automotive instructor credentials, and neither faculty member possessed the appropriate degree. The Verification of Employment forms for both individuals indicated that they did meet the institution's second standard of a minimum of two years (4,000 hours) of occupational experience. While the institution's Minimum Qualifications of Instructional Staff Teaching for Academic Credit policy allows for Qualification through Equivalent Experience, no direct evidence was found that indicates a systematic process for setting equivalent experience and no specific rubric or justification for equivalent experience was listed for either instructor. The reviewers also examined the files for a nursing instructor at the institution whose nursing license on file indicated expiration in February 2022. The reviewer requested proof of current licensure, and none was provided to the reviewers with the statement that it was not the role of Human Resources to keep up with that information. Additionally, the HR representatives stated several times when choosing faculty to review that they "didn't want to choose someone too new as they might not yet have all of the necessary documentation." The credentials of the general education faculty who were reviewed did meet the faculty credentialing requirements set forth by the Commission.

The College has received an extension from the Commission through August 2025 for dual credit instructors to meet HLC credentialing guidelines; thus, dual credit instructors were not reviewed. However, the institution reports that twelve (12) dual credit faculty are in the process of completing degrees required to provide dual credit instruction. Additionally, time did not allow for the review of adherence to the College's policy for part-time faculty in either occupational or general education courses. While the College clearly has robust faculty credentialing policies in place (Occupational Qualifications by Position, Minimum Qualifications of Instructional Staff Teaching for Academic Credit, and Verification of Employment forms), the reviewers were not able to confirm that those policies are being followed in a systematic manner, particularly in terms of the academic credentialing requirements for occupational faculty. The College should clarify whether the bulleted list of qualifications listed in the Occupational Qualifications by Position document is intended to be an "and list" or an "or list" of qualifications. It appears that Northwood Technical College is utilizing

the standard of a minimum of two years (4,000 hours) of occupational experience as both the primary means of qualifying faculty as well as the process for determining qualification through equivalent experience.

### 3C4

All full-time faculty undergo a performance evaluation process annually based on a fiscal-year cycle. The process focuses on job performance, goals, and personal growth, and academic deans meet in the fall semester with faculty to set goals, conduct a formal mid-year check-in, and the process culminates with an end of year evaluation. The annual evaluation process also includes a formal classroom observation by an instructional supervisor, end-of-course student evaluations, and regular Blackboard and syllabi checks. The College reported that dual credit faculty also undergo a classroom evaluation by a part-time dual credit mentor as well as participate in the same end-of-course student evaluation process.

### 3C5

As part of WCTS, Northwood Technical College requires all faculty to participate in Faculty Quality Assurance System mandated professional development requirements. The College's plan is broken into two stages: an initial seven (7) course progression for all new faculty that must be completed during a full-time faculty members first three (3) years and additional on-going professional development requirements of forty (40) hours upon successful completion of the initial coursework. The institution provides four (4) days dedicated to faculty professional development annually and has dedicated professional development funds to support these activities. In meetings, faculty also indicated that some departments had set aside departmental funds for professional development and that other faculty had applied for internal professional development grants to attend discipline specific conferences. All faculty reported they felt supported by the institution in their professional development requests.

### 3C6

Full-time faculty at Northwood Technical College are unionized and have a contract that is based upon 1,330 hours with standard 35 hour, Monday through Friday, work week. Included in the thirty-five (35) hour work week are thirteen (13) hours of non-instructional activities of which eight (8) hours are required to be posted office hours. Office hours are required to be posted in the institutions LMS (Blackboard) and in course syllabi which was verified during the visit. Several faculty members indicated that they often made themselves available for student interactions during the evening and on weekends in order to serve students enrolled in evening and online/hybrid courses. CCSSE data from both 2017 and 2019 indicates that student-instructor interactions received high rankings.

### 3C7

Academic student support staff personnel who provide student services are also hired according to the institution's Occupational Qualifications by Position Guidebook that delineates the necessary qualifications for each position. In a manner that parallels the professional development plans for faculty, staff are also provided with specific professional development plans that are broken down into three stages: onboarding, skill-building, and continuing education. The initial onboarding includes courses on FERPA, record retention, and college-wide technology. Personnel in specific areas such as financial aid also participate in continuing education opportunities offered by state (WASFAA) and national (NASFAA) groups.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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Based upon the evidence provided within the Assurance Argument and the on-campus faculty qualifications review, the team recommends that Northwood Technical College submit an interim monitoring report by January 2024 to address the processes it has put in place for ensuring that all campus faculty are appropriately qualified and that those qualifications are regularly reviewed. This interim monitoring does not apply to the dual credit faculty.

The interim report should include:

- Clarification of the institution's Occupational Qualifications by Position document that includes as the first qualification for the majority of its technical faculty a "Bachelor's degree or equivalent in field or closely related field".
- Systematic, program-specific standard for determining qualification through equivalent experience.
- An approved process for updating faculty licenses/certifications to ensure that all faculty requiring state/national licensure are up-to-date.

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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3D1

Northwood Technical College works meticulously to provide students with a wide variety of comprehensive services to assist them with both their academic and personal goals. To meet their students where they are and ensure that they are available across the entire eleven (11) county region, these services are provided in person, virtually, and via phone.

3D2

The College has implemented an open access model for admission for the vast majority of its programs. Data provided by the institution indicates that no significant decline in course completion rates since this implementation. To support this open enrollment model, Northwood Technical College requires all students to meet with an admissions counselor to discuss the results of their pre-college survey. The intent of this process is to identify possible barriers to success for the student and to identify available resources in place at Northwood Technical College to assist students with specific needs.

Programs that require an entrance assessment are identified in the College Catalog along with the required assessment results to gain entrance into those programs. The Academic Support Center (ASC) staff are available to assist students in their preparation for the ACT or ACCUPLACER exams. Students may also gain entrance into these select programs through the use of multiple measures. Northwood Technical College also has in place an accelerated learning plan that allows students to co-enroll in a college credit English course while also receiving just in time support in a non-credit writing essentials course.

### 3D3

All students at Northwood Technical College are required to first meet with an admission counselor to provide guidance related to the admissions process, enrollment, career counseling, and in selecting a program of choice. Upon admittance to an occupational program of study, faculty take on the role of academic advisor. All faculty are provided with advising resources and have access to resources on effective advising practices. Students enrolled in transfer programs are assigned to a designated counselor on each campus. Survey data provided by the institution indicates that students are highly satisfied with their academic advising as compared with WTCS and national benchmark colleges.

The institution provides academic advising at each of its locations to assist students with career counseling, academic course selection, interest and personality assessments and a variety of other concerns. Furthermore, academic faculty are also assigned to advise students in programs and specific degree paths.

### 3D4

Northwood Technical College also works proactively to provide financial support information to students. In addition to financial aid advisors available on each campus to assist students with FAFSA questions the College hosts College Goal WI, a statewide program that provides anyone help with FAFSA completion. Tutoring and library services are also available on each campus through the innovative Teaching and Learning Centers (iLTC). iLTCs also provide computer labs and technology assistance with both College-issued and personal devices. All iLTC services are available both virtually and in-person.

Through Accommodation Services, accommodation specialists are available to meet with students in-person or virtually to ensure equitable access to learning. In an effort to increase accessibility, Northwood Technical College recently began utilizing Blackboard Ally to improve accessibility of resources on the institution's LMS.

The College also offers student life opportunities on each campus including social, educational, and recreational. The Student Senate Association (SSA) and Campus Activities Boards (CABs) and on each campus work to provide students with a voice on campus issues and planning activities. Northwood Technical College also offers a variety of student organizations including a variety of programmatic specific clubs and associations, SkillsUSA, and others.

The innovative Teaching and Learning Centers (iTLCs) available at every campus also provide students support in academic, library, and technology areas. During a campus tour of the New Richmond campus, reviewers were able to interact with students and Academic Support Center staff, and it was clear that the staff were genuinely invested in the success of students. Students have the ability to access teaching specialists in Math, Science, and Writing through the ASC in person or virtually. A student referral system is offered for faculty to identify students who find themselves in need of extra support. Individuals may be referred for internal college resources, community resources, and if necessary virtual mental health counseling. Basic health services are also provided to students on each campus by a registered nurse.

Northwood Technical College provides students and faculty with the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning including technology, laboratory space, iTLCs, etc. Reviewers visited all 4 (four) campuses as well as the new Health Education Center and were



able to verify that the resources (physical and technology) are impressive and well planned. The institution has continued to invest in technology to ensure that classrooms, labs, and offices are equipped with the necessary equipment to provide effective instruction across such an expansive geographic area. The College has equipped over one hundred (100) next generation learning (NGL) classrooms institution wide that support both face-to-face and virtual learning. During open sessions it was communicated that Northwood Technical College also utilized Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) funding to purchase additional equipment and technology.

The College also provided a Three-year Facilities Plan that details the results of the District's Facility Assessment. The assessment focuses on Northwood Tech's infrastructure as it exists today and provides a Project Sequencing Summary for maintaining, repairing, and improving current facilities. Additionally, the institution indicates they conduct a capital equipment request process as part of the annual budgeting process. However, in open sessions it was expressed to reviewers on several occasions that this process is not entirely transparent to faculty, particularly in how the prioritization takes place. Faculty expressed that it appeared that funding was largely dependent upon how willing their respective dean was to "fight" for their request.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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Evidence provided with the Assurance Argument and verified by the reviewers during the visit demonstrated that Northwood Technical College provides a quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. This is particularly commendable in light of the large service area that the institution provides services across. The College's curriculum and programming are appropriate to its mission and meet both state (WTCS) and national accreditor requirements.

Courses and programs are delivered consistently across the many modes of delivery that Northwood Technical College has identified and, through the use of technology, across its multiple locations. The College also offers a variety of programming to multiple high schools across its service area and has expanded its offerings to include general education transfer credentials as well.

The institution recognizes that the diversity of its faculty and staff does not reflect its student body or service area but continues to focus on the improvement of this metric through the use of its Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Plan. While the College has in place a variety of policies and practices for ensuring that faculty are appropriately qualified the reviewers found these policies to be contradictory and unclear. Additionally, in its review of faculty qualifications the team found multiple instances of faculty who were not appropriately credentialed according to the institution's policies or whose credentials were expired, and it was not clear that all appropriate documentation was collected in a timely manner. Therefore, a monitoring report due one year from the date of the visit is outlined in 3.C.

Northwood Technical College supports its faculty and staff through required orientations and a variety of internal and external professional development opportunities. The College provides quality facilities and a wide variety of student support services to assist students in the achievement of their academic endeavors.

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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4A1

Northwood Technical College (Northwood Tech) maintains a practice of regular program review through a recently revised (2019-2020) annual program review process. An Academic Program Review Guide showing the assessment model, timeline, and reporting process was developed to help outline and facilitate the process. According to the Program Review Guide and confirmed through onsite interviews, *“all academic programs undergo a formal review annually as part of Northwood Tech’s overall planning process”*. The annual review process includes a Plan, Do, Check, Act framework, self-study, data analysis, improvement plan development, and two progress monitoring checkpoints.

To initiate the annual review process, the Institutional Research (IR) Office publishes Program Data Dashboards annually that include multiple indirect program effectiveness measures. Data such as Enrollment (including FTE, Headcount, number of applicants, and number of new students), Course Completion, Course Delivery Mode, Retention, Demographic (including economically and academically disadvantaged and full-time students), Graduate, Transfer, and Technical Skills Attainment statistics/trend data are included with the data dashboards. A data section for the Employability Essentials statistics was also included on the dashboard examples provided (e.g., Accounting and Welding), but no data was presented.

An electronic Academic Program Review Workbook (Workbook) is, as stated in the Academic Program Review Guide, used *to capture information, challenges, and opportunities identified through the self-study and data analysis related to student learning or program effectiveness* and record and track the annual reporting process. The Workbook includes three distinct reporting sections - Section 1: Team Identification, Self-Study, and Data Analysis, Section 2: Program Improvement Plan, and Section 3: Monitor and Update Progress.

To complete Section 1, faculty/program administrators are instructed to examine the data from the Program Dashboard and use thirty-three (33) provided questions to review the data, identify strengths and opportunities related to the program, and develop potential improvement plans. In addition, they are instructed to *focus on student learning and program effectiveness* in their discussions. While it is clear that indirect measures of program effectiveness are included as part of the Program Data Dashboards, it is unclear as to how the process focuses on student learning as data discussions and utilization of direct, program-level assessment measures for programs with Technical Skill Attainment (TSA) outcomes and programs with Non-TSA outcomes were not included as part of the evidence provided. In addition, no evidence was provided to show if or how the thirty-three (33) questions are utilized or considered as part of the review process. It is noted, however, that the Academic Program Review Guide does include information pertaining to Technical Skills Attainment results using Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs) and Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) TSA Scoring Guide. However, TSA and PATs data were not included as part of the program review examples provided with the Assurance Argument evidence or additional evidence file included as Addendum 11.

To complete Section 2 of the Workbook, faculty/program administrators articulate Improvement Plan Objectives with Metrics, Action Items, Person Responsible, Timeline, and Resources needed based on the data and plans indicated in Section 1. A minimum of one improvement plan objective and metric is required to be identified and measured annually, with most of the program examples provided opting to include only the required minimum. Based on the examples provided, improvement plans and metrics seem to focus on using data to inform intervention strategies related to improving course completion rates, course passage rates, and course grade improvements rather than implementing student learning outcome-focused improvement strategies such as program- or course-level learning outcomes assessment, student support, or pedagogy improvement strategies (for example, 2021 & 2022 Criminal Justice Studies, Accounting, Business Management, and Welding and 2022-2023 Human Resource Management report examples included with Addendum 10 or 11). In addition, it was not apparent how programs determine acceptable improvement percentages for metrics such as completion rates as part of the improvement plan implementation process as the College did not provide an explanation (e.g., accounting completion rate in the example provided).

