



HIGHLINE  
COLLEGE

YEAR SEVEN  
**Comprehensive  
Self-Evaluation**  
REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE  
**Northwest Commission on  
Colleges and Universities**

AUGUST 28, 2020

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# INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

## COLLEGE PROFILE

Highline College, founded in 1961, serves over 17,000 students in Washington state via multiple pathways for students to maximize academic, personal, and professional goals. Within our six pathways, we offer associate degrees that prepare students for transfer, associate degrees and certificates in over 40 professional-technical programs, and six Bachelor of Applied Science degrees, creating a complete pathway for students starting in pre-college. We also offer a wide range of short-term training programs and continuing education classes.

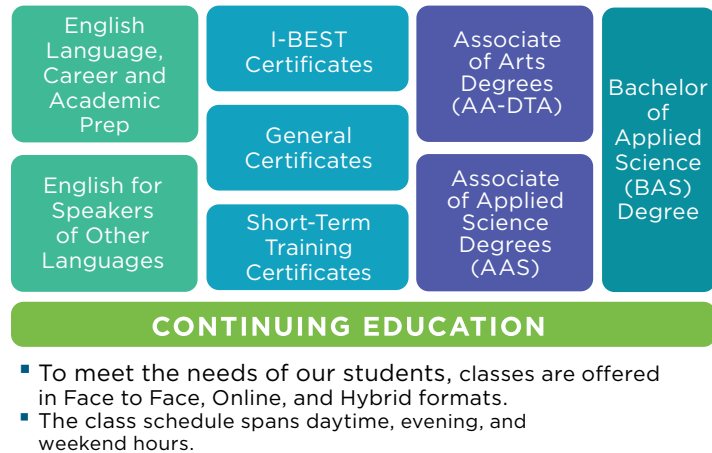


Figure 1. Six Pathways to Completion

Figure 2. Class and Degree Choices

Our main campus encompasses 33 buildings on 77 acres on a beautiful hillside location in Des Moines. This year we opened the doors on the remodeled Health and Life Sciences Building with state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories for our Nursing, Medical Assisting, and Respiratory Care programs.

Highline College is the most racially diverse community college in the state — almost twice as diverse as the system average — with 77% of our students reporting their race or ethnicity as other than white. The majority of our students are local adult learners, but we also serve over 350 international students each year, along with approximately 1,400 high school juniors and seniors in the state’s Running Start co-enrollment program. Students’ purposes for attending are varied, with 32% seeking basic skills or pre-college education, 36% declaring an intention to transfer to a four-year institution, and 27% attending for work-related courses or other educational goals.

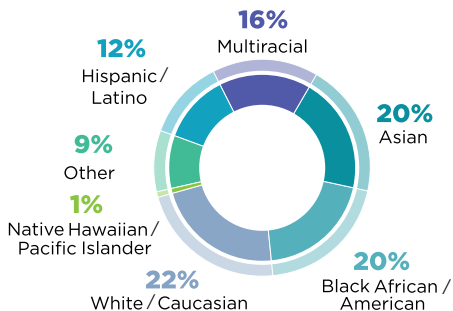


Figure 3. Students by Race/Ethnicity

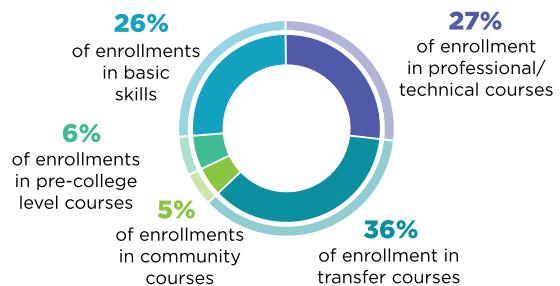


Figure 4. Student Demographics by Type of Student

## CORE THEMES

Highline College's strategic plan and mission are guided by four core themes.

### CORE THEME 1 — STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, LEARNING, AND ACHIEVEMENT

The college has implemented numerous campus initiatives and programs to increase access, retention, and completion, and to close equity gaps including:

#### Academic

- I-BEST
- Learning and Teaching Center
- Multiple measures placement
- Pathways to College
- TRiO

#### Holistic

- Accessible technology
- Achieve
- Benefits Hub
- Wellness Center

### CORE THEME 2 — DIVERSITY AND GLOBALISM

In response to our changing student demographics, we have implemented numerous organizational changes, campus initiatives, and programs including:

- Cohort learning communities
- Global Programs
- Culturally Responsive Campus course

### CORE THEME 3 — PRESENCE WITHIN THE COLLEGE'S COMMUNITIES

An integral part of the communities in south Seattle and King County region,

Highline College partners with many community organizations, school districts, and businesses to provide resources and services.

- Airport University
- Alumni Relations
- Black and Brown Summit
- Coffee with a Cop
- Cyber Security Competition
- Expanding Your Horizons
- High School Dual Credit articulation agreements
- High School Signing Day
- La Conferencia
- Marine Science and Technology (MaST) Center
- Y.E.L.L. (Young Educated Ladies Leading) Female Summit
- YWCA Greenbridge

### CORE THEME 4 — SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is broadly defined as stewardship of our environmental, financial, and human capital resources. Current sustainability initiatives include:

#### Environmental

- Green Week
- MaST Center
- Sustainability Task Force

#### Financial

- Enrollment management
- Library digital resources

#### Human Capital Resources

- ctcLink software migration

# BASIC INSTITUTIONAL DATA FORM

## INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

**NAME OF INSTITUTION:** Highline College  
**Mailing Address:** 2400 S. 240th St.  
**City:** Des Moines  
**State/Province:** WA  
**Zip/Postal Code:** 98198  
**Main Phone Number:** 206-878-3710  
**Country:** United States

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Title:** Dr.  
**First Name:** John  
**Last Name:** Mosby  
**Position:** President  
**Phone:** 206-592-3200  
**Fax:** 206-592-3779  
**Email:** jmosby@highline.edu

### ACCREDITATION LIAISON OFFICER

**Title:** Dr.  
**First Name:** Emily  
**Last Name:** Lardner  
**Position:** Vice President  
**Phone:** 206-592-3711  
**Fax:** 206-592-3780  
**Email:** elardner@highline.edu

### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

**Title:** Mr.  
**First Name:** Michael  
**Last Name:** Pham  
**Position:** Vice President  
**Phone:** 206-592-3984  
**Fax:** 206-592-3754  
**Email:** mpham@highline.edu



## INSTITUTIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

### INSTITUTIONAL TYPE *(Choose all that apply)*

- Comprehensive
- Specialized
- Health-Centered
- Religious-Based
- Native/Tribal
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### DEGREE LEVELS *(Choose all that apply)*

- Associate
- Baccalaureate
- Master
- Doctorate
- If part of a multi-institution system, name of system:

### CALENDAR PLAN *(Choose one that applies)*

- Semester
- Quarter
- 4-1-4
- Trimester
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL

- City       County       State
- Federal       Tribal
  
- Public                      OR                       Private/Independent
- Non-Profit                      OR                       For-Profit

## STUDENTS (ALL LOCATIONS)

### Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment (Formula used to compute FTE: IPEDS)

**Official Fall: 4626**

(most recent year) FTE Student Enrollments

Classification	Current Year: 2019-20	One Year Prior: 2018-19	Two Years Prior: 2017-18
Undergraduate	5016	5497	5842
Graduate			
Professional			
Unclassified			
Total all levels	5016	5497	5842

### Full-Time *Unduplicated* Headcount Enrollment.

(Count students enrolled in credit courses only.)