Section 3 of the Workbook documents the improvement plan progress as part of a monitoring schedule that occurs in January (6 months) and May (1 year). However, evidence to support the

implementation of the improvement plan objectives and individual action items was not provided as evidence of implementation.

As part of the College's 2017 Systems Portfolio review and Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, the Systems Appraisal Team identified several Strategic Challenges and recommended that each Challenge be revisited in subsequent Comprehensive Quality Review visits. As part of this 2022 Comprehensive Review, the current Peer Team is reiterating Strategic Challenge #1 -

*Processes for establishing goals and targets and selecting multiple appropriate measures and tools are the foundation of effective assessment and data-informed decision making which are cornerstones of quality improvement. Emphasis should be placed on direct measures of quality and not just quantity. Staying focused on this foundation is critical as WITC [Northwood Tech] continues on its quality journey.*

Following a review of the Assurance Argument and subsequent onsite discussions, it is evident that the College has implemented a new annual program review process that meets the expectation of maintaining a practice of regular program review and is trying to act upon the review process findings as documented and tracked in the Workbook. It appears, however, that the College is focusing the review process on quantity versus quality of included measures. As a result, a large quantity of indirect data is included with limited data utilization annually. In addition, there appears to be a limited emphasis placed on using data from direct measures to evaluate, support, and improve student learning. Since the intent of the annual review process is student learning and program effectiveness, it would benefit the College to ensure that data related to both program effectiveness measures and direct measures of student learning are emphasized as part of the annual review process.

4A2

Northwood Technical College evaluates the credit it transcripts. The College follows the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Education Services Manual (ESM) and WTCS Board Policy 323 to evaluate and award credit for prior learning.

The College developed a Credit for Prior Learning Handbook that outlines available methods and processes for awarding credit for prior learning. The College utilizes Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) such as challenge exams, experiential learning portfolios, skills-based demonstration activities, professional licensure and industry certifications, military service, and nationally recognized standards from the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate Examination (IB), and the DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST) to evaluate and award college credit. The College also awards academic credit for successful completion of college-level courses as outlined in Advanced Standing/Dual Credit high school course articulation agreements.

4A3

Northwood Technical College has a policy that ensures the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer. The transfer of credit is guided by WTCS Board Policy 323 and outlined in the WTCS ESM. In addition, the College website and Student Handbook provide details on the credit transfer process. The Registrar is responsible for evaluating and awarding credits transferred from other Colleges. The College also uses Transferology, a nationwide network designed to provide students with information on credit transfer. Students can use the system to determine which courses completed at other

institutions will transfer to Northwood Technical College and any degree requirements they satisfy.

4A4

*Prerequisites, Rigor, and Student Learning Expectations:*

Northwood Technical College maintains and exercises authority over its course prerequisites, rigor, and learning expectations. The Curriculum and Assessment Documentation Administrative Policy (I-300) indicates that *the purpose of curriculum and assessment documentation is to enhance academic planning, effectiveness, and student learning and success. In addition, it is used for program review, curriculum modification, [and] credit for prior learning decision-making.* The College utilizes a centralized process for program and course curriculum development that aligns with the WTCS ESM expectations and requires approval from the Northwood Technical College and WTCS governing Boards. Internally, the Curriculum and Assessment Office oversees the curriculum and instructional design process. In coordination with the Curriculum and Assessment Office, deans and faculty determine course prerequisites and utilize a Course Outcome Summary Checklist when establishing course competencies and program outcomes. WIDS, the College's curriculum management system, is used to document and link competencies, learning outcomes, and third-party performance standards. WIDS is also used by faculty to create standardized syllabi.

*Access to Learning Resources:*

While other areas of the Assurance Argument included descriptions of learning resources that are made available to faculty and students (e.g., Library, iTLC, Health Education Center, etc.), the only resource presented as part of 4A4 was Blackboard. While Blackboard is a resource that the College maintains and exercises authority over, the College provides various learning resources across its multiple campus locations that it could have showcased in this section.

*Faculty Qualifications:*

Northwood Technical College has in place a faculty credentialing policy (G-200) to ensure existing or prospective Academic (general education/transfer), and Occupational (Technical) instructional staff meet the minimum institutional qualifications and HLC credentialing standards. The Occupational faculty credentialing procedure is primarily based on WTCS Administrative Code (TCS 3) which establishes minimum academic, occupational, and teaching requirements for technical college instructors. Academic instructors must also meet the minimum credentialing qualifications set forth by the HLC credentialing standards and WTCS Administrative Code (TCS 3).

Northwood Technical College Human Resources Office prepared a Faculty Credentialing Guide that requires Faculty Qualification Rationale Forms to be completed for each instructional staff member to verify qualifications to teach for programs or individual courses. The Rationale Forms allow for qualification determination of Occupational instructors based on credentialing and equivalent experience and Academic/General Studies instructions based only on credentialing minimums.

In addition, the College's Occupational Qualifications by Position document (presented in 3C2) serves as an institutional compilation of minimum and preferred credentialing expectations for Faculty, Non-Instructional Employees, Management, Support & Technical Staff, and Custodial Staff. As outlined in the Occupational Qualifications by Position document, each bulleted item is an institutional credentialing minimum requirement for respective positions. While an Alternative Standard Qualification through Equivalent Experience is allowed under Administrative Policy G-

200, equivalent experience expectations/allowances are not included as an option in the Occupational Qualifications by Position document. The Qualifications by Position document is referenced as the governing document to refer to for determining required and preferred qualifications in the Instructor Job Description document provided as evidence in 3C2.

While, as mentioned in 3C2, the College clearly has robust faculty credentialing policies in place, the reviewers could not confirm that those policies are being followed systematically, particularly in terms of the academic credentialing requirements for occupational faculty.

*Dual Credit:*

The College has a process to ensure that dual credit course outcomes/competencies and learning expectations are equivalent to the College curriculum. Dual credit expectations are described in articulation agreements and outlined in an Articulation Handbook. To ensure the process's integrity, consistency, and quality, the College assigns Northwood Technical College faculty mentors to coordinate with the high school instructors and conducts a dual credit course review as part of a three-year review process. The College's Articulation Handbook also indicates that the same standards are used to hire dual credit faculty teaching in area high school academies.

4A5

The Assurance Argument states that the College maintains specialized accreditation for eleven (11) programs. Following a review of the Assurance Argument evidence, College website, and additional requested addendum documentation, it was determined that the College maintains specialized accreditation for eight (8) academic program areas and adheres to specialized professional or licensing/certification requirements for three (3) academic programs.

Accredited programs include

- Automotive Service Technician/Automotive Technician
- Dental Assistant
- Health Information Technology
- Medical Assistant
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Paramedic and Paramedic Technician
- Veterinary Technician

Programs maintaining specialized professional licensing or certification requirements include

- Cosmetology
- Criminal Justice
- Nursing Assistant.

In the initial evidence submission, the College provided a list of associated programs, including accrediting or licensing bodies and dates of the next accreditations/reviews as evidence. The College publishes details about Specialized Program Accreditations and Professional Licensure and/or Certification Information on the College website and program webpages. The College identified in an evidence document that the Cosmetology program is not formally accredited. The program does, however, adhere to the State of Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (WI

DSPS) licensing standards. The College website lists the WI DSPS as an accrediting agency rather than more appropriately listing it as a Licensing Agency. In addition, the Criminal Justice and Nursing Assistant Programs are included on the College's main Specialized Program Accreditation information page, which is used to identify *programs that are required to maintain professional or specialized accreditation or licensure requirements*. Corresponding program webpages do not, however, include accreditation information and instead include only Professional Licensure and/or Certification Information. If programs are not formally accredited through a third-party accrediting body, they should not be listed with accrediting agency declarations and should instead be categorized with the appropriate Licensing or Certifying Agency or with another appropriate designator.

While the Assurance Argument indicates that each program is in good standing, official accreditation and licensing confirmation letters verifying the status of each program were not originally provided as evidence, and links to the accreditor's websites were not included on the College's main accreditation webpage. When asked for accreditation confirmation letters, the College promptly responded by providing supporting documentation as an addendum item. As a result of the Peer Team's request, the College indicated that discussions had already been initiated to update the language on the College website to *better reflect the programs with licensing approval versus accreditation.*"

4A6

Northwood Technical College participates in a mandated WTCS review process to evaluate the success of its graduates. The WTCS process requires colleges to conduct annual Graduate Follow-up, four-year post-graduation Employer Follow-up, and five-year post-graduation Longitudinal Follow-up surveys for all associate degree and technical diploma program graduates.

Graduate Follow-up Survey results are reported to the WTCS, and the College uses aggregate data to benchmark against peer colleges. Northwood Technical College also includes disaggregated program-focused graduate survey data on Program Data Dashboards as part of the annual program review process.

The Longitudinal Follow-up survey is conducted once every four years post-graduation to evaluate a graduate's perception of career and education progression. Data is reported to the WTCS and compiled in a Five-Year Longitudinal Follow-up Report. The Assurance Argument indicates that the longitudinal report is shared with the Board and used by leadership to understand career progression and program transfer opportunities. The College, however, did not provide evidence to support these assertions.

The Employer Follow-up survey is conducted once every four years at the direction of the WTCS to assess how employers who hire Northwood Technical College graduates view student preparedness for entry-level positions. Survey results are reported to the WTCS and compiled in the Employer Satisfaction Report.

Utilizing a multipoint survey process helps WTCS and Northwood Technical College use appropriate and meaningful metrics to evaluate the success of their graduates.

While the Assurance Argument, supporting evidence, and onsite interviews confirm that Northwood Technical College has processes in place to ensure the quality of its educational offerings, opportunities still exist to support, improve, and demonstrate the effectiveness of those processes.



## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met With Concerns

### Rationale

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4B1

#### *Course Assessment:*

Course-level student learning outcomes (aka Course Competencies) are measurable statements used to describe what students should be able to demonstrate upon course completion. Northwood Technical College utilizes a Curriculum Development Checklist to guide Course Competencies' development with a prescribed construct that includes Bloom's taxonomy hierarchical framework of learning with corresponding action verbs. Competencies are housed in WIDS, the College's curriculum-management system, and are presented to students on course syllabi.

Course-level assessments are created using the Course Competencies as a guide for determining the expected level of learning. In addition, course projects and Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs) are designed to evaluate student performance. PATs are also housed in WIDS and include which Course Competencies are being targeted and how the assessment will be scored to determine if the outcome is met.

The Assurance Argument asserts that course-level assessments are used in conjunction with the annual program review process. An action plan from the 2021 Business Management Program was presented to support this assertion. The Improvement Plan, however, does not include specific information related to PATs or individual project findings. The Improvement Plan Objective focused instead on improving course completion by 3% for the Introduction to Business course and includes an Action Item that focuses on reviewing the curriculum, sequencing, and assessment without providing specific details as to which, if any, TSA, Course Competencies, PATs or other direct measures of assessment would be targeted for improvement or modification to support student learning. After reviewing the Program Review process described in the Assurance Argument in Criterion 4A1, the evidence included as part of Criterion 4B1 does not appear to include outcome/competency-focused information or data utilization to support the assertion that course-level

assessments are used as part of the annual program review process. A more apparent connection to the Course Competency assessment process needs to be established to show a clear connection between the course-level assessment process and the annual program review process.

While the connection between course-level assessment and the program review process needs to be established to strengthen the effectiveness of the program review process, the College has demonstrated that it has effective processes for course-level assessment of student learning and for the achievement of learning goals.

*Program Assessment:*

Course competencies are linked to program outcomes/TSAs and documented in WIDS. Program-level assessments are conducted annually at the course level. For programs with a state-aligned curriculum, state-approved TSAs are used to evaluate and measure student performance and skill attainment. TSA standards are used in the outcomes assessment process to ensure programs and students are meeting the state-aligned curriculum standards. The College indicated that five (5) programs are currently developing TSAs but gave no indication as to which programs are included or if the TSAs being developed are for state-aligned curricula. In addition, no evidence or discussion was presented regarding programs without TSAs or state-aligned curricula. Advisory Committees meet annually to discuss outcomes and ensure they remain relevant to their respective industries.

To evaluate and measure student performance at the program level, faculty use summative assessments with program-aligned PATs that identify the Targeted Program Outcome(s) and include standard scoring guides/scales. TSA outcomes data are reported to the WTCS and included on the Program Data Dashboards prepared annually for the Program Review Process.

The Assurance Argument asserts that the TSA results have been incorporated into the program review process. Other than the Total/Compilation of Data for Met and Not Met results being included in the Program Data Dashboards that are prepared as part of the annual program review process, no evidence was provided to show a focused breakdown of which TSAs were Met or Not Met. After reviewing the Program Review process described in the Assurance Argument in Criterion 4A1, the evidence included as part of Criterion 4B1 does not appear to include TSA/program outcome-focused information or data utilization to support the assertion that TSA results have been incorporated into the program review process. In addition, the program review samples provided as part of the Assurance Argument submission and supplemental/addendum documentation did not include a discussion or presentation of outcome/TSA-focused improvement plans or action items. A more apparent connection to program-aligned PATS or summative assessments needs to be established to show a clear connection between the program-level assessment process and the annual program review process.

While the connection between program-level assessment and the program review process needs to be established to strengthen the effectiveness of the program review process, the College has demonstrated that it has effective processes for program-level assessment of student learning and for the achievement of learning goals.

*Institutional Assessment:*

Northwood Technical College has been working to develop an institutional learning outcomes assessment process since 2007. In 2007 the College attended an HLC Assessment Academy and, as a result of attendance, developed a Collegewide Outcomes (CWO) assessment process that was used

between 2007-2016. In 2016, the CWO process was reduced from six (6) to four (4) outcomes and rebranded the Employability Essentials. In 2019, the College again started revamping the institutional assessment process by attending a second HLC Assessment Academy with an initiative to develop and implement a comprehensive institutional assessment process to assess student learning outcomes.

As a product of the 2019 Academy attendance, the College formed an Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) Team, revised the collegewide Employability Essentials (EE) learning outcomes, developed evaluation rubrics to assess the EEs, and began to examine and link the Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) assessment process to the Program Review and EE assessment processes.

The ASL Team approved the revised EE assessment process in January 2020. However, the implementation of the assessment process was delayed until the fall of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty training was held between May 2020 and August 2021 in conjunction with faculty in-service sessions to prepare for the fall 2021 rollout. During the 2021-22 academic year, all one- and two-year Technical Diploma and Associate Degree programs began the institutional process by assessing the Communicate Clearly EE.

The College provided an evidence document to show which EEs are aligned with each Associate Degree and Technical Diploma (<1yr, 1-year, and 2-year). The Assurance Argument and EE alignment document, however, provided no clarification to explain why some programs align with all four EEs while others align with only one, two, or three EEs (e.g., Broadband Installer, Financial Services Customer Rep, Marine Repair Technician Welding, and Utility Construction Technology). It was noted that the evidence document indicates that every program is identified as being aligned with the Think Critically EE.

Following a review of the Assurance Argument and supporting documentation, it is unclear whether every program is or will be required to align with and assess every EE when the institutional assessment process is fully implemented, as no information or explanation was provided. The Peer Team asks the following question, *are students in one-year technical diploma programs expected to meet the same level of learning and EE exposure expectations as students in the two-year technical diploma or associate degree programs when the time in the respective programs is substantially different?* The College may want to define the minimum EE attainment expectation for every program and clearly state if some or any programs require alignment with all EEs.

Following attendance at the 2022 HLC Annual Conference and a meeting with the HLC Assessment Academy Mentor, the College began to modify the revised process to include aligning the EE and TSA assessment processes. For programs without aligned TSAs, the ASL Team developed a three-year reporting schedule for the annual assessment process using representative samples. It is unclear, however, as to what process is used to select and approve assignments as relevant and appropriate to use to evaluate specific EEs, especially for those programs that do not utilize TSAs. In addition, the College provided no evidence samples of TSA-aligned EE assignments or examples of *representative samples*.

In the Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report Panel Review dated May 2022, the Quality Initiative Panel noted *The Academy Team [at Northwood Technical College] appears to be well-positioned to complete the project in the final two years of the Academy. The steps taken in the first two years, including the establishment of the Assessment of Student Learning Team, development of the Employability Essential rubrics, training and involvement of faculty, the adoption of a philosophy of general education, and the building of co-curricular assessment plans, should be a solid foundation*

*for continued progress.* The College expects to complete the multiyear Assessment Academy initiative in October 2023. In addition, the Quality Initiative Panel reported that *the panel confirms genuine effort on the part of the institution.* The current Peer Team is inclined to agree.

In the 2017 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, the Systems Appraisal Team noted that *there is evidence that WITC [now Northwood Technical College] has made progress since it abandoned its original college wide assessment plan and the college wide measures. Because of this fairly recent decision, it appears that much of the work within this document tied to the CWO process has been accomplished recently. This has resulted in a lack of data collection on several components and a lack of interpretation and use of the data that has been collected on others.*

While the College has continued efforts over the past fourteen-plus years to develop and implement a meaningful, comprehensive institutional outcomes assessment process, the process included in this 2022 review has once again *been accomplished recently* and is still in the development phase. Once the current process is finalized, it is imperative that the College give the process time to mature before considering additional modifications. In addition, it would benefit the College to address areas of the process that still need clarification so that the process can meet its full potential.

#### *Cocurricular Assessment:*

Northwood Technical College defines cocurricular as *activities designed to support the academic curriculum.* The College developed a cocurricular assessment process that focuses on indirect, self-reported student survey responses of student club members. As of 2021-22, the College has thirty-seven (37) student clubs classified as active cocurricular clubs.

As evidence of process development, a Co-Curricular Sub Team Agenda/Minutes from April 28, 2020, was provided. The document provided supports process development but does not show evidence of a final process or team recommendation. In addition, an ASL Team meeting minutes document from May 29, 2020, was provided to show the ASL Teams' approval of the cocurricular assessment process. The evidence document does not, however, show ASL Team approval of the final process. Instead, it shows additional discussion related to process development and provides an update on topics discussed in the April 2020 Co-curricular Sub Team meeting. No evidence of final process approval or implementation plan was provided.

A document called *What type of club do you advise,* appears to be intended to help club advisors determine if the club they are affiliated with is classified as a cocurricular or extracurricular club. The process begins by asking advisors to answer the question *Does the learning experience or activity support academic curriculum?* If the response is yes, the club is deemed cocurricular and required to initiate assessment through the distribution of a post-activity survey. The question being posed, however, does not seem to ask if club activities support the academic curriculum and would therefore support the club being designated as a cocurricular club. The question seems to indicate, instead, that a club is already deemed a cocurricular club and is trying to determine if a specific club activity or learning experience is occurring in the club and would then be identified as an assessable activity to measure the perception of EE attainment by club members and activity participants. As part of the Assurance Argument and supporting documentation, no description or evidence was provided to establish how activities are determined to be relevant cocurricular activities for assessment and are expected to provide students with an opportunity for learning. In addition, there was no information provided as to how this indirect cocurricular assessment process would be used in conjunction with the direct EE assessment process used in the academic courses or an acceptable institutional performance target for cocurricular assessments.

The Assurance Argument states that students complete a post-activity survey aligned with the EEs. The survey result summary that was provided, however, indicates that as of this review, only one of the four established EEs (i.e., Communicate Clearly) is included in the cocurricular post-survey assessment. The inclusion of an assessment process for the remaining three EEs has not yet been implemented as part of the cocurricular assessment process, which shows the immaturity and newness of the process.

In the College's 2016 AQIP Systems Portfolio, the College indicated that *co-curricular activities are not assessed as to how the activities help students learn. This will be addressed by WITC in the future.* As of this 2022 review, the College is still essentially in the preliminary phase of the cocurricular assessment development process. It concerns the Peer Team that, at this point, the College has not formally established a meaningful cocurricular assessment process.

While the College is working to establish a cocurricular assessment process, the details of the process are unclear and need to be clarified as the process matures. Since the College defines cocurricular as *activities designed to support the academic curriculum*, there needs to be a more refined connection between the purpose of the activity and the expectation for student learning. The College needs to clearly define how club activities are *designed* to support the EE or EEs being measured moving forward to strengthen the cocurricular assessment process. It is important to note that while the cocurricular process was indicated as part of the College's 2019 HLC Assessment Academy initiative, no evidence was provided to indicate what progress has been made in the cocurricular assessment development process or presented to show a timeline for implementation.

Northwood has effective processes for assessing student learning and achieving learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings. That being said, the institutional and cocurricular assessment processes are still in their infancy and require additional process clarifications and time to mature. At the College's Year 4 evaluation, the current Peer Team expects that these processes will be fully developed, implemented, and utilized to support student learning.

4B2

*Course Assessment - Data Utilization:*

The Assurance Argument asserts that *information gained from course level assessment is used by individual faculty and program faculty groups to inform teaching & learning decision-making. Course competencies are assessed every semester. Course level data is used during the program review process, along with other program dashboard data, to improve student learning.*

As discussed in Criterion 4A1, the Assurance Argument asserts that course-level assessments are used in conjunction with the annual program review process. An action plan from the 2021 Business Management Program was presented to support this assertion and the current assertion that course-level assessments are used to inform teaching and learning. The Improvement Plan, however, does not include specific information or collected data related to PATs or individual project findings. The Improvement Plan Objective focuses instead on improving course completion by 3% for the Introduction to Business course and includes an Action Item that focuses on reviewing the curriculum, sequencing, and assessment without providing specific details as to which, if any, TSA, Course Competencies, PATs or other direct measures of assessment would be targeted for improvement or modification to support student learning.

A 2021 Industrial Mechanic Program Improvement Plan was also provided. This Plan shows the

program's improvement plan focused on increasing the General Education completion rate. What was not provided in the example, however, was a completed data analysis and self-study section to demonstrate what data was used to identify the need for improvement and evidence of what improvements were implemented in which general education courses or how the improvements were used to improve learning in the Industrial Mechanic Program.

After reviewing the Program Review process described in Criterion 4A1 and course-level data utilization practices described in 4B2, the evidence provided does not appear to include outcome/competency-focused information, data collection, or data utilization to support the assertion that course-level assessments are used as part of the annual program review process or that course competencies are assessed and used to inform teaching and learning decision-making annually. Therefore, a more meaningful connection to the Course Competency assessment process needs to be established to show a clear connection between the course-level assessment process/activities and the data collection and utilization processes used to inform and improve teaching and learning practices.

#### *Program Assessment – Data Utilization:*

The Assurance Argument indicates that *TSA results for each program are included in the program review dashboard and are included in the program review process*. While a Compilation of Data (aka aggregate data) of Met and Not Met scores are included on the annual Program Data Dashboard, data for direct, individual TSA outcome-focused measures are not. No evidence was provided to show how assessment data for individual TSA learning outcomes are collected or utilized to support student learning and outcome-focused interventions or improvement strategies. In addition, program-level assessment data collection and utilization details and examples were also not provided for programs without associated TSA standards.

A '22-'23 Program Review report for the Medical Administrative Professional Assistant Program was provided as an evidence sample. The Assurance Argument indicates that *faculty reviewed the TSA data for outcomes not met to identify potential barriers for student success*. What was not presented, however, was evidence to show which or how many of the program TSAs were Not Met and focused intervention/improvement strategies to support student learning for those TSAs. The Plan of Action is to *keep monitoring to see what patterns develop*. The only selected Program Review Improvement Plan Objective included in the report focused on the indirect measure of improving retention rates rather than including direct measures associated with student performance. There was also no information on whether minimum performance benchmarks were met for individual TSAs, and no actionable data utilization was provided. A 2021 Program Review report was presented for the Gerontology program as an additional evidence document. This example also provided no actionable utilization of the TSA outcomes data. Since no actionable improvement strategies were planned for either of the included programs, more relevant data utilization examples may have been more appropriate to include.

A discussion of course-level assessments using HIP assessments in the AA and AS transfer programs was also presented, but once again, no evidence of outcome-focused data collection or utilization was provided.

As mentioned in 4B1, the Assurance Argument asserts that the TSA results have been incorporated into the program review process. Other than the Total/Compilation of Data for Met and Not Met results being included in the Program Data Dashboards that are prepared as part of the annual program review process, no evidence was provided to show a focused breakdown of which TSAs

were Met or Not Met. After reviewing the Program Review and Program-level assessment process described in the Assurance Argument in Criterion sections 4A1 and 4B1, the evidence included as part of Criterion 4B2 does not appear to include TSA/program outcome-focused data collection or utilization to support the assertion that TSA results have been incorporated into the program review process or are being effectively utilized to support learning and program-level improvement strategies. In addition, the program review samples provided as part of the Assurance Argument and addendum documentation did not include a discussion or presentation of outcome/TSA-focused data, improvement plans, or action items. A more apparent connection to program-aligned PATS or summative assessments needs to be established to show a clear connection between the program-level assessment process and data collection and utilization to support student learning.

*Institutional Assessment – Data Utilization:*

In the 2013 Quality Checkup Report, the Quality Checkup Team noted *that through its membership in the HLC Assessment Academy, the College developed a long-term assessment plan to measure student learning through its general education goals.*

In the 2017 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, the Systems Appraisal Team noted that *there is evidence that WITC has made progress since it abandoned its original college wide assessment plan and the college wide measures. Because of this fairly recent decision, it appears that much of the work within this document tied to the CWO process has been accomplished recently. This has resulted in a lack of data collection on several components and a lack of interpretation and use of the data that has been collected on others.*

While the College has shown diligence in its efforts to develop and implement a meaningful, comprehensive institutional outcomes assessment process, the process included in this 2022 review is still in the development phase. The process has yet to produce actionable EE-focused data to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning, which shows the immaturity and newness of the process.

The Assurance Argument asserts that the College *will do* various activities associated with the EE assessment, data collection, and utilization processes. While the Peer Team recognizes that the College is still in the development process and actively working with the HLC Assessment Academy to finalize the institutional assessment process, the evidence provided as part of the current review does not adequately reflect that the College is using information gained from the institutional assessment process to improve student learning.

*Cocurricular – Data Utilization:*

In the College's 2016 AQIP Systems Portfolio, the College indicated that *co-curricular activities are not assessed as to how the activities help students learn.* As stated in Criterion 4A1, the College is still essentially in the preliminary phase of the cocurricular assessment development process.

As previously stated, while the College is working to establish a cocurricular assessment process, the details of the process are unclear and need to be clarified as the process matures. Since the College defines cocurricular as *activities designed to support the academic curriculum*, there needs to be a more refined connection between the purpose of the activity and the expectation for student learning. The College needs to clearly define how club activities are *designed* to support the EE or EEs being measured moving forward to strengthen the cocurricular assessment process. Once a connection is made between the activity and the expected learning, the College will be better prepared to effectively



use the post-activity student survey data to inform, support, and improve student learning. While the College indicated that it plans to review and use cocurricular data, as of this review, no evidence of effective data utilization or improvement strategies to support student learning was provided. As presented, the cocurricular assessment process does not adequately reflect that the College is using information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4B3

Northwood Technical College's processes and methods to assess curricular and cocurricular learning, while still being refined, reflect good practice. The Assurance Argument describes a multi-level process that includes course, program, institution, and cocurricular assessment levels to evaluate and collect student learning data.