**Official Fall: 6310** (most recent year) Student Headcount Enrollments

Classification	Current Year: 2019-20	One Year Prior: 2018-19	Two Years Prior: 2017-18
Undergraduate	9961	9859	10199
Graduate			
Professional			
Unclassified			
Total all levels	9961	9859	10199

## FACULTY (ALL LOCATIONS)

- Numbers of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff
- Numbers of Full-Time (only) Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff by Highest Degree Earned

Include only professional personnel who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

**Total Number** Number of Full-Time (only) Faculty and Staff by Highest Degree Earned

Rank	Full-Time	Part-Time	Less than Associate	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Specialist	Doctorate
Professor								
Associate Professor								
Assistant Professor								
Instructor	141	237	1	3	5	91	0	43
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant								
Research Staff and Research Assistant								
Undesignated Rank	141	203			2	39		16



## FACULTY (ALL LOCATIONS)

**Mean Salaries and Mean Years of Service of Full-Time Instructional and Research Faculty and Staff.** Include only full-time personnel with professional status who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

Rank	Mean Salary	Mean Years of Service
Professor		
Associate Professor		
Assistant Professor		
Instructor		
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant		
Research Staff and Research Assistant		
Undesignated Rank	73,699	11

## INSTITUTIONAL FINANCES

**Financial Information.** Please provide the requested information for each of the most recent completed fiscal year and the two prior completed fiscal years (three years total).

Please attach the following as separate documents submitted with the Basic Institutional Data Form

- Statement of Cash Flows
- Balance Sheet – collapsed to show main accounts only; no details
- Operating Budget
- Capital Budget
- Projections of Non-Tuition Revenue

Financial information can be found here: <https://nwccu.box.com/s/ux1vge9qvwz75j6v7rxk5nhew5w99vpe>

## NEW DEGREE / CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

### Substantive Changes

Substantive changes including degree or certificate programs planned for 2020-2021 approved by the institution's governing body. If NONE, so indicate.

*Please feel free to create the list using the headings we have specified and submit it as an Excel spreadsheet.*

\* This listing does not substitute for a formal substantive change submission to NWCCU

Substantive Change	Certificate/ Degree Level	Program Name	Discipline or Program Area
None			

## DOMESTIC OFF-CAMPUS DEGREE PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT SITES

Report information for off-campus sites within the United States where degree programs and academic credit coursework is offered. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

- **Degree Programs** - list the **names** of degree programs that can be completed at the site.
- **Academic Credit Courses** - report the **total number** of academic credit courses offered at the site.
- **Student Headcount** - report the **total number** (*unduplicated headcount*) of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.
- **Faculty Headcount** - report the **total number** (*unduplicated headcount*) of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

### Programs and Academic Credit Offered at Off-Campus Sites within the United States

Name of Site	Physical Address	City, State, Zip	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Head-count	Faculty Headcount
SeaTac international Airport - Port Jobs	SeaTac Airport Mezzanine	SeaTac, WA 98158		12	115	4 (all part time)
YWCA Greenbridge Learning Center	9720 8th Ave SW	Seattle, WA 98106		12	105	3 to 5 (all part time). (Varies by quarter.)

## DISTANCE EDUCATION

Degree and Certificate Programs of 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more where at least 50% or more of the curriculum is offered by Distance Education, including ITV, online, and competency-based education. Adjust entries to category listings below as appropriate. ***If your list is longer than ten entries, please create a list using the heading we have specified and upload it in the box provided as an Excel spreadsheet.***

\* This listing does not substitute for a formal substantive change submission to NWCCU

Name of Site	Physical Address	Degree/Certificate Name/Level	Program Name	Student Enrollment (Unduplicated Headcount)	On-Site Staff (Yes or No)	Co-Sponsoring Organization (if applicable)
Online		Associate	Associate of Arts	2933	Yes	
Online		Associate	Associate of Business	535	Yes	

## PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC COURSES OFFERED AT SITES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Report information for sites outside the United States where degree programs and academic credit coursework is offered, including study abroad programs and educational operations on military bases. (Add additional pages if necessary)

- **Degree Programs** - list the **names** of degree programs that can be completed at the site.
- **Academic Credit Courses** - report the **total number** of academic credit courses offered at the site.
- **Student Headcount** - report the **total number** (*unduplicated headcount*) of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.
- **Faculty Headcount** - report the **total number** (*unduplicated headcount*) of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

### Programs and Academic Credit Offered at Sites outside the United States

Name of Site	Physical Address	City, State, Zip	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Headcount	Faculty Headcount
None						

# PREFACE

Here we provide an update on institutional changes since the Midcycle Self-Study Report in 2016.

Highline College is a vibrant, community-responsive institution where change is a constant. In the last four years alone, we have seen a variety of substantial new initiatives and developments. Among the highest impact are the following:

## ADMINISTRATION

After decades of stability in upper level administration, the last four years have brought almost complete turnover and an expansion in senior administration.

- An interim President was hired in 2017; a new President hired in spring 2018.
- An interim Vice President for Student Services was hired in fall 2018; a new Vice President for Student Services hired in March 2020.
- An interim Vice President for Academic Affairs was hired in summer 2019 and was named permanent Vice President for Academic Affairs in summer 2020.
- A new Vice President for Institutional Advancement was hired in fall 2018.
- A new Executive Director of Human Resources was hired in summer 2019.
- Executive Director of IT Services was added to Executive Cabinet in summer 2019.

## REORGANIZATION

Along with new administration, Student Services and Academic Affairs have recently been restructured to better support student achievement.

- Student Services was reorganized in 2019 to clarify roles in support of student access, retention, and success.
  - New dean positions were added and departments were grouped to align functions.
  - Additionally, Workforce Education Services moved from Academic Affairs to Student Services in order to centralize funding sources in one organizational unit.
  - The Associate Dean of Advising was reorganized in May 2019 as the Dean of Advising and Enrollment Services.
  - The Associate Dean of Student Development and Conduct was recognized in May 2019 as the Dean of Student Support and Funding Services.
  - An Associate Dean for Student Life was created in May 2019 to oversee the Center for Leadership and Service, Center for Cultural & Inclusive Excellence, and Campus View.

- Academic Affairs was reorganized in 2019 to align with work in student attainment.
  - The Dean of Instructional Resources position was retired in 2019 and was replaced with a new Dean of College and Career Readiness (began in January 2020).
  - The Dean of Transfer and Pre-College Studies position was reorganized in fall 2019 as a Dean of Academic Pathways & Partnerships.
  - The Dean of Extended Education was reorganized in fall 2019 into the Dean for Organizational Development and Extended Education.
  - The Director of Workforce and Baccalaureate Education was reorganized into an Associate Dean for BAS and Workforce Pathways.
  - An interim Executive Dean for Workforce Education was hired in summer 2019 and replaced with a permanent Dean of Workforce Education in summer 2020.

## STUDENT ATTAINMENT INITIATIVES

From 2015 to 2019, Highline worked to build a center of support for students so that more students attain credits and degrees at Highline. This has been a cross-divisional effort. It originated with vision, support, and guidance from Academic Affairs and received support from Student Services, Institutional Advancement, Administrative Services, and community partners. Together we created what is now our one-stop student [Support Center](#). Other examples are below:

- The Math Attainment Initiative began in 2017 and has since formed the Math Attainment Committee, a cross-divisional faculty and staff group that studied and created recommendations to increase math attainment, including corequisite math classes.
- In light of the success of placement reform and corequisite courses in English, corequisite classes were developed, piloted, and instituted at Highline for college math courses in 2019-20. This came from the significant work of the Math Attainment Committee together with the Math Department.
- The Advising Council was charged in fall 2018 with developing a comprehensive model for advising at Highline, building on the earlier work (2014-2016) of the Advising Task Force. They presented a four-stage model for advising to campus stakeholders in spring 2020.
- Highline became a Guided Pathways college (via the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) in 2019-20, expanding on the Guided Pathways work of the Advising Task Force and the subsequent Advising Council. This has been one of the main areas of work in Academic Affairs and Student Services in 2019 and 2020, calling on over 65 employees to work on the design.

## CONSTRUCTION

Highline has been busy with construction on three major projects in the last four years.

- Campus View Student Housing, a new building on Pacific Highway 99, built in collaboration with an investment group and currently leased through the Highline College Foundation, was completed and opened in 2019.
- In partnership with transit and city officials, the entrance to the college from Pacific Highway 99 was widened and repaved in 2019 as the first step to redesign the street access to campus. This will eventually incorporate the Campus View building into a College Way entrance boulevard, directly across — and visible — from a new Link light rail station.
- Building 26 was remodeled into a LEED building and opened in February 2020 and two energy inefficient faculty buildings were torn down. Thus faculty were moved into new locations, including Buildings 26, 18, and 15.



## ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS AND BUSINESS PROCESS CHANGES

Highline has been very busy adapting its technology and business processing to continually improve services for students and employees.

- Along with the rest of the Washington community and technical college system, Highline is working on a migration to a new centralized software system, running on PeopleSoft, and dubbed ctcLink. Highline has been working on preparatory work such as business process analysis for the project since 2016, but officially began the implementation phase in October 2019, working toward a February 2021 launch. We hired three new staff members in Information Technology Services (ITS) dedicated to the project and devoted substantial time and energy of numerous employees in ITS, Student Services, Administrative Services, Institutional Advancement, and Academic Affairs to adapting to this new technology.
- We have increased documentation for transparency in order to facilitate planning and access to information and to facilitate shared governance.

## EQUITY TASK FORCE

In 2016-17, a group of faculty and staff advocated for the creation of a new senior level position to guide Highline's equity initiatives. It took three years for this advocacy to

come to fruition. In the interim, the [Equity Task Force \(ETF\)](#) was formed. That group developed its charge in 2017-18, with its primary function serving as an advocacy body for EDI initiatives on campus, as well as facilitating dialogue between administration, faculty, and staff around issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Beginning in 2018, a representative from the ETF has served on screening committees for leadership positions across campus. In 2018, ETF engaged in sustained dialogue with Highline's new President, Dr. John Mosby, about the need to create the position of Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Recruitment for this new position — Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion — was conducted in 2019-20, but the search ultimately failed. A new search will be conducted in winter/spring 2021. ETF also advocated for the establishment of an annual professional development day, called the Equity Development Institute (EDI). The first EDI was held in May 2019. Members of the ETF worked with administration and staff across campus to establish this all-campus day, and ETF developed the content and recruited speakers for it. No classes were held, and services were closed so all staff and faculty could participate. In 2020, ETF designed and facilitated the second Equity Development Institute via Zoom. Unlike the previous year, the co-chairs of ETF were provided stipends/release time in recognition of the significant work involved in planning a campus-wide professional development event.

## STUDENT SUPPORTS

- A community pantry was opened in 2018 on campus as a result of significant planning and cooperation between several divisions on campus to provide resources and support, as part of the Working Students Success Network.
- An agricultural program was also initiated in 2018 in response to food insecurity on campus. The program now includes an on-campus garden.
- A partnership with King County Housing Authority was developed to assist students with housing needs.
- All aspects of student funding were reorganized to be under Student Support and Funding Services to provide students with centralized funding services.
- The Puget Sound Welcome Back Center at Highline College provides navigation support for internationally educated professionals who would like to return to their chosen careers. It provides information about licensure in various career fields and assists professionals in developing career pathway plans that build on their prior education, work experience, and skills.



## OFF-CAMPUS OFFERINGS

To respond to community needs that make it difficult for students to travel to campus, we maintain and expand these offerings:

- In 2020 we are preparing to open a new hub in Federal Way, providing courses toward associate degrees, certificates, and customized classes for students who can then transfer to the local University of Washington Tacoma or use the classes to advance in their career.
- We provide Early Childhood Education courses in White Center in Somali and English languages to meet the needs of Washington state birth-to-five workers.
- Highline College's English Language for Career and Academic Prep (ELCAP) department provides many English and GED preparation classes off campus to better meet the needs of our students. These community-based classes are often held in libraries, apartment complexes, schools, and community-based organization sites. These classes not only provide learning opportunities in convenient locations for students, the classes themselves become outgrowths of their site, focusing on the specific needs of that gathering place. An example is school-based English classes that specifically address the issues facing parents. In some sites, the partner at the site provides children's programming while parents study. This enables many students to attend classes with small children. In essence, in community classes, the community becomes the backdrop for learning. Additionally, the ELCAP department provides various college services in the community that increase access to career and educational pathways.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

The college's emergency response activation during COVID-19 is a Level 3 (highest) response effort and a full [Incident Command System \(ICS\)](#) has been activated. The ICS is engaged in the Washington State Public Health efforts to reduce the spread of transmission and meets in a virtual Emergency Operations Center weekly to review ongoing actions and plan to return services in a phased approach. The weekly meetings allow for cross-campus coordination and provide a united response and recovery effort that centers community safety and equity.

We have also set up a dedicated [COVID-19 resource page](#), where best practices, safety measures, and campus service updates can be shared with the community. Students or employees that have further questions about COVID-19 resources or planning efforts are encouraged to contact a centralized email.

Several ICS members participate in weekly calls with [county or state workgroups](#) and attend periodic State Board for Community and Technology College meetings that facilitate real-time discussion and feedback related to the ongoing response and compliance measures.



**As of August 2020, the college's primary incident objectives for response and recovery are to:**

- Understand the differing impacts of COVID-19 on all subsections of our campus community. Ensure equity and inclusion is in the forefront of all decisions made during the recovery process.
- Adapt online and [remote learning](#) to a flexible and dynamic instructional environment, where students and faculty have varied levels of access to campus. Continually review student feedback and faculty support needs and assess for effectiveness. Design instructional methods and faculty and student support to ensure equitable success for students and faculty.
- Provide assistance and guidance to vulnerable student populations and groups impacted by limited or no access to technology and the internet.
- Develop and disseminate messages and materials for the college community including students, employees, and our partner agencies through the Joint Information Center.
- Implement current [safety and social distancing](#) precautions as recommended by Public Health and the CDC to prevent the spread and exposure of COVID-19 in our community. Coordinate closely with custodial crew to ensure all accessed spaces are sanitized daily.
- Implement a phased approach in conjunction with the State's Safe Start plan to return services and employees back to campus, in a safe manner that implements recommended infection prevention techniques.
- Work with department/offices to assess ways to implement best practices in infection prevention tactics and social distancing.



Every department, division, and person on campus has been affected by the pandemic. We will highlight just a few areas to illustrate our response.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

As a response to the sudden increase in remote work of faculty and staff, as well as the move of all classes to emergency remote teaching for spring 2020, ITS staff worked diligently to provide the equipment and support required by all members of the campus community to teach, learn, and support students in a remote environment, while also working remotely themselves. While most of the basic frameworks were in place to support this work, not all of the tools were regularly utilized by many faculty and staff who previously performed most or all of their work physically on campus. In addition to getting available equipment in the hands

of faculty and staff, ITS worked to quickly expand access to virtual private network (VPN), video conferencing via Zoom, and “soft” telephone functionality for remote voice calls. ITS and Purchasing also worked to quickly acquire additional mobile technology equipment in a very tight market and were able to provide over 500 laptops, Chromebooks, and network hotspots to students, faculty, and staff in a short timeframe.

While the college has long made use of virtualization technology, Customer Support staff worked to find creative methods of expanding the access to virtualized desktops and software in support of remote teaching and working. The staff also made extraordinary efforts to provide access for students to advanced software specifically for design and engineering programs that normally require physical attendance in a campus lab.

Additionally, we are in the process of improving our network security as a response to the increase in remote work. We were already moving towards a zero-trust network policy, which means better access security, improved training, and network monitoring. COVID-19 requires us to move faster to the zero-trust end goal. We have a new cybersecurity training platform that we assigned and delivered to faculty and staff. Under the new platform, we increased training completion from 5% to 30%. Our goal is to get our training completion rate to 80%, with training repeated more frequently. We are implementing new network security monitoring services during summer 2020 and have a project to evaluate group access and group maintenance in our active directory to ensure the right employees have access to the right systems at the right time.

ITS is planning a shift to a mobile-first device structure for faculty and staff. This experience has shown that the majority of college employees are able to do their jobs remotely, but in some cases sufficient computing equipment has been an issue. Providing mobile devices as primary computers for faculty and staff will enable a more flexible response to future public health crises. The ongoing shift from on-premises software and storage to cloud services means that we are less reliant on the physical presence of desktops on campus to achieve our work.