While concerns have been expressed regarding assessment process details and data collection and utilization for the purpose of improving student learning, the College's assessment processes are grounded in good practice. In addition, the College's assessment processes include substantial faculty, relevant staff members, and stakeholders' participation through committee memberships, professional development activities, and the annual program review process.

As part of a continuous improvement approach to implementing effective assessment strategies (Plan, Do, Check, Act), the College would be well served to refine the connections between the assessment levels and the annual program review process and incorporate data collection and utilization processes that include evidence of direct measures being used to evaluate and improve student learning.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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Based on the evidence provided with the 2022 Assurance Argument, supporting supplemental materials, and on-campus interviews, the Peer Review Team has determined that Northwood Technical College is still in the early stages of implementing effective assessment and data utilization processes. As a result, the Review Team is requesting an assessment-focused interim monitoring report be included and embedded with Northwood Technical College's Year Four (4) Assurance Review. While an arbitrary date has been noted in this system of 9/1/2026, the due date of this embedded report is to align with the Year Four (4) Assurance Review.

The interim assessment report is to include:

- Course-level data collection and utilization processes that include direct course outcome/competency-focused measures and evidence that data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning in both technical and general studies courses.
- Program-level data collection and utilization processes that include direct TSA/program outcome-focused measures for TSA and Non-TSA aligned programs and evidence that the data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning.
- Institution-level data collection and utilization processes that include direct measures within the academic areas to produce actionable EE-focused data and evidence that the data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning.

- Cocurricular data collection and utilization processes that produce actionable EE-focused data and evidence that the data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning.
- A clear connection between course (program and general studies), program, and institutional assessment data collection and utilization processes to support student learning as part of the annual Program Review process.

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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4C1

The Assurance Argument indicates that Northwood Technical College initially established retention, persistence, and completion goals as part of its 2009-2012 Strategic Plan. The Plan, however, was not provided to support this assertion. Key metrics were defined according to data definitions identified by the WTCS. Institutional goals for student retention, persistence, and completion are evaluated using defined performance percentage values corresponding to a three-tiered color-coded signal system, with green indicating desired goals, yellow indicating values are slightly below desired goals, and red indicating values significantly below desired goals. While the Collegewide Metrics evidence document includes data definitions for retention, persistence, and graduation rates, neither the Collegewide Metrics document nor the table presented in the Assurance Argument present goals or target values for the institutional graduation rate. This was confirmed with the review of the College Effectiveness Measures data matrix from May 2021, which indicates graduation rate signal values as TBD (To Be Determined). The only completion goals discussed in this section of the Assurance Argument are focused on goals for course completion rates.

The Assurance Argument states that goal data is updated annually and reviewed by college leadership to ensure goals are ambitious, attainable, and appropriate to the institutional mission. What was not included in the Assurance Argument or supporting evidence was details or an explanation for why goals for institutional graduation rates have yet to be established by the college leadership in conjunction with the annual review process. The College implemented the College Effectiveness Measures as part of the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan. Effectiveness measures are focused

measures directly linked to strategic themes based on comparison and benchmark data from other WTCS colleges. Institutional graduation rates are also not included in those metrics. In the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, however, the College does indicate a goal for an increase in three-year graduation rates as a population-focused initiative for students with disabilities.

In addition to establishing goals and collecting aggregate, collegewide data, Northwood Technical College includes disaggregated, indirect program retention and course completion data measures as part of the annual program review process.

Additional institutional retention and completion goals are established through the WTCS Perkins planning process. Student populations are broken down to allow institutions to focus on equity gaps within underrepresented student populations.

While it is evident that the College has defined goals for retention and persistence and is working to establish population-focused goals related to graduation rates, a goal for institutional completion (aka graduation rate) needs to be established. There is an expectation by the current Peer Team that when the College is reviewed as part of its Year 4 Assurance Review, it will be able to present information focused on the College's goals for institutional graduation rates that address the full range of students who enroll.

#### 4C2

Northwood Technical College collects student retention, persistence, and completion data at the course, program, and institutional levels using PeopleSoft and COGNOS databases. The Office of Institutional Research is responsible for providing various reports for data analysis.

The College collects and reports data on retention, persistence, and completion at the state (WTCS) and federal (IPEDS) levels. The WTCS provides the College with data visualization graphics such as Program Completion within 3 Years, Aligned General Education Course Completion, and Fall to Spring Retention data comparisons across all 16 in-state Colleges to use for institutional analysis. In addition, the Board of Trustees and College Leadership team review data linked to the College's strategic initiatives annually.

The College collects and analyzes retention, persistence, and completion data for institutional grants and funding opportunities such as Perkins funding. Institutions are provided a Perkins Report Card outlining performance levels and highlighting statistic discrepancies requiring improvement plan development. The College's cross-functional Perkins Team is responsible for analyzing Perkins data and developing improvement plans with population-focused intervention strategies based on the data.

Program administrators and faculty also review retention, graduation, and course completion rates to evaluate student performance and program success as part of the annual program review process.

#### 4C3

Northwood Technical College uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion to make improvements as warranted by the data included in the annual program review process, grant opportunities, and strategic initiatives.

At the course and program levels, the faculty review retention, graduation, and course completion data as part of the annual program review process and use the data to develop and implement improvement plans. To ensure improvement plans are implemented, the program review tracking

process includes two progress checkpoints (i.e., May and January). In addition, the Academic Affairs Division Team monitors progress as a leadership team annually in the fall.

The College is provided a Perkins Report Card annually outlining performance levels and highlighting statistical discrepancies requiring improvement plan development. The College develops improvement plans with population-focused intervention strategies based on the data and submits WTCS Grant Applications that outline proposed intervention strategies and includes a request for Perkins funding to support the initiative.

The College used data focused on course completion rates to address student success barriers experienced by economically disadvantaged and single-parent students. To implement improvement strategies, the College received funding through the WTCS General Purpose Grant funding opportunity.

A student referral system was implemented as a result of retention data analysis and to support the College's retention efforts. Through this initiative, faculty and other members of the Northwood Technical College team can refer students to counselors, academic coaches, and the Academic Support Center.

While it is clear from the Assurance Argument that Northwood Technical College uses information on retention, persistence, and completion to plan data-informed improvements, it is unclear if initiatives such as the Perkins and WTCS grant-funded improvement initiatives were implemented and how improvements affected retention efforts, as a follow-up analysis and data were not provided.

In addition, the College previously indicated that they report retention, persistence, and completion data to WTCS for benchmarking against other colleges. The Assurance Argument narrative and evidence documents, however, did not describe how that data is used to improve retention, persistence, or graduation rates at Northwood Technical College.

4C4

Northwood Technical College's processes and methods for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion reflect good practice. The College routinely reports data to internal, state, and national sources. Data collection and analysis occur at multiple levels throughout the College. Data is routinely shared with and reviewed by the College Leadership Team, Academic Affairs Division Team, Institutional Research Office, and program administrators and faculty as part of the annual program review process. Data is routinely collected and analyzed in both aggregated and disaggregated forms. The College also collects and reports data to IPEDS and the WTCS, allowing for institutional benchmarking to similar and other institutions.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

### Rationale

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Northwood Technical College has processes to evaluate course competencies, program outcomes, and institutional Employability Essentials (EE). The College maintains a practice of regular program review through a recently revised annual programmatic review process. It is clear that the College is using the annual review process to review programs, collect data, and plan program and general education course improvements. It appears, however, that the College is focusing the review process on quantity versus quality of included measures. As a result, a large quantity of indirect data is included with limited data utilization annually. In addition, a limited emphasis appears to be placed on using data from direct measures to evaluate, support, and improve student learning. As part of a continuous improvement approach to implementing effective assessment strategies (Plan, Do, Check, Act), the College needs to refine the connections between the assessment levels and the annual program review process and incorporate data collection and utilization processes that include evidence of direct measures being used to evaluate and improve student learning.

Student Services is working to establish an EE-aligned assessment process for cocurricular activities within student organizations to align with the curricular EE assessment process. The details of the process, however, are unclear and need to be clarified as the process matures. Since the College defines cocurricular as *activities designed to support the academic curriculum*, there needs to be a more refined connection between the purpose of the activity and the expectation for student learning. In addition, the process needs to ensure actionable EE-focused data is collected and used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning.

The Peer Review Team has determined that Northwood Technical College is still in the early stages of implementing effective assessment and data utilization processes. As a result, the Review Team recommends an assessment-focused monitoring report be included with Northwood Technical College's Year four (4) Assurance Review. This recommendation will allow the College time to clarify and improve process details, fully implement its multi-level assessment processes, and demonstrate that it is collecting meaningful data and using it to support and improve student learning.

It is apparent from the Assurance Argument that the College is making a concentrated effort to establish a culture of assessment and is focused on establishing a robust multi-dimensional assessment process that includes course (including dual enrollment), program, institutional, and cocurricular levels of assessment. While concerns have been expressed regarding assessment process details and data collection and utilization for the purpose of improving student learning, the College's assessment processes are grounded in good practice and include substantial faculty, relevant staff members, and stakeholder participation through committee memberships, professional development activities, and the annual program review process.

The College evaluates the credit it transcripts and has a policy that ensures the quality of the credit it

accepts in transfer. While initial program development is regulated at the state level, the College internally exercises authority over the courses, program prerequisites, and rigor for the curricula offered.

The College has defined goals for retention and persistence and is working to establish population-focused goals related to graduation rates. A goal for institutional completion (aka graduation rate) still needs to be established. There is an expectation by the current Review Team that when the College is reviewed as part of its Year 4 Assurance Review, it will be able to present information focused on the College's goals for institutional graduation rates that address the full range of students who enroll.

Northwood Technical College uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion to make improvements as warranted by the data included in the annual program review process, grant opportunities, and strategic initiatives. The College's processes and methods for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion reflect good practice. The College routinely reports data to internal, state, and national sources. Data collection and analysis occur at multiple levels throughout the College. Data is routinely shared with and reviewed by stakeholders in the College community and is routinely collected and analyzed in both aggregated and disaggregated forms. The College also collects and reports data to IPEDS and the WTCS, allowing for institutional benchmarking to similar and other institutions.

The College demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its education programs, learning environments, and support services and is working to develop effective assessment processes to evaluate student learning and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

### Rating

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Met With Concerns

### Rationale

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5A1

Northwood Technical College leadership presented a framework of resources, structures, processes and planning efforts that are sufficient to its ability to fulfill its mission. Without doubt, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission. Through its assurance argument, the College provides evidence it supports its mission of "Learning First." The College Leadership provided evidence of administrative structures that establish opportunities for its internal constituents to engage in collaborative processes. Northwood Tech, an expansive, 10,000-square mile district with multiple campuses and centers, depends on cross-functional teams and a matrix of committees to advance its "Learning First" mission.

Northwood Tech is in process of fulfilling one of its Strategic Themes, Rebranding, as it transitions in name from Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College to Northwood Technical College, and this move is embraced by the College employees, students, and industry partners. The College leadership is intentional in its desire for the institution to brand as one college within the vast district. A disconnect, however, is felt within the programs and locations. While some programming may cross all corners of the district, each campus has unique, independent, individual programming for that region. True to the collective technical college mission, this model supports local industry. Students, though, noted the requirement to relocate within the district to enroll in campus-specific programs.



In its commitment to ensure a one-college rebranding, each campus has a unique opportunity to connect with its internal stakeholders and constituencies and identify as a program-aligned institution with regional centers of excellence. This opportunity to showcase its regional footprint while recognizing the voice of internal constituents in establishing campus-specific and unique programming may support Northwood Tech's goals to integrate its one-college model. This opportunity could ensure some programming operations, such as the model Shell Lake Health Education Center is creating, are recognized as regional locations of excellence -- invaluable destinations or "nerve centers," as described in a conversation with the college president -- to support specific programming validated by students and employees. While students may be able to complete portions of programming in their region via the College's many avenues of delivery (certificate level), the center of excellence model establishes the destination for full program completion (associate level, for instance).

In discussions during the site visit, both in-person and through the BlueJeans distance meeting technology, Northwood Technical College employees and students participated in meetings from across the district. The College depends greatly on these cross-functional teams and technical systems to advance and deliver its "Learning First" mission to its students. The peer review team encourages the College to consider its volume and numbers of committees, however. Employees in stakeholder sessions indicated committee fatigue and a perceived lack of value of committee voice and authority in decision-making. Some employees felt the stakeholder presence on the committee was for Northwood Tech to provide a checkmark in a box to suggest representation rather than welcome inclusive perspectives and elicit feedback. Some employees in the stakeholder sessions believed the College Leadership Team made decisions regardless of committee input, with some employees indicating a withdrawal from committee service because of the perception of how decision-making was being undertaken by the College Leadership Team.

The College may want to review the distinction between "shared governance" and its purpose for and role of its cross-functional teams. While representation by multiple stakeholders on a cross-functional team is of value and provides a breadth of perspectives, shared governance is distinct in its intent and purpose. It ensures respect, equity, and inclusion of voices representing classified, unclassified, faculty, and administration perspectives and voices. While the College offers a Student Senate to students, neither faculty nor staff (neither classified nor unclassified) has access to representation by constituent councils with whom to consult, deliberate, or make decisions. There is little to no opportunity for employees to offer consultation or deliberations on topics they deem important. The peer review team observed the Assurance Argument made no mention of the faculty bargaining/negotiating process. While Wisconsin's model itself inherently limits the items for negotiations, nonetheless the omission appears symbolic to the value the College Leadership Team places on constituent representation in shared governance of the institution. This message was a more concerning, pervasive, and consistent message shared with the Comprehensive Evaluation and Multilocation peer reviewers by both faculty and staff across the New Richmond, Rice Lake, Ashland, and Superior campuses. While on an onsite review, peer reviewers anticipate some level of "water-cooler" conversations on the side with an employee or two; the persistent and comprehensive nature of these conversations, however, elevated the matter to a concern by the onsite peer review team.

The peer review team had the opportunity in its schedule to meet with the Board during the closing hour of its regularly-scheduled September monthly meeting. In the review team's luncheon meeting with the Board of Trustees, the Board acknowledged its role in policy approval and budget oversight for the institution. The Board acknowledged its role with personnel, with the members stating they

had one employee. The Board members appear engaged in state-level training and have attended and presented at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) conferences. The Board indicated ease and comfort with the use of distance technology in the meeting, and members joining via the distance technology were engaged and included in the conversation. It was through the scheduled first-morning sessions through the conclusion with the Board luncheon the matters related to shared governance emerged, with additional conversations at the constituent sessions and multilocation sites validating the concern by the team for the College's approach to shared governance.

## 5A2

The College administration relies on, accesses, and uses data in its decision-making operations. Dashboards deliver to managers enrollment funnels, budget status, and four-year trends for divisions and college effectiveness. The College leadership team and managers have access to robust data warehouses and resources, and these data are used to inform strategic planning. In addition to the evidence the College provided in its assurance argument, the employees included references to data resources as natural extensions to their positions--student services personnel referenced their enrollment funnel numbers; a budget manager referred to the accessible financial data; the grant/resource representative noted access to data to support those needs.

Northwood Tech depends on its data to support programming initiatives. The peer review team was able to learn more of the role of labor market data in supporting the Veterinary Technician and Truck Driver training programs. Students in the Student Luncheon with peer reviewers shared the value of the Veterinary Technician program to their goals, as some students stated they had transferred from universities to access and enroll in the new program. The students in the multiple represented programs lauded the institution for maintaining extraordinary classrooms and laboratories for their respective programs. The peer review team also met with community members, whose conversations also suggested the College Leadership Team made informed decisions in the best interest of the institution.

## 5A3

Like the use of teams and committees in many colleges, Northwood Technical College has in place a framework of teams and committees to support many of its diverse operations. A member institution of the Wisconsin Technical College System, Northwood Tech may not have significant authority over some academic requirements, policies, and procedures. However, in its review of institutional rosters, the peer review team observed committees over which faculty have traditional leadership and oversight to be heavily weighted by administration. Assessment, for instance, is understood to be driven by faculty leadership through HLC's Assumed Practices: "Faculty participate substantially in ... analysis of data and appropriate action on assessment of student learning and program completion." Of 10 members on the Assessment of Student Learning Team, three slots are dedicated to faculty positions. The District Team Approval Form shows four faculty comprising 29% of the membership, with administration at 50% of the membership. Led by co-chairs, neither co-chair is faculty. Additional evidence from the District Team Approval Request Forms indicates of the 14 members on the Perkins Team, 13 are administrators and one is staff. Perkins funds and professional development opportunities significantly impact curriculum and faculty operations.

While the institution integrated a MyChoice academic delivery model for students, the evidence the College recognized the potential impact and additional workload on faculty is not clearly understood. As a model to support student access and success, there does not appear to be evidence to indicate the

role of faculty in advocating for and supporting the learning delivery model. This model of learning to support students is widely appreciated by students yet a source of stated frustration by faculty. To that end, while the College Leadership Team is ensuring its operations and its decisions align to the mission of "Learning First," this may be another example of the lack of shared governance in decision-making when ensuring faculty are involved in setting academic processes.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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The Comprehensive Evaluation team suggests the following recommendations for Northwood Technical College to respond to the perceived lack of a shared governance culture. The lack of such current operation for employees appears to devalue and minimize the employee participation in institutional operations. In identifying a model relevant to the culture of Northwood Technical College, a visual may add to employee understanding of the levels of decisions, constituent involvement in those decisions, the hierarchy of the decision-making process, and the role of the committee, College Leadership Team, College President, and Board in the kinds of decisions made, procedures implemented, and policies approved. While engagement in ACCT and other state organizations to support Board involvement is evident, a structured training process rather than an ad hoc process to acclimate new Board members is needed. When one of the newer members of the Board was asked of training, the response described a conversation with a mentor.

The College has two years (January 2025) to show progress in this recommendation.

1. The College is to explore the council, senate, or other comparable approach to establish an inclusive shared governance model that supports institutional culture and a space for the employee voice to be valued and expressed in a safe environment. This model might include an opportunity for classified staff and faculty representatives a seat at the Board table to share monthly reports related to those constituent groups.
2. The College is to create a decision-making template / flow chart graphic that substantiates the value and meaning to committee or team memberships and the role of such teams or task forces in contributing to the shared governance process.
3. The College is to establish and implement a structured training process for new and veteran Board members to include shared governance, budget operations and resources, and institutional operations.

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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5B1

Northwood Technical College provided evidence to support its employees overall are qualified and trained for their positions. A robust professional development plan supports each employment group, and the team referenced and explained the Maestro system to track and manage professional development. A distinction was made by the Human Resources staff of the Faculty Qualifications tracking system through Taleo and the professional development system, Maestro. Faculty qualifications would be managed and stored in Taleo; the professional development activities are tracked and managed in Maestro. These resources are good examples of the infrastructure to ensure employees have access to professional development. The peer review team also experienced the majority of sessions via BlueJeans and Teams virtual meeting technology. This enables employees to participate in meetings regardless of geographic location or campus. This technology and the ease with which the college uses this BlueJeans and/or Teams system to connect all campuses is evident, and this practice aligns to the institution's one-campus initiative. Northwood Tech uses the Blackboard LMS for delivery of its academic programming. The college is currently transitioning to Blackboard Ultra for its academic LMS.

The college supports a significant technology infrastructure that unites all its campuses and education centers, ensuring employees and students regardless of location experience a single Northwood Technical College. A member of the Facilities leadership team participated in several meetings and referenced the focus the institution has on its facilities. The peer review team was able to tour the facilities, noting the modern, bright, and welcoming environment supported by the attention to the facilities. In a virtual and face-to-face meeting with students representing the different campuses, the peer reviewers had the chance to hear students praising their laboratory and learning spaces in their different programs, from veterinary technology to diesel mechanics to automation for industrial systems. As well, peer reviewers were able to experience the mobile learning resources such as the firefighter burn unit and a mobile welding operation. These equipment investments and operations

allow the college to take its education and training into its communities. Northwood Tech has the infrastructure to support its myriad and vast operations.

## 5B2

Northwood Technical College College Leadership Team has access to substantive data resources not only through the Wisconsin Technical College System operations but also through the College's Office of Institutional Research. The 2021-2023 strategic plan, "Evolve XXIII," sets clear and measurable goals to respond to the College's "Learning First" mission. To that end, these five themes (transferability, program optimization, perception, rebranding, diversity/equity/inclusion) are discussions and initiatives at the forefront of the institution's operations. The team was able to learn more about each of these initiatives, and the College is poised to make significant strides toward these efforts in the 2021-2023 timeline. Limited to the delivery of the Associate of Applied Science by way of Wisconsin Technical College System policies and financial aid barriers for students, those barriers began crumbling when Northwood Tech Board minutes indicate Board action approved the College delivering the transferable associate of arts and associate of science. Rebranding is evident on campus, in the meeting with the industry and education partners, and with the employees. A critical theme of the strategic plan is its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The College has dedicated and invested resources to a DEI coordinator, and the peer review team met with the team to confirm institutional resources and dedication to this initiative. As the College advances such initiatives, it has a significant opportunity to partner with the indigenous tribes of the Northwood Technical College region. The peer review team observed the Assurance Argument made no reference to the indigenous population and referenced the College's minority population as data points. The appointment of the DEI coordinator is evidence the College is committed to efforts to support diversity and inclusion in providing equitable opportunities to its region's populations.

## 5B3

Northwood Technical College has a process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances. The College aligns to Wisconsin Technical College System policies for fiscal and physical infrastructures. Members of the peer review team met with the Chief Financial Officer, who articulated insight to the process for budgeting and finances. The College has established timelines and protocol for budget communications while ensuring technical programs are supported in equipment needs. Faculty defined the process for submitting equipment needs, and the College Leadership Team and academic leaders tally those requests and ensure programs have access to the most critical needs to support the delivery of technical programming. The College is transparent in its budgeting process. Moody's Investor Services has recognized the College with a AAA rating; the College's CFI consistently falls Above the Zone for HLC CFI ranges. In its Federal Compliance materials, the College disclosed financial matters that were not deemed at the level of findings as required for Federal Compliance reporting. However, the College leadership is to be commended for disclosing its actions in submitting materials to Appendix A in spite of the US Department of Education not imposing negative actions. In situations where financial conditions were identified through auditing processes, the College had either mitigated the matter or established policies and procedures to respond to the matter within reasonable timelines.

## 5B4

The College has fiscal allocations dedicated to its educational purposes. In meeting with the CFO, he explained the process the College uses to support equipment needs through a capital expenditures budget. While the physical plant operations comprise 44% of the capital expenditures budget, 44.s%

is lined to instruction and instructional resources. The Grants and Resource Development staff are to be commended for the success in securing several grants approaching \$15 million, providing additional resources for student support, academic program delivery, industry and educational partnerships, and underserved populations. In tracking and managing educational equipment needs and academic program-related budgets, the CFO, business office staff, budget managers, and members of the College Leadership Team stated the College distributes budget updates every two weeks to ensure budget managers have access to fiscal lines and budget processes.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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5C1

Northwood Technical College allocates its resources in a responsible and efficient manner. The argument included evidence to show the process for budget allocation and approval, and expenditures show the "Learning First" mission is upheld with 69% of the institutional budget supporting teaching and learning activities. Northwood Tech engaged in a Facilities Assessment in 2017 with an update in 2020 to analyze the College's different campuses, outreach, and educational centers and the facility updates and upgrades needed for those locations. On a broad, district-wide scale, the College has integrated operations and systems to unite the organization as a single entity while ensuring the infrastructures to deliver programming are updated, efficient, and relevant for instruction and delivery of curriculum. Northwood Tech should be commended in its ability to deliver programming through such a diverse and vast operation to maintain a college district of such geographic size. To support the delivery of credit and noncredit programming to its region, Northwood Tech attends to and dedicates financial and human resources to the physical operations (plant/facility needs); information technology (uniform IT operations, use of various meeting technologies); and learning management systems (Blackboard). In its onsite discussion with the CFO/Vice President for Administrative Services, the team learned of the complex processes involved in responding to the facility and equipment needs of the College as well as the management of the budget for such needs.

5C2

The College has a substantive process in place to link its operations to the planning and budgeting process. The process includes both instructional and non-instructional units. The pandemic caused

some delays in implementing the non-instructional processes, yet the College appears to have resumed those opportunities for assessment and alignment to the planning and budgeting process. The FY23 Budget Book defines the purpose to the planning and budgeting, which includes definitions related to the institutional operations, long-range planning, debt management, and capital improvement plans. The Budget Book states the role of the budget in using and assessing resources available to support the entirety of the College operations while also validating "the budget plan and the strategic plan are aligned in order to achieve the overall goals and objectives of the College." The program review, subsequently, is linked to the College's Strategic Plan, EVOLVE XXIII.

5C3

Northwood Technical College has invested in tools to ensure the College captures the perspectives of both internal and external constituent groups in its planning. In describing its process of strategic planning, it is apparent Northwood Tech is consistent in working with its varied constituencies to establish planning themes and goals. The framework of research and methodology of developing the Twenty-Four by Twenty-One Strategic Plan and the EVOLVE XXIII Strategic Plan include community surveys and community member engagement as well as business and industry engagement and school district relationships. The internal constituents include students, staff, and faculty. Members of the Board are also involved in these research, inquiry, and feedback stages of planning. To garner more specific feedback and recognize institutional perception in its region, the College invested in a significant community survey led by Clarus corporation. The College Leadership Team, other organizational leaders, faculty, and staff referenced the information and results gained from use of this community survey, suggesting to the peer review team this tool and its results continue to drive conversation and actions of College leadership through this feedback as voice of the College's constituents. A particular population and constituent group that emerged in the onsite conversations as a valued external constituent lacked acknowledgement in the Assurance Argument. The engagement with the tribal populations is more significant than identified in the Assurance Argument, and the opportunities for partnerships and engagement with this regional population should not be overlooked by the College as it continues to consider the perspectives of its constituent groups as it rebrands to a one-college model responsive to the needs of its constituents.

5C4

In its evidence submitted and in the meeting with the CFO/Vice President of Administrative Services, the peer review team learned of the College's response to fluctuations in enrollment and sources of revenue. The College CFI is The College sustained its operations through the pandemic in spite of enrollment declines. In addition to College policies and processes, the Wisconsin Technical College System and Wisconsin administrative codes frame the College's planning policies related to debt service and capital equipment. The 2021 Audit stated the "District continues to maintain a strong financial position with adequate operating reserves within board policy guidelines." The audit noted the College's losses during the pandemic while acknowledging the institution's stable financial planning and management to weather such emergencies that impact enrollment.