Finally, we are exploring more sustainable options for providing remote computing for students, as well as better supports and training for students just getting started with remote learning through technology. While we are proud of how quickly we were able to move in providing emergency equipment and support, we are evaluating how we might be able to make that support more successful and sustainable.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF**

The shift to emergency remote teaching and services required rapid response from faculty and staff. Faculty who were scheduled to teach in spring quarter but

had not taught an online course at Highline College in the past two years (adjunct and full-time) were surveyed about their need for support. Results of that survey guided the supports that were put into place. Highline provided additional release time for faculty fellows working with Educational Technology to provide workshops and one-on-one support for faculty colleagues. Highline also provided stipends for a group of instructors (primarily adjunct faculty) to attend a basic Canvas and Zoom training session during spring break. Over the course of the quarter, faculty were invited to use mid-quarter evaluations instead of — or in addition to — end-of-course student evaluations to get formative feedback from students about this rapid shift to remote learning. Faculty were also invited to participate in a peer-to-peer reflection protocol where they were paired up and reviewed each other's classes from students' points of view, with a particular emphasis on interaction and engagement. Nearly 60 faculty participated in this and received modest stipends. Faculty reflections from that process are informing the design of educational technology support and professional development for fall 2020.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Student services were shifted online, as were library supports and the academic tutoring centers.

## **JOINT INFORMATION CENTER**

Under the auspices of the ICS, a [Joint Information Center \(JIC\)](#) was established with cross-divisional membership including representation from Executive Cabinet. The purpose of the JIC has been to draft, review, and coordinate campus communications to students, faculty, and staff about Highline's response to COVID-19. The JIC has been actively assessing its effectiveness through surveys, including assessing the effectiveness of campus-wide communications. As well, JIC adapted surveys developed by EDUCAUSE for faculty, staff, and students to gather information from campus stakeholders about supports needed as we move forward with remote teaching and learning. Through Institutional Advancement, Highline launched a series of "Highline cares" calls to students enrolled for spring quarter 2019 as a basic check in. Approximately 3,500 calls were made. Highline also established an email, [ask@highline.edu](mailto:ask@highline.edu) and the JIC is using information that comes through those emails to inform its ongoing work in coordinating communications with campus.

# CHAPTER ONE: MISSION, CORE THEMES, AND EXPECTATIONS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### AUTHORITY (ER 2)

Highline College, in accordance with the Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 28B.50, provides “thoroughly comprehensive educational, training, and service programs to meet the needs of both the communities and students.” The college operates under the authority of Title 1321 of the Washington State Administrative Code, its Board of Trustees, and the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

### MISSION AND CORE THEMES (ER 3)

Highline College’s core themes are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. They were approved by our Board of Trustees in 2010. An updated mission statement incorporating those themes was adopted in May 2013. In June 2014, the Board of Trustees reaffirmed the college’s mission, underscoring the alignment of that mission with the institution’s new Bachelor of Applied Science degrees. Our mission and core themes were most recently reaffirmed by our Board of Trustees in November 2019.

Our primary programs lead to degrees recognized in higher education, among them the Associate of Arts, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Science, and applied bachelor’s degrees. Per the Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 28B.50, our purpose is to serve the educational interests of our students. As a publicly-funded institution, all our funding exclusively fulfills our educational mission.

## STANDARD ONE - MISSION AND CORE THEMES

### STANDARD 1.A - MISSION

*The institution articulates its purpose in a mission statement and identifies core themes that comprise essential elements of that mission. In an examination of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations, the institution defines the parameters for mission fulfillment. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.*

**1.A.1** *The institution has a widely published mission statement, approved by its governing board, that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.*

**1.A.2** *The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.*

## Mission statement

Our mission statement is published on our website, is included on many print materials, and is posted widely around campus. In full, it reads as follows:

*As a public institution of higher education serving a diverse community in a multicultural world and global economy, Highline College promotes student engagement, learning, and achievement, integrates diversity and globalism throughout the college, sustains relationships within its communities, and practices sustainability in human resources, operations, and teaching and learning.*

## Interpretation of mission fulfillment

Highline College has, over the past 15 years, moved strongly and continuously toward a “culture of evidence” for its work. At the mission level, our work is guided by core themes, objectives, and benchmarks.

**Core themes:** Our four core themes represent the pillars of our mission and provide the lenses through which we view and assess mission fulfillment. The themes are:

1. Promote student engagement, learning, and achievement.
2. Integrate and institutionalize diversity and globalism throughout the college.
3. Build valuable relationships and establish a meaningful presence within Highline College’s communities.
4. Model sustainability in human resources, operations, and teaching and learning.

Some key characteristics make them particularly valuable. The core themes:

- Reflect longstanding, widely embraced campus priorities.
- Have remained largely stable over time, allowing for long-term focus and trend analysis.
- Are tied to metrics that are meaningful, verifiable, and directly assessable.

**Objectives:** Each core theme sets a large-scale goal, which is articulated through two to four directly measurable objectives. Every objective, in turn, is quantified by a limited set of indicators of achievement. For the indicators, we have been careful to select data sources that are meaningful, relevant, and sustainable over time. Wherever possible, the metrics are comparable to peers, using national or state data. Typical sources include:

- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), a widely used, nationally normed instrument which we have administered since 2008.
- Washington State Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) data.
- Community Perception Survey from Washington State University, Social and Economic Science Research Center (SESRC Report 19-060).
- “Great Colleges to Work For” survey from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Internal Highline College three-year average, set in Year One for most measures.

**Benchmarks:** Benchmarks are set in one of two ways. Where possible they are tied to the national norm or state average. In the absence of an external reference, we use our own three-year rolling average as a minimum standard for continuous improvement. The decision to benchmark against local averages and mid-percentile external norms is deliberate, reflecting several key environmental factors at Highline:

- Compared to its peers, Highline has long been modestly funded (see Standard 5).
- The extraordinary socioeconomic diversity of our communities demands commensurate innovation, cultural responsiveness, and respectful flexibility in meeting their needs. Thus, attaining our benchmarks shows we are performing at a solid level in our local environment.

For each measure, a benchmark represents a minimum threshold of fulfillment.

In short, our approach is informed by evidence-based practices that are known to increase student momentum and completion while capitalizing on the best instincts, values, and energies of our faculty and staff. Constant attention to the values articulated in our core themes and objectives, ongoing assessment of the indicators for the objectives, and strategic planning to sustain continuous improvement are how we interpret mission fulfillment.

### **Articulation of extent of mission fulfillment**

The annual [Mission Fulfillment Report](#) presents a comprehensive evaluation of institutional performance. For reasons similar to those of our benchmark-setting approach, we define our minimum threshold for mission fulfillment as achievement of 70% of our benchmarks across all core theme objectives. In calculating that figure, the report articulates the achievement level (relative to the benchmarks) on each indicator of every objective in the four core themes. While the final aggregate number is important, the discrete analysis of each indicator provides a rich, motivating source of information for strategic planning, campus discussion, and goal setting. The [Mission Fulfillment Report \(MFR\)](#) is posted annually and available on the Institutional Research (IR) website for review by the college community. Over the course of the year, our Executive Cabinet — comprised of the president, the four vice presidents, the executive directors of Information Technology Services and Human Resources, and the Director of the Office of the President — regularly use data from the MFR to ensure that the college is maintaining the course charted by the core theme objectives. In consultation with the Board of Trustees, Executive Cabinet is charged with developing goals and, where deficiencies arise, a data-driven response plan that delegates implementation to appropriate campus committees and governance groups. In this way, mission fulfillment is an ongoing process, carefully managed, effectively guiding the day-to-day work of the college.

## STANDARD 1.B – CORE THEMES

**1.B.1** *The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.*

**1.B.2** *The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.*

The following pages detail Highline’s four core themes, their associated objectives, indicators, measures, and benchmarks, as well as the rationale behind the college’s choices of metrics and benchmark levels.

### Core Theme 1: Promote student engagement, learning, and achievement

*Explanatory statement: Students at Highline are supported in pursuing their own educational pathways through innovative curricula, quality instruction, and student services. Students engage with their peers and community to experience multiple perspectives, practice civic responsibility, and contribute to the global community.*

**Objective 1:** Students engage with their curriculum, campus, and community for a meaningful educational experience.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>1.1: Students experience meaningful interactions with faculty in and outside of the classroom.</b>	<b>1.1.A: CCSSE “Student-Faculty Interaction” scores</b>	<b>Scores remain at or above national norm of 50.</b>
<b>1.2: Students experience HC courses as challenging and engaging.</b>	<b>1.2.A: CCSSE “Academic Challenge and Collaborative Learning” composite score</b>	<b>Score is at or above the national norm of 50.</b>
<b>1.3: Students participate in organizations and activities that provide support, mentoring, or leadership opportunities on campus and in the community.</b>	<b>1.3.A: Percent of students who participate in student organizations (CCSSE item 13.i.1)</b>	<b>Score remains at or above 20% (CCSSE national sample).</b>

We begin with student engagement because we believe it is the foundation of student success. Students who form meaningful relationships with faculty, staff, and fellow students are far more likely to stay in school than those who are less connected. Research supports this view.

We assess student engagement from three angles – engagement with faculty and staff, with the curriculum, and outside the classroom.

In benchmarking this group of indicators, we find the CCSSE national norm a meaningful minimum goal, particularly in light of our below-average funding level as an ABE/ESL serving school.

**Objective 2:** Diverse teaching methods, innovative curricula, and student support services fulfill the learning needs of students.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
2.1: Faculty continually plan, assess, and improve teaching methods based on assessment of student learning.	2.1.A: Percent of departments that document an improvement plan based on a department discussion of annual assessment and improvement data	Percent of departments reporting is 80% or better (internal).
	2.1.B: Percent of assessed students who met the course learning outcomes	Percent of students meeting outcomes is 75% (internal).
2.2: Faculty and student services personnel provide effective support to students.	2.2.A: CCSSE “Support for Learners” score	Score is at or above the national norm of 50.
	2.2.B: Percent of students on academic probation who raise their quarterly GPA to a 2.0 or above in any subsequent quarter in the academic year	Percent of students who raise GPA is 57% (internal).

Our second objective moves from student-staff engagement to the quality of the learning process itself. Here, we assess the educational experience itself through three lenses — quality of learning, adequacy of academic support, and effectiveness of academic recovery resources.

- *Measure 2.1.A* expects all departments to consistently assess student achievement of learning outcomes and innovate for improvement in student learning. Though in past years we have held this benchmark at 90%-plus, we temporarily reset it to 80% in 2019 to accommodate significant reforms intended to deepen our assessment work. Because these reforms demand a substantially higher level of faculty engagement in analyzing annual department data (see Assessment Committee Standards 4.A.3 and 4.B.2), we recognize that it will take a year or two to meet the 90% mark. We plan to return to it in the next cycle.
- *Measure 2.1.B* aims to make a global assessment of student learning itself, directly answering the question “Are students learning what we teach?” To answer, we calculate the percent of students meeting course-level learning outcomes annually, as reported in our [Assessment Tool](#) report. ([Access Assessment Tool](#). [How to Navigate the Tool](#)). We have set 75% as a meaningful minimum achievement level.
- For *Measure 2.2.A* we find the CCSSE national norm a meaningful minimum benchmark.



Added in 2016, *Measure 2.2.B* is set at 57% as a local stretch goal, set at five percentage points above our previous results. In 2016, we measured “the percent of students on first level academic probation who status remained the same or did not continue to decline further.” This was a target we felt we could achieve given our improvements in communicating and supporting students on probation (see Chapter 4, 2.2.B). We kept this benchmark for comparison purposes when we revised to our current measure of students who raise their GPA in any subsequent quarter.

**Objective 3:** Students achieve their goals by progressing on educational pathways.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>3.1: Advanced Basic Skills students will transition from non-credit to credit courses.</b>	<b>3.1.A: Percentage of Advanced Basic Skills students who transition to college-level courses during the academic year</b>	Percentage is at or above 10%.
<b>3.2: Degree- or certificate- seeking students will progress through significant educational milestones.</b>	<b>3.2.A: Percentage of eligible students who attain 15 college-level credits within the academic year</b>	Percentage is at or above 45%.
	<b>3.2.B: Percentage of eligible students who attain five college-level credits in quantitative reasoning within current year</b>	Percentage is at or above 25%.
	<b>3.2.C: Percentage of eligible students who attain a credential and 45 credits in current year</b>	Percentage is at or above 30%.
<b>3.3: Degree- or certificate- seeking students will attain credentials.</b>	<b>3.3.A: IPEDS graduation rate of full-time, first-time degree-seeking students within six years</b>	The rate is at or above Washington state peer institutions’ aggregate rate for the current year.

#### SAI Student Group Definitions

**3.1A** Advanced Basic Skills students include levels ABE3-4, GED 2 and ESL4-5. Transition means that an ABE 3-4, GED 2 or ESL 4-5 student in the current or previous year has attempted college-level credits during the year shown.

**3.2A** 15 College-level Credits - Transfer/Prof Tech/Running Start who had no prior college level credits

**3.2B** Quant Point - Transfer/Prof Tech/Running Start who had some prior college level credits but no college-level Math

**3.3A** 45 College-level Credits - Transfer/Prof Tech/Running Start who had 15+ prior college level credits

**3.3B** Current 2018-19 IPEDS graduation cohort entered during fall of 2013.

*Objective 3* measures student milestones along the educational pathway. As such, the objective reflects our belief that, if students are engaged and are learning, their successes should lead to tangible attainment markers – course completions, credit accumulation, and credentials.

- For *Measure 3.1.A* we set the local benchmark at 10%, our highest-ever performance on this measure, achieved in 2010-11.
- *Measures 3.2.A, 3.2.B, and 3.2.C* directly align with [Washington’s Student Achievement Initiative \(SAI\)](#) measures. An evidence-based, performance-based funding tool, SAI counts student attainment of key “momentum-points.” Because the SAI benchmarks can be analyzed both locally and in comparison to state averages, we have selected them as a convenient, meaningful, and rich source of data. For each, we have set as a benchmark our initial three-year rolling average as minimum threshold for mission fulfillment.
- For *Measure 3.3.A* we chose Washington’s aggregate rate as a meaningful comparison.

**Core Theme 2: Integrate and institutionalize diversity and globalism throughout the college**

*Explanatory statement: Highline College is an institution in which issues of diversity and globalism are central to decision-making, integrated throughout curriculum and pedagogy, and considered in all interactions among faculty, staff, and students. Faculty and staff are culturally competent, all students progress and achieve at comparable rates, and a positive campus climate exists for all.*

**Objective 1:** Diversity and globalism are infused throughout the curriculum; faculty employ a pedagogy that integrates diversity and globalism.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
1.1: Diversity and globalism are integrated broadly across the curriculum.	1.1.A: Percentage of courses with student learning objectives that link to the College Wide Outcome on diversity	Percentage is at or above 35%.
1.2: Students from diverse backgrounds experience positive interactions with faculty in and outside the classroom.	1.2.A: CCSSE “Student-Faculty Interaction” score, disaggregated by race/ethnicity	For each racial/ethnic category, the score is at or above the national norm of 50.
1.3: Students from diverse backgrounds experience HC courses as challenging and engaging.	1.3.A: CCSSE “Academic Challenge/Active and Collaborative Learning” composite score, disaggregated by race/ethnicity	For each racial/ethnic category, the score is at or above the national norm of 50.

We assess our success across three domains — course content, faculty interaction, and collaboration with diverse peers and faculty.

- *Measure 1.1.A* is admittedly somewhat arbitrary. The local 35% benchmark reflected an expectation that at least one-third of general education courses would incorporate diversity and/or globalism. At the beginning of this cycle, our curriculum management system allowed us to keep track of courses that met this learning outcome. Our move to the Curriculog system in 2016-17 no longer allowed us to track DGS learning outcomes that measured the college-wide outcome on diversity. Through the revision of the core competencies, we will be able to establish a valid replacement for the earlier measure (see discussion in Chapter 4 for more detail).
- For *Measures 1.2.A and 1.3.A*, we disaggregate student responses to the same CCSSE scores we used in Core Theme 1, with the national norm as a minimum benchmark.