5C5

Northwood Technical College provided examples of institutional planning that responds to external factors. The College's "Next Generation of Learning" task force, created in 2017, states as its purpose to "gather feedback and ideas from faculty, staff, and students through surveys and meetings that will assist the College moving forward with new learning strategies and keeping pace with ever-changing technologies. The focus is on all learning, to include both credit and non-credit delivery of learning



methodologies." In addition, the College transitioned its district administration from a centralized model with a dedicated administrative facility in Shell Lake to a distributed, district-wide model of leadership. This redistribution of leadership establishes leaders throughout the district; the more important action from this restructure is the renovations to the Shell Lake facility. This facility has been remodeled and repurposed as the Health Education Center to allow the College to better serve the needs of the region's healthcare industries and partners. The College has also responded to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts by hiring a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator. In the conversations with the DEI team, this initiative by the College is further evidence of the College's recognition of its role as a leader in the region cognizant of the need to be intentionally and respectfully engaged in leading Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts in this region of Wisconsin. Finally, while already a College heavily dependent on distance services and operations, the pandemic further stabilized the College's distance-related services to support minimal disruption to instructional operations and the delivery of its "Learning First" mission. This forward-thinking mentality allowed for business-continuity during a time when many organizations were establishing operations to pivot to alternative learning modalities.

5C6

Northwood Technical College has a triangulation method in place to support the implementation of its plans through its various guiding documents. Its Mission, Vision, and Values document, Board-related ENDS goals, strategic plan, program review materials, and divisional team and committee purpose documents align to support the College's planning processes. It is also through these myriad operations that it focuses on its mission to ensure "Learning First" is the core target to drive all operations.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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Northwood Technical College has sufficient resources, structures, processes and planning strategies in place to fulfill its mission and support quality improvement in not only its administrative operations but also its instructional delivery. The College's ability to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic challenges lends credibility to its existing structures and operations while allowing the College the opportunity to build on and identify areas for continued responsiveness, growth, and improvement. Fiscal management is significant and strong, and the leadership of the institution exhibits a conservative fiscal management process while ensuring operational access to innovative delivery models, equipment to support both plant and instructional needs, and fiscal policies to support operations.

## FC - Federal Compliance

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### Rating

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Met

### Federal Compliance Filing Form

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- Northwood\_Tech\_Federal\_Compliance\_Overview\_08-2022

### Rationale

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Federal Compliance Rationale Template

**Instructions:** When an evaluation that includes a Federal Compliance Review is released to the peer review team in the Assurance System, copy and paste the text below into the Rationale section of the Federal Compliance tab.

#### 1. ASSIGNMENT OF CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH AND TUITION

**Conclusion:**

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

**Rationale:**

Northwood Technical College (College or Northwood Tech) acknowledges in its Federal Compliance Filing (Filing) that the purpose of degrees and diplomas awarded are to prepare the learner for employment and operates under the authority of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). WTCS is a system of 16 public technical colleges administered by the state of Wisconsin, awarding two-year associate degrees, one- and two-year technical diplomas, and short-term technical diplomas and certificates. The Federal Compliance reviewer took note that associate degree and technical diploma courses must be assigned credit and be approved by WTCS before offering to students.

Assignment of credits and programs are based on standards provided in Northwood Technical College Administrative Policy 1-401 and outlined in the WTCS Education Services Manual, serving as the authoritative document and guide for WTCS policies, processes, and procedures related to all aspects academic programming.

The College's Administrative Procedure 1-401A describes in great detail how course credit is assigned to each program level. Program level courses are those courses designed to meet the requirements of the various programs offered within WTCS. The following program levels have been established to for use (clarification and consistency) system-wide with some flexibility for the 16 WTCS member institutions:

- Aid Code 10 Associate of Applied Science Degree (60 to 70 credits)
- Aid Code 11 Advanced Technical Certificates (9 to 25 credits)
- Aid Code 17 Local Technical Certificates (Awarded at option of college & any Aid Code)
- Aid Code 20 Associate of Arts / Science in Liberal Arts (60 to 70 credits)
- Aid Code 30 Technical Diploma (2 to 25 credits)
- Aid Code 31 Technical Diploma (26 to 53 credits)
- Aid Code 32 Technical Diploma (54 to 70 credits)
- Aid Code 50 Apprenticeship (Vary by length of time, credits & hours)
- Aid Code 61 WTCS Pathway Certificate (2 to 18 credits)

All program level courses contain eight digits with the first two digits reflecting the program level and are limited to five (5) or less credits. The latest review of current administrative policy and procedure by WTCS occurred April 26, 2022. Further examination by the reviewer revealed the fact that program level courses must be assigned to one or more programs in that such courses are designed to meet specific purposes within a curriculum (page 8 of the Filing). The Filing also identifies and explains why some program level courses would not be assigned to an approved program curriculum (page 8 of the Filing).

The College included in the Filing pertinent information on the manner in which WTCS assigns credit for associate degree/technical diploma courses. The stated goal is to ensure courses offered by districts across the state have the proper aid code, instructional area, credits, and materials fees. Specifically, these are five standards in play:

**Type A Hours:** Instructor-delivered content via multiple learning format, including face-to-face and a variety of distance education modalities; lectures, presentations, course outcomes, learning objectives, and assessment and exclude clinical, independent, and personalized study

- Associate Degree/Liberal Arts (18 50-minute periods of instruction per term equal one associate degree credit; student outside effort—two hours for each period of instruction)
- Technical Diploma (36 50-minute period of instruction per term equal one associate degree credit; student outside effort—two hours for each period of instruction)

**Type B Hours:** Hands-on and experiential learning via laboratory, simulation, shop or other non-work-based learning experience; course outcomes, learning objectives, and assessment; instructor interaction is frequent and continuous, including face-to-face and a variety of distance education modalities

- Associate Degree/Liberal Arts (36 50-minute periods of instruction per term equal one technical credit; student outside effort—one hour for each period of instruction)
- Technical Diploma (36 50-minute period of instruction per term equal one technical credit; student outside effort—two hours for each period of instruction)

**Type C Hours:** Independent and individualized study, instructor-led work-based learning,

extended lab or instructor-led clinics

- Associate Degree/Liberal Arts (54 50-minute periods of individualized/independent instruction per term equal one associate degree credit; student outside effort—none required)
- Technical Diploma (54 50-minute period of individualized/independent instruction per term equal one technical degree credit; student outside effort—none required)

**Type D Hours:** Work-based learning including internship, externship, job shadowing, and Clinical or practicums; employer provides direct or indirect supervision; clearly specified and documented learning criteria; course outcomes, learning objectives, and assessment; instructor provides direct oversight of program standards

- Associate Degree/Liberal Arts (72 50-minute periods of work-based learning per term equal one associate degree credit; student outside effort—none required)
- Technical Diploma (72 50-minute period of work-based learning per term equal one technical credit; student outside effort—none required)

**Type E Hours:** Work-based experience (require Education Director pre-approval); students have shown competency in work at approved off-site employer; employer works with student to meet learning objectives

- Associate Degree/Liberal Arts (216 hours of work-based learning experience equals one associate degree credit; student outside effort—none required)
- Technical Diploma (216 hours of work-based learning experience equals one technical credit; student outside effort—none required)

Of particular importance is the fact the hours approved through the WTCS are based on an 18-week schedule. Northwood Tech schedules using a 16-week semester. As a result, when scheduling courses, hours are converted using the following structure: total hours divided by 18 multiplied by 16 equals Northwood Tech scheduled hours. Please note the calculations below:

- **Type A Hours:** (Associate Degree: 16 scheduled hours; Technical Diploma 32 scheduled hours)
- **Type B Hours:** (Associate Degree & Technical Diploma 32 scheduled hours)
- **Type C Hours:** (Associate Degree & Technical Diploma 48 scheduled hours)
- **Type D Hours:** (Associate Degree & Technical Diploma Hours 64 scheduled hours)
- **Type E Hours:** (Associate Degree & Technical Diploma Hours 192 scheduled hours)

In addition to reviewing the standards used to set credit hour policy for all types of courses, regardless of mode of delivery, the reviewer examined the process use by Northwood Tech to verify the length of academic periods and compliance with credit hour requirements when scheduling classes. All courses are assigned credit and approved by WTCS before the class schedule is developed and students enrolled. Courses are submitted to WTCS for approval and are assigned as occupational specific/technical studies or occupational supportive/general students. The first two digits (aid code) of the eight-digit program level course will reflect the program level of the course. The middle three digits reflect the instructional area, and the last three digits identify the course. Again, all courses at the College are limited to five credits or less.

The Federal Compliance reviewer requested, and received from the College, a sample of 45 course

syllabi to determine whether Northwood Technical College adheres to its published credit hour policy and procedure and adheres to WTCS standards. Northwood Tech sent the requested sample from last year, including a mix of syllabi from different semesters (Fall 2022, Summer 2022, and Spring 2022), academic divisions, locations, and delivery modalities. Also included were syllabi from dual credit (offered in high schools) courses. All course syllabi met the credit hour stipulation for the program level and program type. It is the judgment of the reviewer that the College fully adheres to its credit hour definition (which matches the federal definition and WTCS standards) and has procedures in place for ensuring credit hour requirements are met when scheduling courses.

Northwood Tech audits its syllabi on a regularly basis. By the start of each semester, the Curriculum Office notifies faculty that they must create and submit a syllabus in the Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS). A spreadsheet showing all the courses running each semester is created. The Curriculum Office runs a report at certain points during the semester and documents in the spreadsheet that syllabi have been entered into WIDS. Associate Deans review syllabi from their respective areas to ensure the required information is posted. This includes course and instructor information, textbook and supply information, and other various guidelines. Associate Deans also ensure all syllabi are posted into Blackboard, the College's Learning Management System.

As for tuition and fees, the Filing asserts that all programs are subject to a uniform fee per credit established by the WTCS Board and state legislature. The current tuition and fee structure can be found on pages 16-17 of the Filing with a note that the rate is subject to change. The rates in the Filing align with the rates published in the 2022-23 catalog and on the College's website.

In sum, the College's credit hour awarding system is intact and meets HLC requirements. WTCS provides general oversight and authority for management of the academic enterprise, which Northwood Tech demonstrates strict adherence.

## 2. INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

### **Conclusion:**

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

### **Rationale:**

Northwood Technical College provided an extensive set of documents highlighting its institutional complaint policies and procedures. Collectively, these documents describe how the institution receives and addresses complaints with defined timetables and how it processes information and trends gathered from periodic studies of complaints. Through Northwood Tech Administrative Policy J-500, the College communicates the process for students to file a complaint about any service or function of Northwood Tech. This process will be published annually in the Student Handbook which is available to students both online and in a printed format.

The handbook identifies student rights and responsibilities including the student complaint process, which can be found on page 199 of the handbook--Student Handbook: Student Complaint Process. Additionally, the student complaint policy and procedure can be found on the Consumer Disclosures page of the website. Students may also provide feedback on their experiences, give suggestions, file a complaint, or pass along a positive experience via the Contact Northwood Tech page of the

Northwood Tech.

Equally important, students who attend a WTCS member institution can also file a complaint at the System level in in three categories defined by the United States Department of Education, including complaints that: Allege violations of Wisconsin consumer protection laws, including but not limited to false advertising; Allege violations of Wisconsin laws related to the licensure of postsecondary institutions; or Relate to the quality of education or other State or accreditation requirements. The WTCS student complaint process can be found here: <https://www.wtcsystem.edu/student-complaints/>.

The Student Handbook on page 199 provides contact information to help students connect with the correct person when they have a concern or a complaint. The Handbook is located on the Current Student Resources page of the College's website. Further, Northwood Tech has in place a procedure for tracking student complaints to ensure they are appropriately addressed and to identify potential trends. An annual report of student complaints by category and campus is reviewed by the Vice President of Student Affairs and shared with the College Leadership Team with an expectation of trends being incorporated into strategic planning and process improvement activities. The reviewer found that the College's student complaint policies and procedures reflect good practice and are in keeping with HLC requirements.

### 3. PUBLICATION OF TRANSFER POLICIES

#### **Conclusion:**

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

#### **Rationale:**

Northwood Tech is a technical institution with a defined purpose of preparing its students for the world of work. The College published its transfer policies on the website and makes clear to students the various ways credit can be transferred to Northwood Tech and how credit can be received from other higher education institutions. Students entering directly from high school may pursue the one or more of the following options: (1) Start College Now program, (2) Advanced Standing Agreement, (3) Dual Credit Courses, and (4) Youth Apprenticeship. For adult learners with military service, a viable option is pursuit of military credit.

Northwood Tech provides maximum recognition for work completed through national or regionally accredited postsecondary institutions or other education, training, or work experiences pertinent to the student's new educational programming and Northwood Tech's graduation requirements. Students must be admitted to a program before credit is awarded.

In setting Credit for Prior Learning standards, the College aligns with WTCS policies which are detailed in WTCS Administrative Policy Manual #323. Northwood Tech documents this information on the Credit for Prior Learning page of the website and also communicates this information to students on pages 146-147 of the Student Handbook.

Northwood Tech has established articulation agreements with over 30 colleges. Details are found on the Transfer Options page of the College's website. Additionally, students can transfer credit for coursework from other accredited colleges to Northwood Tech if the course meets at least 80 percent of Northwood Tech's course competencies and, in most cases, if a grade of "C" or better was received.

Some Northwood Tech programs have higher grading standards. There is no fee for transferring credits.

Northwood Tech uses Transferology, a nationwide network designed to help students explore their college transfer options to assist students with determining how classes will transfer to Northwood Tech. Final determination of transfer credit acceptance is made by the campus credit for prior learning contact or registrar once admitted to a program and once Northwood Tech receives official transcripts of all completed coursework. Details can be found on the Transfer Credit from Other Colleges page of the College's website.

The reviewer concludes that the College has in place an orderly process for evaluating transfer credit from other colleges and universities and for determining applicability toward Northwood Tech's associate degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates.