**Objective 2:** Student support and business services initiatives successfully meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>2.1: Support and business services are effectively/ successfully delivered to diverse students.</b>	<b>2.1.A: CCSSE “Support for Learners” score, disaggregated by race/ethnicity</b>	<b>For each racial/ethnic category, the score is at or above the national norm of 50.</b>

In supporting the success of diverse learners, it is important to look beyond the classroom, since services and programs play an equally significant role in student success. Accordingly, we are committed to providing culturally responsive support services and assessing our success in doing so.

- For *Measure 2.1.A* we again use the national norm as our benchmark.

**Objective 3:** Students from diverse backgrounds progress, achieve goals, and complete degrees/certificates.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>3.1: Degree- and certificate-seeking students from diverse backgrounds achieve significant milestones at rates comparable to relevant comparison groups.</b>	<b>3.1.A: Percentage of eligible students who attain 15 college-level credits within the academic year, disaggregated by race/ethnicity</b>	<b>For each racial/ethnic category, the percentage is at or above 45%.</b>

	<b>3.1.B: Percentage of eligible students who attain five college-level credits in quantitative reasoning within the current year, disaggregated by race/ethnicity</b>	For each racial/ethnic category, the percentage is at or above 25%.
<b>3.2: Students from diverse backgrounds complete degrees and certificates at rates comparable to relevant comparison groups.</b>	<b>3.2.A: Percentage of eligible students who attain 45 credits within the current year, disaggregated by race/ethnicity</b>	For each racial/ethnic category, the percentage is at or above 30%.
	<b>3.2.B: IPEDS graduation rate of full-time, degree-seeking students within six years, disaggregated by race/ethnicity</b>	For each racial/ethnic category, the rate is at or above Washington state peer institutions' aggregate rate for the current year.

Highline’s overarching goal is student achievement. As an institution committed to equity and diversity, we believe students should achieve at equitable levels, regardless of their demographic background. Mirroring the approach to *Indicator 2.1*, above, our assessment again disaggregates a set of institution-wide performance measures, examining them for equity across demographic groups.

- For *Measures 3.1.A-3.2.B*, to test for disparities across these outcomes, we measure against the identical benchmarks used in Core Theme 1 for the total student population.

**Objective 4:** The college engages in inclusive recruitment and hiring practices and fosters a campus climate perceived as culturally competent and inclusive by all constituents.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>4.1: Recruitment, hiring and retention of personnel are equitable and full-time employees show increasing diversity.</b>	<b>4.1.A: Percentage of people of color in full-time positions</b>	1% increase/year (internal).
<b>4.2: Employees from diverse backgrounds experience the campus climate as positive.</b>	<b>4.2.A: Rate of job satisfaction and positive campus climate, disaggregated by race/ethnicity</b>	The percentage is at or above 75%.

*Objective 4* broadens our equity lens to examine the campus environment. Climate is influenced by everything from the diversity of faculty and staff, to visual images in posters, to the way new visitors are treated, to processes for debating campus issues. Together, these disparate elements create a “feeling” that makes some feel welcome

and others feel alienated. A large body of research underscores the importance of climate in making members of the campus community feel productive and engaged. Where the prior objectives emphasized student metrics, *Objective 4* concentrates on the employees who create climate.

- For *Measure 4.1.A*, in selecting a benchmark, we considered many options, including national figures (17.7% faculty of color), state system data (14.7% faculty, 23.1% classified staff, 16.7% professional staff of color), and Washington state’s population (23.8% people of color). But ultimately, the college is committed to mirroring the diversity of our student population – currently over 68%. Thus we adopted a 1% per year increase as a benchmark, beginning with 2015’s baseline of 35%.
- For *Measure 4.2.A*, we once again disaggregate results from the *Chronicle for Higher Education’s* “Great Colleges to Work For” survey, which we administer campus-wide every three years, [last administered in 2018](#). Designed specifically for higher education, the survey can be disaggregated by employment category (faculty and staff), full- and part-time status, and race/ethnicity. We set a benchmark of 75%, mirroring the target for workplace-wide satisfaction in Core Theme 4, *Objective 1*, which is our minimum target.

**Core Theme 3: Build valuable relationships and establish a meaningful presence within Highline College’s communities**

*Explanatory statement: Highline College, in collaboration with community partners, identifies community needs, and develops, implements, and maintains programs based on those identified needs.*

**Objective 1:** The college communicates effectively with its communities.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
1.1: The local community is familiar with the college.	1.1.A: Percent of community members who indicate familiarity with the college as reported in the Community Perception Survey	80% of respondents indicate familiarity with the college (internal).

We believe the first step in community engagement is awareness of Highline and its offerings within the communities the college serves. Ideally, successful communications lead from awareness toward a positive perception of the college. This initial awareness provides an anchor for all of our engagement efforts, including advertisements, outreach events, high school visits, and community partnerships, making us a familiar presence and reducing the need to explain who we are before we can build deeper relationships in the community. Our first objective starts with those initial expectations.

- In *Indicator 1.1*, to assess community awareness, we enlist a professional firm to conduct a periodic Community Perception Survey. Because the services

are expensive, the survey is conducted every seven years. The objectivity and professional methodology of the instrument are worth the cost and the associated infrequency of its administration. We have set a high benchmark for achievement here, with the goal of maintaining the 80% familiarity level that we have reached in the past two survey cycles.

**Objective 2:** The college initiates community connections to understand community needs.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
2.1: The college actively offers a variety of programs and makes connections with external organizations.	2.1.A: Rates of agreement that the college is meeting the community’s educational needs as reported in the Community Perception Survey	Agreement is at least 65%.
2.2: Participation rates reflect meaningful community connections and confidence in the quality of college offerings.	2.2.A: Participation rate of degree-seeking students in service district	Overall participation rate is at least 4.5% of the service district total.
	2.2.B: Participation rate of degree-seeking students by ethnic group (vs. district 2018)	The percentage of students of color is within five percentage points of the service district percentage for each racial/ethnic group.

Beyond simple awareness, we believe it is important to create a genuinely reciprocal connectivity to communities. Ideally, local communities should see value in what we do. In pursuit of that goal, our second objective seeks to measure our success in initiating meaningful connections and understanding community needs. Here, our measures span both perceptions (survey responses) and actions (enrollment).

- *Indicator 2.1* again draws on the Community Perception Survey, this time assessing not simply awareness of college services but the perceived relevance of those services. Based on prior survey cycles, we set a benchmark of 65% for this more nuanced community response.
- *Indicator 2.2* turns to participation rates as a measure of both awareness and, more importantly, public confidence in our institution. We believe that, when degree-seeking students enroll at Highline, it reflects a community-wide sense that we can provide quality educational experiences.

Because our service district is exceptionally diverse, we measure both overall rates of participation and equity of participation among ethnicities.

*Measure 2.2.A* sets the expectation that our overall participation rate matches the average of Washington’s community colleges, as calculated by the state. The second target, *Measure 2.2.B*, tracks the degree of variance in participation rates across demographic groups within our service district. Here, our ultimate goal is a student body that equitably represents the proportions of each demographic group in our community. We are using percentages based on students who provided a racial/ethnic identification. As a minimum threshold, we set a five-percentage point limit on any variance. Because the median age of our students has dropped from 31 when we established this measure to 23 at the time of this review, we plan to revise this measure as discussed in Chapter 5.

**Objective 3:** Highline College contributes to meeting community needs.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>3.1:</b> The college serves the ever-changing needs of our service district.	<b>3.1.A:</b> Number of annual community non-credit programmatic offerings (includes ESL classes, continuing education classes)	Number of annual offerings is 750 or more (initial three-year average).
	<b>3.1.B:</b> Number of community members served by community-responsive events	Number of community attendees served annually is 8,000 or more (initial two year average).
<b>3.2:</b> The college meets regional workforce development needs.	<b>3.2.A:</b> Post-completion employment rate of students in workforce education programs	Percentage of students who are employed following program completion is at or above the average for our CTC peers.
	<b>3.2.B:</b> Percent of Advisory Committee members who agree that our workforce program curricula meet the needs of our community’s employers	Percentage of Advisory Committee members who agree that our workforce program curricula meet the needs of our community’s employers is 90% or more.

Full engagement extends beyond awareness and participation to find the community fully integrated with the college, its programs, and offerings. In that environment, effective partnerships between agencies, schools, universities, businesses, government, and residents are a vital part of community growth. Such collaboration increases the likelihood that local organizations reach a larger population, avoid a duplication of services, make better use of their resources, and engage more effectively and thoroughly with communities.

That vision is ambitious and we are further aware that it is challenging to measure community connections and understanding through commonly available data. Good data benchmarks are still being developed, researched, and understood by institutional researchers and colleges in our sector.

Nevertheless, through a variety of measures, we are seeking to gain an understanding of our contribution to community needs. We examine that contribution through two lenses: 1) the community's engagement with our outward-facing educational services and 2) the employer community's engagement with our graduates and trainees.

- *Indicator 3.1* reflects our belief that we need to reach into the community to meet its needs as they evolve. To a large degree, this metric tracks the vibrancy and relevance of our extended learning and community outreach initiatives — offices specifically charged with that work. The associated measures address each function.

*Measure 3.1.A* tracks the number of non-credit ESL classes and continuing education classes offered by Highline. We assess this effort in part because non-credit classes emerged as important offerings in our last round of community surveys. Further, we see these services as reflecting our commitment to support the non-degree seeking members of our South King County community — a core part of our mission and values, comprising a large component of our college population. The benchmark of 750 is an achievable minimum based on our internal average.

*Measure 3.1.B*, in turn, measures participation in community-driven events. We believe that these activities reflect the college's commitment to support community members, potential students, and students' families in accessing, navigating, and influencing higher education. Importantly, these events engage members of our community who would otherwise not have a gateway to post-secondary learning. Our benchmark of 8,000 is internal, based on average attainment.

- *Indicator 3.2* reflects our commitment to meeting regional workforce development needs. We use two measures to give us a thorough picture of our relevance in meeting those needs.

*Measure 3.2.A* draws on post-completion employment rates to provide a meaningful measure of the college's ability to align with local economic needs. As a benchmark, we aim to match the state average each year. We find this benchmark meaningful because it allows a broad comparison to other Washington regions, attenuating the impact of localized or short-term economic variations.

Finally, *Measure 3.2.B* surveys our professional-technical advisory committees for their insights on program relevance. Their perceptions offer an important early alert mechanism, supplementing the state's employment data, which is often lagged. Here, we set our benchmark at 90% because we hold ourselves to a very high standard which is achievable.



## Core Theme 4. Model sustainability in human resources, operations, and teaching and learning

*Explanatory statement: Sustainability calls for policies, procedures and strategies that meet society’s present needs without compromising the welfare of future generations. Sustainability encompasses the intertwined ideals of viable economies, social equity, and ecological integrity. For the college, sustainability calls for us to use our human, physical, and financial resources to improve the future success of the college, minimize our impact on the environment, and model sustainability for students.*

**Objective 1:** The college recruits, retains, and develops a highly qualified workforce.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>1.1: Staff and faculty actively pursue continuing professional development opportunities.</b>	<b>1.1.A: Rate of agreement that employees have opportunities at work to learn and grow professionally</b>	<b>The percentage is at or above 75% (internal).</b>
<b>1.2: Current employees indicate satisfaction with working environment and campus climate.</b>	<b>1.2.A: Rate of job satisfaction and positive campus climate</b>	<b>The percentage is at or above 75% (internal).</b>
<b>1.3: Employees are retained by the college.</b>	<b>1.3.A: Short-term (two-year) attrition rate of full-time employees</b>	<b>The attrition rate is at or below 21% (three-year rolling average).</b>

Education is a service-oriented industry where the quality of the professionals who provide instruction and support services has a significant influence on student success. Recognizing that our people are our most important resource, we begin our assessment of sustainability with them. Our informal logic model proposes that professional development improves not only the qualifications of the existing workforce but also the level of employee workplace satisfaction, which in turn promotes staff retention. Implemented effectively, this virtuous cycle can help to sustain and nurture our human resources.

We evaluate this model at each step: First, do employees see growth opportunities at work? Second, are employees satisfied in their jobs and place of work? Finally, do new employees stay at the institution?

- *Indicator 1.1* tracks employee perception of Highline’s opportunities for professional growth. We measure this indicator using *Chronicle for Higher Education’s* “Great Colleges to Work For” survey, specifically through its aggregation of items on that topic. Based on repeated survey administrations, we have retained an internally set benchmark of 75% as a high, but achievable, minimum.

- *Indicator 1.2* reflects the value we place on overall workplace satisfaction, turning again to the “Great Colleges to Work For” survey for summary data. As with Indicator 1.1, we set a benchmark of 75% based on our two-time recognition as a “Great Colleges to Work For” awardee from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and as a NWJobs.com “People’s Pick” favorite employer in the education category.
- *Indicator 1.3* offers an initial measure of retention, using short-term attrition as the key data point. In 2013, we established an internal benchmark of 8% based on our average attrition during the last economic downturn. More recently, as King County’s unemployment fell to near-zero, we updated our measure to the most recent three-year rolling average.

**Objective 2:** The college demonstrates good stewardship of financial resources while ensuring sufficient resources will be available in the future.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>2.1: The college maintains sufficient financial resources to both maintain programs and remain strategic in times of financial downturn.</b>	<b>2.1.A: Percent of general operations budget maintained as operating reserves</b>	<b>Reserve remains at or above 10% of general operations budget.</b>
<b>2.2: The college maintains strong internal controls over assets and ensures compliance with college and state procedures.</b>	<b>2.2.A: Number of annual audit findings</b>	<b>Annual audit findings remain at zero.</b>
<b>2.3: The college ensures continuing alignment of fiscal resources to meet current operating needs.</b>	<b>2.3.A: Achievement of annual target FTE allocation</b>	<b>Benchmark is 100% of target.</b>
	<b>2.3.B: Achievement of annual tuition revenue target</b>	<b>Benchmark is 100% of target.</b>

While people are our first priority, we also recognize the critical importance of financial stability and growth to ensure the successful realization of the college’s educational mission. Accordingly, we measure our fiscal sustainability in terms not only of our budget reserves and funds management, but also our ability to meet revenue projections.

- *Indicator 2.1* reflects our awareness that the college requires adequate financial reserves to respond strategically and thoughtfully to financial challenges. Our reserve benchmark of 10% matches the level fixed by our Board of Trustees.
- *Indicator 2.2* reflects a strong culture of internal controls, assuring stakeholders that the college is a good steward of scarce resources, strengthening our ability to compete for those resources. Because we feel that any audit findings should trigger a response, our benchmark is zero.

- *Indicator 2.3* underscores the importance of aligning our revenue sources with operating needs. We measure this alignment in two ways. For our state performance metric, *Measure 2.3.A*, we monitor actual enrollments as a percentage of our annual full-time equivalent (FTE) allocation. Second, recognizing that tuition represents a critical component of the college’s non-state revenues, we measure actual income against each budget’s tuition-collection target. For both, we chose a benchmark of 100% because we expect that any shortfall in either measure should prompt attention.

**Objective 3:** The college demonstrates stewardship of environmental resources.

Indicator	Measure	Benchmark
<b>3.1: The college encourages awareness and use of ‘green’ practices in working environments.</b>	<b>3.1.A: Percent reduction in annual waste stream (landfill tonnage) from baseline</b>	<b>Increase 5% reduction from baseline.</b>
	<b>3.1.B: Percent reduction in annual total energy consumption (electricity and fossil fuels combined) from baseline</b>	<b>Total energy consumption remains 2% or more below baseline of 78,511 MBTUs.</b>

As stewards of the environment with a commitment to resource management, we are dedicated to efficient resource management in our daily operations. In support of this goal, we measure both inputs and outputs of consumption and waste as proxies for our success in developing sustainable practices and reducing our impact on the environment.