#### **4. PRACTICES FOR VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY**

##### **Conclusion:**

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

##### **Rationale:**

Northwood Tech has students enrolled in distance education courses. The College identifies the delivery method of each course through its student enrollment system. Each course is assigned a code identifying the delivery method, which students are made aware at the time of registration. Students who participate in courses or programs through distance delivery are required to use logins and passwords to access Northwood Tech's learning management system (LMS), Blackboard. Courses coded as online are automatically enrolled in the system. Access to the LMS requires students to login with their eight-digit student identification. For initial access, they are provided a default password and the password and recovery methods are then individualized by the student. The College has implemented a Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) system for all students (begun Summer 2022).

The reviewer did sample a number of hybrid and online courses during the credit hour policy review and noted that constant language alerting students to Blackboard help assistance, if needed.

Referenced in the Federal Compliance Filing were several additional methods used by faculty to ensure enrolled students are completing the assigned work in their distance-delivered courses. Some require on-site/proctored exams, using Respondus to lock down the testing environment within Blackboard. Others use targeted assignments that help to identify students' writing/submission styles, level of comprehension, and experiences and SafeAssign, a tool used to prevent plagiarism and to create opportunities to help students identify how to properly attribute sources. The Filing also stated the College purchased the services of Grammarly which also serves as a plagiarism detector and assists in improving writing skills. Students do not incur any additional costs for the College's measures to verify their identity and to protect their privacy.

Through Administrative Procedure J-115A, Northwood Tech has implemented an Identity Theft Prevention Program to protect personal identifying information. Specifically, this procedure helps the College verify student identity when fulfilling information requests and has steps in place for reporting suspected or reported red flag issues (pages 44-47 of Filing).



Overall, the reviewer concludes that the College's methods for ensuring accuracy in the verifying student identity and student privacy represent best practice.

## **5. PUBLICATION OF STUDENT OUTCOME DATA**

### **Conclusion:**

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

### **Rationale:**

As demonstrated by the evidence presented in its Filing, Northwood Tech understands the importance of disclosing student outcome data to the public. As such these data at the institutional level have been linked to the College's website within the top three levels. Definitions of technical terms are included within the links along with the source of the data on the Research and Resources page of the website. Available student outcome data on the Research and Resources page include the following: Enrollment, Graduation Rates, Persistence, Licensure Rates, and Retention. In addition, results from the most recent Graduate Follow-up Survey are posted. The reviewer believes these reports meet HLC standards for publication of relevant student outcome data.

## **6. STANDING WITH STATE AND OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES**

### **Conclusion:**

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

### **Rationale:**

Evidence was presented in the Filing that Northwood Tech displays its standing with state agencies and other accrediting bodies via the College's website. Wisconsin Executive Order #151 is the result of a joint effort by the WTCS, the University of Wisconsin System, and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities to ensure that there is a clear statement that each of our member institutions is legally authorized to provide higher education. This Executive Order verifies state authorization: Executive Order #151.

Northwood Tech has several programs that are required to maintain professional or specialized accreditation or licensure requirements. By virtue of its technical college mission, Northwood Tech has relationships with multiple professional accreditation and licensing agencies. Page 48 of the Filing contains a list of these programs (with links to program webpages). This information is published on each program's catalog information page and is also linked on the Accreditation page of Northwood Tech's website. The College is not on sanction and none of its programs operate with provisional status. The Veterinary Technician program received its initial accreditation status in February 2021.

## **APPENDIX A: TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

Complete this section only if the institution has submitted an Appendix A. Review any negative actions taken against the institution and identify any implications for the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or other HLC requirements. Provide a detailed rationale for any Core Components identified as Met with Concerns or Not Met.

**Rationale:**

Northwood Tech included a section, Appendix A, in spite of the fact there have been no negative actions taken by the United States Department of Education against the institution since the last comprehensive review in 2017. That is, the College has not experienced any implications of negative findings (such as, repeat findings, limitations imposed on aid programs, or suspension or termination action). Appendix A contains copies of annual audited financial statements ending June 30 for the past five years that identified eight conditions of interest, reported the auditor's recommended actions, and recorded the College's responses to recommended actions. An overview of the conditions is as follows:

**2017**

Condition: Error in recording OPEB expenses

Recommended Action: Implement procedure to have second review of general ledger distribution of OPEB expenses

College's Response: Already implemented procedure to minimize potential of error in the future

**2018**

Condition #1: Error in reimbursing expenses using OPEB trust

Recommended Action: Implement procedure to have second review of type of expenses reimbursed by OPEB trust

College's Response: Already implemented procedure to minimize potential of error in the future

Condition #2: Return of Title IV

Recommended Action: Implement a review process relative to Return of Title IV calculation process

College's Response: Agreed with recommendation

**2019**

Condition #1: Error in not moving encumbered expense to accounts payable once the work was performed (proposed material adjustment entry)

Recommended Action: Establish policies and procedures to ensure all transactions are properly recorded prior to audit

College's Response: Will work to establish policies and procedures

Condition #2: Error in Title IV Calculation (Need to return unearned assistance)

Recommended Action: Implement plan for regular G5 draws to ensure Title IV balances are returned in proper timeframe

College's Response: Agreed with findings, Effective immediately, will reconcile student ledger activity with 5 and make adjustments weekly

## **2020**

Condition #1: Material Adjustment

Recommended Action: Need to record a material adjusting entry discovered as result of the audit procedures performed

College's Response: Performed material adjusting entry

Condition #2: Return to Title IV Calculations (completion of one calculation that fell outside 45-day window; 29 calculations were returned late)

Recommended Action: Ensure Title IV return of financial aid procedures are in place and enforced

College's Response: Agreed. Testing for affected students in 2019-2020, all calculations and returns were completed within the required timeframe.

## **2021**

Condition: Late Enrollment Reporting for Loan Programs (failure to update the enrollment roster by purging those who have graduated or ceased to enroll)

Recommended Action: Review procedures for reporting graduate students to the Clearinghouse with staff tasked with the responsibility

College's Response: Concurred with the recommendation

Overall, the reviewer concluded that there are no major issues pertaining to the College's compliance with Title IV responsibilities and its relationship with the Department of Education. It is advisable to have the chief finance officer and director of student financial aid present for the team's review of Federal Compliance. Specifically, the team should inquire about the status of improvements made to the Return of Title IV aid.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## Review Dashboard

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

## Review Summary

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### Interim Report(s) Required

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#### Due Date

1/12/2024

#### Report Focus

CORE COMPONENT 3.C FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

Based upon the evidence provided within the Assurance Argument and the on-campus faculty qualifications review, the team recommends that Northwood Technical College submit an interim monitoring report by January 2024 to address the processes it has put in place for ensuring that all campus faculty are appropriately qualified and that those qualifications are regularly reviewed. This interim monitoring does not apply to the dual credit faculty.

The interim report should include:

- Clarification of the institution's Occupational Qualifications by Position document that includes as the first qualification for the majority of its technical faculty a "Bachelor's degree or equivalent in field or closely related field".
- Systematic, program-specific standard for determining qualification through equivalent experience.
- An approved process for updating faculty licenses/certifications to ensure that all faculty positions requiring state/national licensures are up-to-date.

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#### Due Date

9/1/2026

#### Report Focus

CORE COMPONENT 4.B ASSESSMENT FOCUS WITH YEAR FOUR ASSURANCE REVIEW

Based on the evidence provided with the 2022 Assurance Argument, supporting supplemental materials, and on-campus interviews, the Peer Review Team has determined that Northwood Technical College is still in the early stages of implementing effective assessment and data utilization processes. As a result, the Review Team is requesting an assessment-focused interim monitoring report be included with Northwood Tech's Year Four (4) Assurance Review. While an arbitrary date has been noted in this system of 9/1/2026, the due date of this embedded report is to align with the Year Four (4) Assurance Review.

The interim assessment report is to include:

- Course-level data collection and utilization processes that include direct course outcome/competency-focused measures and evidence that data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning in both technical and general studies courses.
- Program-level data collection and utilization processes that include direct TSA/program outcome-focused measures for TSA and Non-TSA aligned programs and evidence that the data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning.
- Institution-level data collection and utilization processes that include direct measures within the academic

areas to produce actionable EE-focused data and evidence that the data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning.

- Cocurricular data collection and utilization processes that produce actionable EE-focused data and evidence that the data is used to inform the development and implementation of improvement strategies to support student learning.
  - A clear connection between course (program and general studies), program, and institutional assessment data collection and utilization processes to support student learning as part of the annual Program Review process.
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## **Due Date**

1/10/2025

## **Report Focus**

CORE COMPONENT 5.A SHARED GOVERNANCE

The Comprehensive Evaluation team suggests the following recommendations for Northwood Technical College to respond to the perceived lack of a shared governance culture. The lack of such current operation for employees appears to devalue and minimize the employee participation in institutional operations. In identifying a model relevant to the culture of Northwood Technical College, a visual may add to employee understanding of the levels of decisions, constituent involvement in those decisions, the hierarchy of the decision-making process, and the role of the committee, College Leadership Team, College President, and Board in the kinds of decisions made, procedures implemented, and policies approved. While engagement in ACCT and other state organizations to support Board involvement is evident, a structured training process rather than an ad hoc process to acclimate new Board members is suggested. When one of the newer members of the Board was asked of training, the response described a conversation with a mentor.

The College has two years to show progress in this recommendation (January 2025).

1. The College is to explore the council, senate, or other comparable approach to establish an inclusive shared governance model that supports institutional culture and a space for the employee voice to be valued and expressed in a safe environment. This model might include an opportunity for classified staff and faculty representatives a seat at the Board table to share monthly reports related to those constituent groups.
  2. The College is to create a decision-making template / flow chart graphic that substantiates the value and meaning to committee or team memberships and the role of such teams or task forces in contributing to the shared governance process.
  3. The College is to establish and implement a structured training process for new and veteran Board members to include shared governance, budget operations and resources, and institutional operations.
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## **Conclusion**

The Comprehensive Site Review peer team appreciated the opportunity to visit Northwood Technical College and conduct a review at such a pivotal, energized time for Northwood Technical College. On campus, the "one-college" initiative drives many conversations and is discussed with an exhilarated and focused optimism. The tenure of the president bodes well for the College in an era when college presidents have an average tenure of 6-7 years. The president continues to shape and drive a vision and mission for Northwood Technical College, both of which will take the College into the preparations for its next Comprehensive Review.

While a core group of leaders drive the efforts and initiatives, an undercurrent of opportunity awaits Northwood Tech. This may include embracing the employee base and delivering initiatives that include a representative employee voice that some staff and many faculty perceive as lacking. This College is at a juncture to expand programming exponentially in the region. In so doing, having faculty and staff believe they are part of the leadership and effort -- rather than five people who comprise the College Leadership Team -- is critical. This effort is also essential to employee retention and employee sense of value.

The additional undercurrent of opportunity for Northwood Tech is in working with its indigenous population in its region. The potential for such collaboration is evident. The addition of a DEI coordinator, who identified as a member of a regional indigenous tribe, to the organizational chart is significant. As well, the College's dedication of resources is evidence of its commitment to serving its diverse and varied populations in a diverse and varied region of the state.

Northwood Tech is on the cusp of a new century and renewed vision and mission. This momentum will serve the College well over the next several years. Finally, the Review Team recommends Northwood Tech be eligible to choose its HLC Pathway, as the Comprehensive Evaluation Peer Review team does not see persistent evidence of qualifying variables for placement on the Standard Pathway. The Team believes with every confidence the College can adjust and realign the items noted in the monitoring reports and should have the eligibility to choose its HLC Pathway.

## **Overall Recommendations**

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### **Criteria For Accreditation**

Met With Concerns

### **Sanctions Recommendation**

No Sanction

### **Pathways Recommendation**

Eligible to choose

### **Federal Compliance**

Met





## Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

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<b>INSTITUTION and STATE:</b>	Northwood Technical College, Wisconsin
<b>TYPE OF REVIEW:</b>	Open Pathway - Comprehensive Evaluation Visit
<b>DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:</b>	Specific review of compliance with faculty qualifications requirements solely for dual credit faculty has been suspended until the first evaluation occurring on or after September 1, 2025.
<b>DATES OF REVIEW:</b>	09/19/2022 09/20/2022
<input type="checkbox"/> No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements	

### Accreditation Status

Control: Public

**Recommended Change: no change**

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Degrees Awarded: Associates

**Recommended Change: no change**

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Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2013 - 2014

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2022 - 2023

**Recommended Change: 2032-2033**

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### Accreditation Stipulations

General:

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

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

**Recommended Change: no change**

Additional Locations:



## Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

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The institution has been approved for the Notification Program, allowing the institution to open new additional locations within the United States.

**Recommended Change: no change**

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

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

**Recommended Change: no change**

Accreditation:

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### Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway:

Open Pathway

**Recommended Change: Eligible to Choose**

Upcoming Events:

**(No Upcoming Events)**

### Monitoring

Upcoming Events:

Due January 12, 2024: an interim report to address the processes it has put in place for ensuring that all campus faculty are appropriately qualified and that those qualifications are regularly reviewed.

Due January 10, 2025: an interim report to show progress in responding to the perceived lack of a shared governance culture, and to identify a model relevant to the culture of the College. This report to include evidence of explorations of various models; a decision-making template/flow-chart that substantiates value and meaning of stakeholders; and a structured training process for new and veteran board members.

Due September 1, 2026: an embedded report focused on assessment, to include course-level, program-level, and institution-level data collection and utilization; co-curricular data collection and utilization processes that produce actionable data leading to improvement strategies to support student learning; and clear connections drawn between course, program and institutional level assessment data and collection and utilization processes to support student learning as part of the annual program review process.



# Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

(No Upcoming Events)

## Institutional Data

### Educational Programs

**Recommended  
Change: no  
change**

#### Undergraduate

Associate Degrees 27

Baccalaureate  
Degrees 0

#### Graduate

Master's Degrees 0

Specialist Degrees 0

Doctoral Degrees 0

**Certificates** 97

### Extended Operations

#### Active Branch Campuses

UNITED STATES, 2100 Beaser Avenue, Ashland, Wisconsin, 54806

UNITED STATES, 1019 Knowles Avenue, New Richmond, Wisconsin, 54017

UNITED STATES, 600 North 21st Street, Superior, Wisconsin, 54880

**Recommended Change: no change**

#### Active Additional Locations

UNITED STATES, 555 Minneapolis Ave S, Amery, Wisconsin, 54001

UNITED STATES, 400 Polk County Plaza, Balsam Lake, Wisconsin, 54810

UNITED STATES, 1908 WI-46, Balsam Lake, Wisconsin, 54810

UNITED STATES, 221 S Prentice St, Clayton, Wisconsin, 54004

UNITED STATES, 1010 8th Ave., Cumberland, Wisconsin, 54829

UNITED STATES, 257 West St. George Ave, Grantsburg, Wisconsin, 54840

UNITED STATES, 1751 Broadway Street, Hammond, Wisconsin, 54015

UNITED STATES, 1940 Ridgeway St, Hammond, Wisconsin, 54015

UNITED STATES, 1920 Ridgeway St, Hammond, Wisconsin, 54015

UNITED STATES, 15618 Windrose Lane, Suite 106, Hayward, Wisconsin, 54843

UNITED STATES, 10320 N Greenwood Lane, Hayward, Wisconsin, 54843



## Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

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UNITED STATES, 11040 N State Road 77, Hayward, Wisconsin, 54843  
UNITED STATES, 1501 Vine Street, Hudson, Wisconsin, 54016  
UNITED STATES, 119 E 4th Street, Ladysmith, Wisconsin, 54848  
UNITED STATES, 1104 West Lake Ave., Suite 1, Ladysmith, Wisconsin, 54848  
UNITED STATES, 1700 Edgewood Ave E., Ladysmith, Wisconsin, 54848  
UNITED STATES, 8105 7th St, Luck, Wisconsin, 54853  
UNITED STATES, 4751 Country Road F, Maple, Wisconsin, 54854  
UNITED STATES, 575 Hospital Rd., New Richmond, Wisconsin, 54017  
UNITED STATES, 701 E 11th St, New Richmond, Wisconsin, 54017  
UNITED STATES, 30 S Wisconsin Ave., Rice Lake, Wisconsin, 54868  
UNITED STATES, 505 Pine Ridge Drive, Shell Lake, Wisconsin, 54871  
UNITED STATES, 802 County Hwy B, Shell Lake, Wisconsin, 54871  
UNITED STATES, 24022 4th Ave., Siren, Wisconsin, 54872  
UNITED STATES, 750 East Louisiana St, St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, 54024  
UNITED STATES, 2600 Catlin Ave, Superior, Wisconsin, 54880  
UNITED STATES, N4540 Co Rd I, Tony, Wisconsin, 54563  
UNITED STATES, 205 N Oak Street, Turtle Lake, Wisconsin, 54889  
UNITED STATES, 24663 Angeline Ave, Fire #4424, Webster, Wisconsin, 54893

**Recommended Change: no change**

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### Contractual Arrangements

46.0302 Electrician - Courses Only - Electricity (Construction) Apprentice - Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards

**Recommended Change: no change**



## Multi-Campus Reviewer Form

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After conducting the electronic and on-site portions of the multi-campus visit, the assigned peer reviewer completes a separate Multi-campus Reviewer Form for each campus that was reviewed. The reviewer then emails completed forms to the rest of the comprehensive evaluation team members. The team discusses and integrates the findings into its final comprehensive evaluation report in the Assurance System, including any concerns or recommended follow-up.

After the visit, the team chair should submit all Multi-campus Reviewer Forms as PDFs at [hlcommission.org/upload](https://hlcommission.org/upload). Select “Final Reports” from the list of submission options to ensure the institution’s materials are delivered to the correct HLC staff member. (Note: The submission webpage can be accessed through the Assurance System by clicking the Submit Final Form button on the Forms tab.) The Multi-campus Report from the institution and the reviewer forms become part of the institution’s permanent file and are shared as appropriate with future evaluation teams.

### Instructions

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A Multi-campus Reviewer Form should be no more than five pages. The form begins with a brief description of the campus and its operations to provide the context for the on-site team’s deliberations.

For each review category, provide 2–3 evidence statements that make clear the team’s findings in relationship to the Criteria and Core Components. Check one of the following for each category:

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the review category. (The reviewer may cite ways to improve.)
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the review category.

This form does not request a recommendation from the reviewer. Instead, the full evaluation team is expected to include a discussion of the evidence related to the multi-campus visit in its deliberations about the oversight, management, and educational quality of extended operations of the institution. The team will incorporate evidence on extended operations into the final team report. Further, the full team may determine that a pattern of concern exists across multiple categories of a single campus or more than one campus and may result in a recommendation for additional monitoring or sanction.

# Report Template

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Name of Institution: Northwood Technical College

Name and Address of Branch Campus:  
1900 College Drive, Rice Lake, WI 54868;  
2100 Beaser Ave. Ashland, WI 54806;  
600 N. 21<sup>st</sup> St. Superior, WI 54880

Date and Duration of Visit: 9/20/22 [Rice Lake and Ashland] and 9/21/22 [Superior]

Reviewer: Tamara Arnott (Superior and Ashland); Paul Bruinsma and Christina Johnson (Rice Lake) --  
Team Chair Caron Daugherty and Richard Counts remained at the New Richmond Campus for additional Comprehensive Review meetings.

Tamara Arnott, Paul Bruinsma, and Christina Johnson traveled to the multilocation visits.

## 1. Campus Overview

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Provide a brief description of the scope and operations of the campus. Include information about consortial or contractual arrangements, if applicable.

Northwood Technical College offers a wide variety of academic programs across a vast district primarily through use of technology. The locations where a course is delivered face to face use “BlueJeans” virtual meeting technology to provide Online Live opportunities for students to learn from home, another campus, or any other location with internet access. Additionally, each campus offers one or more unique signature programs that are primarily offered face to face. For example, Ashland offers Marine Repair, while Superior offers HVAC. A new Health Center hosts the lab portion of medical-focused course work centrally where nursing students from locations across the district meet to gain hands-on lab skills. As indicated, many courses are delivered across the district through technological means such as Online (asynchronous), Online Live (synchronous instruction through ITV with online components), Flex, and “Your Choice” – where students elect how to attend, such as Online Live, onsite, or by viewing a recording of a class session. Reading material is available online, and homework and assessments are primarily project-based or through timed individual exams using Blackboard LMS.

## 2. History, Planning, and Oversight

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Provide 2–3 evidentiary statements on the effectiveness of the institution’s planning, governance and oversight processes at the campus and in relationship to the broader systems of the institution, particularly as they relate to enrollment, budgeting and resource allocation at the institution.

### Judgment of reviewer (check one):

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

### Evidentiary Statements:

The leadership/administration and management of these campuses is done centrally, with managerial/supervisory personnel spread across all four campuses with district-wide responsibilities. Membership on various committees includes district leadership, campus leadership, staff and faculty. The ratio of administrators and staff and faculty on these teams is heavily weighted to members whose roles are primarily administrative.

Data extracted from District Team Approval Request Forms:

Team	# Admin. (vp, dean, mngr, director, supervisor)	# Staff (technician, coordinator, assistant)	# Faculty (instructor)	% Faculty
Assessment of Student Learning	7	3	4	29%
Benefits Review Team	6	5	3	21%
Perkins Team	13	1	0	0%
Professional Development Team	12	3	2	12%
Safety and Security Team	16	3	1	5%

### 3. Facilities and Technology

Provide 2–3 evidentiary statements on the institution’s facilities and technology at the campus and their suitability to the needs of the students, staff and faculty, as well as the educational offerings. Consider, in particular, classrooms and laboratories (size, maintenance, temperature, etc.); faculty and administrative offices (site, visibility, privacy for meetings, etc.); parking or access to public transit; bookstore or text purchasing services; security; access for people with disabilities; and other services or facilities (food or snack services, study and meeting areas, etc.).

#### Judgment of reviewer (check one):

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

### Evidentiary Statements:

The quality of the facilities and technology at the campus in Ashland and Superior are equivalent in overall quality to the spaces available at the other locations (Rice Lake and New Richmond). The interior design of all four campuses is the same, lending to the feeling of Northwood’s “one college” concept and vision. The spaces were comfortable, open, and welcoming. In the conversations by peer reviewers on campus with the campus staff, the reviewers perceived the employees shared a feeling that the smaller

campuses were the last to be updated, and that they received used equipment/materials from the larger campuses when these others experienced upgrades. The reviewers substantiate the expectations of the category through those onsite conversations held September 21 and 22, 2022.

#### 4. Human Resources

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Provide 2–3 evidentiary statements on appropriateness of faculty and staff qualifications, sufficiency of staff and faculty for the campus, and the processes for supporting and evaluating personnel at the campus. Consider the processes in place for selecting, training and orienting faculty at the location, as well as the credentials of faculty dedicated to the campus and other faculty.

##### Judgment of reviewer (check one):

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

##### Evidentiary Statements:

Expectations for faculty qualifications are outlined in documents such as the Occupational Qualifications by Position, Minimum Qualifications of Instructional Staff Teaching for Academic Credit, and Verification of Employment forms. Exceptions are documented through the Qualifications Expectation Agreement form, and the example provided in the addendum indicates one faculty member under this agreement. As mentioned, many instructors teach across the four locations through use of technology, such as face to face at their campus and Online Live, or through Online delivery at the other three locations. Faculty and staff are centrally managed by the leadership team, some of whom are housed in Superior or Ashland. Faculty indicated access to a strong mentor/mentee program to support new instructors across the college district. The college President is present on all campuses, but the schedule of his time on any particular campus varies.

#### 5. Student and Faculty Resources and Support

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Provide 2–3 evidentiary statements on the student and faculty services and academic resources at the campus, as well as the processes to evaluate, improve and manage them. Consider, in particular, the level of student access (in person, by computer, by phone, etc.) to academic advising/placement, remedial/tutorial services, and library materials/services. Also, consider the level of access to admissions, registration/student records, financial aid, and job placement services, as well as attention to student concerns. Finally, consider the resources needed by faculty to provide the educational offerings.

##### Judgment of reviewer (check one):

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.



### Evidentiary Statements:

Students have access to equivalent student support services at all of the campuses. Each campus offers student services available onsite, and examples include these offices: Registration, Financial Aid, Health Services, Counseling, Academic Support/Tutoring, Accommodations for ADA/Learning Disabilities, ITLC (Learning Technology Center/library/helpdesk), Veterans Support, Career Planning, and the Bookstore. Of 259 students responding to a survey of ease of access to services, 38% of the students indicated using at least one service while 62% of the students did not use services. Additionally, 55% of students who used services experienced no challenges in accessing the amenity (“not at all challenging”) and 28% of the respondents shared their experience in accessing services as Somewhat or Very Challenging. These data were aggregate in nature and not broken down by campus. The reviewer accessed the Environmental Scanning Report, November 2020 for additional evidence.

## 6. Educational Programs and Instructional Oversight

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Provide 2–3 evidentiary statements on the institution’s capacity to oversee educational offerings and instruction at the campus. Identify whether the institution has adequate controls in place to ensure that information presented to students is ample and accurate. Consider consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, attention to student concerns.

### Judgment of reviewer (check one):

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

### Evidentiary Statements:

Information provided to students is ample and accurate and by campuses through the College’s web site: northwoodtech.edu. Students may access information and services in person at any campus location, through mail, by phone or online.

Technology requirements and training for students in the use of hardware and software is available on each campus through the ITLC.

The curriculum requirements and changes/modifications for the majority of programs are set by the WTCS (state office), with required technical skill assessment expectations aligned. Programs with professional organizations or national approvals, such as gerontology or nursing, for example, additionally meet the standards of these accrediting bodies. The reviewer accessed the “How Faculty Deans Participate” document, which was found in the Assurance Argument Addendum for additional evidence. This document provided evidence to support this category.

## 7. Evaluation and Assessment

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Provide 2–3 evidentiary statements on the institution’s processes to evaluate and improve the educational offerings of the campus and to assess and improve student learning, persistence and

completion sufficiently in order to maintain and improve academic quality at the campus. Consider, in particular, the setting of outcomes, the actual measurement of performance, and the analysis and use of data to maintain/improve quality. Identify how the processes at the branch campus are equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main campus.

**Judgment of reviewer (check one):**

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

**Evidentiary Statements:**

Regardless of campus location, the College assesses programs using the same process. The College provides data/metrics of student success and completion as an organization, and data are also available by location. Student satisfaction is high with ~96% of students very satisfied or satisfied with training experience delivered by the College. Evidence to support this category includes the Graduate Follow up Survey report of 2020-2021 and the WITC College Effectiveness Measures.

## 8. Continuous Improvement

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Provide 2–3 evidentiary statements that demonstrate that the institution encourages and ensures continuous quality improvement at the campus. Consider in particular the institution’s planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement of the campus, as well as alignment of the branch campus with the mission and goals of the institution as a whole.

**Judgment of reviewer (check one):**

- The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.
- The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

**Evidentiary Statements:**

The Campus Leadership Teams (CLT) lead continuous improvement activities at each location. Members of the CLT are also members of the collegewide leadership group. Common themes that are heard across the sites and throughout the district include these: transferability, program optimization, perception, rebranding, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Evidence was provided in the following materials: 2021-2023 Strategic Plan Monitoring Report and the District Team Approval Request Forms.