- For *Measure 3.1.A.*, we have chosen to measure campus landfill tonnage and its reduction as the primary metric for our waste-management efforts. We set our initial benchmark at our most recent level of achieved reduction at that time, which was 5% below our 2009-10 tonnage. While we intend to further reduce our waste stream, we find that maintenance of our current goal requires vigilance, making 5% a reasonable minimum threshold of achievement.
- The second measure, *Measure 3.1.B*, tracks reductions in total energy consumption. For this measure, we use a benchmark of remaining at least 2% below a baseline of 78,511 MBTUs. This baseline is in alignment with the requirements of our Puget Sound Energy Resource Conservation Program grant, secured in December 2009, which set forth industry-standard targets for an institution of our profile.

In the longer-term, we have taken steps to integrate teaching and learning into our sustainability efforts. To that end, our self-organizing Sustainability Task Force has long sponsored large-scale campus informational events such as fall’s Green Week and April’s Earth Week. The committee and others have suggested that Highline establish course-, program-, and eventually college-wide learning outcomes around sustainability. While that curricular initiative has been somewhat overshadowed by other curriculum priorities, the college remains interested in strengthening the application of learning to matters of environmental stewardship and equity.

# CHAPTER TWO: RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **OPERATIONAL FOCUS AND INDEPENDENCE (ER 4)**

Highline College has full authority over its district budget, curriculum, and governance, making the college accountable and responsible for meeting the Commission's accreditation standards and eligibility requirements (Standard 2.A.2).

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION (ER 5)**

The institution is governed and administered with respect for the individual in a nondiscriminatory manner while responding to the educational needs and legitimate claims of the constituencies it serves as determined by its charter, its mission, its core themes, and Cultural Diversity Policy.

### **INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY (ER 6)**

The institution establishes and adheres to ethical standards in all of its operations and relationships. Ethical standards are established and followed. College employees are bound by the Washington State Ethics Act and governed by the Highline College Code of Ethics. The Board of Trustees Code of Ethics binds that body. Faculty are bound by the Highline College Education Association Agreement 2018-2021 (Standards 2.A.22, 2.A.23, 2.A.24).

### **GOVERNING BOARD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AND ADMINISTRATION (ER 7, 8, 9)**

Highline's five-member Board of Trustees, none of whom has a contractual or employment relationship with the college, is appointed by the governor (Standards 2.A.4, 2.A.5, 2.A.6, 2.A.7).

The Highline College President (chief executive officer) is appointed by the Board of Trustees. The President serves as secretary to the board, not as an *ex officio* member (Standard 2.A.10).

Highline administrators and their governance groups represent all major units of the college and manage the institution (Standard 2.A.1). Administrators engage in strategic planning, consultation, assessment, and policy development. The college has a sufficient number of qualified administrators to carry out its mission (Standard 2.A.11).

### **FACULTY (ER 10)**

Highline employs a sufficient number of appropriately qualified faculty to achieve its educational objectives (Standard 2.B.4). Faculty evaluation procedures meet the standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (Standard 2.B.6). Full-time faculty workloads meet the college's expectations (Standard 2.B.5). Faculty ensure that academic programs maintain appropriate content and rigor (Standard 2.C.5).

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, GENERAL EDUCATION, AND RELATED INSTRUCTION (ER 11, 12)**

Highline offers the Associate of Arts degree; the Associate of Science degree in chemistry, biology, computer science, physics, and general engineering; the Associate of Applied Science degree in professional-technical areas; and various certificates (Standard 2.C.1). Information for these appears in the college catalog, on the website, and in course syllabi (Standard 2.C.2).

For any degree, students complete at least 90 college-level credits. The number of credits and general course requirements for A.A. and A.S. degrees reflect policies developed by the Washington State Intercollege Relations Commission and the Washington State Joint Transfer Council. Professional-technical degrees and certificates meet requirements in the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (Standard 2.C.3).

## **LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES (ER 13)**

The Highline College Library provides access to both physical and electronic resources to meet the information needs of students, faculty, staff, and the community (Standards 2.E.1, 2.E.2). It ensures that the collection has the currency, breadth, and depth needed to support the information needs of its primary users. The library promotes and enhances the information literacy (IL) skills of students, faculty, staff, and administrators (Standard 2.E.3).

## **PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE (ER 14)**

The college maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and conducive to healthful and productive learning and working (Standard 2.G.1). The college's Master Plan provides for the continued development and renewal of the campus, explains the college's programs, and describes its current and future campus facilities requirements (Standard 2.G.3).

Highline's technological infrastructure meets the technology needs of the college community (Standard 2.G.5).

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM (ER 15)**

Academic freedom for students and faculty is specifically addressed in the Instructional Policies section of the college catalog (Standard 2.A.27, 2.A.28, 2.A.29). Additionally, for students, the Student Rights section of the Highline Students Rights and Responsibilities code includes a detailed statement specifying the academic freedoms to which students are entitled (Standard 2.A.15).

## **ADMISSIONS (ER 16)**

The college provides open access to any adult who can benefit from its educational services. Highline's Admissions department website and the college catalog provide information on the college's entry processes and procedures (Standard 2.D.3). One associate degree program (Nursing) and all BAS degree programs require competitive-entry admissions. Criteria appear on the programs' webpages. To ensure objectivity, the Nursing AAS admissions decisions are handled by Admissions (Standards 2.A.15, 2.A.16, 2.A.17).

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION (ER 17)**

The online college catalog has the college's mission in its *About Highline* section. Admissions information is on the Admission/Entry Services website. Information about academic programs and courses is found at the Programs and Courses website and in the online college catalog (Standard 2.C.1). Grading policy is found under Instructional Policies in the catalog.

The Board of Trustees/Faculty/Staff section of the catalog provides titles and academic credentials of administrators and faculty.

The Students Rights and Responsibilities Code is on the Student Services website (Standards 2.A.15, 2.A.16, 2.A.17). The Registration and Records website lists tuition and fees. The Cost of Attendance webpage estimates the overall cost of attending Highline. The college lists its refund policy and procedures in the college catalog. The Financial Aid department website links to information on how to apply for aid, deadlines, types of financial aid, forms, scholarships, and more (Standards 2.D.8, 2.D.9).

The [Academic Calendar](#) is posted by the Academic Affairs division of the college and contains both the current and proposed calendars.

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES (ER 18)**

Highline College is financially stable, with sufficient cash flow and reserves to cover all operations and commitments (Standard 2.F.1). The college plans for the next fiscal year beginning the current winter quarter and develops careful revenue estimates (Standards 2.F.2, 2.F.3). Risk assessments are completed annually by all major college departments (Standard 2.F.4).

## **FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY (ER 19)**

Audits are conducted by qualified state auditors. SAO audit staff and management then meet with the college to review and discuss recommendations or action items (Standard 2.F.7).

## **DISCLOSURE (ER 20)**

Highline accurately discloses to the Commission all information the Commission may require to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ACCREDITATION COMMISSION (ER 21)**

Highline accepts the standards and related policies of the Commission and agrees to comply with these standards and policies.

## STANDARD TWO – RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

*By documenting the adequacy of its resources and capacity, the institution demonstrates the potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered. Through its governance and decision-making structures, the institution establishes, reviews regularly, and revises, as necessary, policies and procedures that promote effective management and operation of the institution.*

Highline College's resources and capacity are sufficient to fulfill the institution's mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered. In accomplishing its goals, the college's greatest asset — without question — is its people: an exceptionally dedicated, talented, and collaborative faculty and staff. On the other hand, like all institutions, Highline College faces some resource challenges, among them, declining state finances and an aging infrastructure. The college has established realistic plans to address those challenges. Day to day, Highline College's human, financial, educational, and policy resources are more than adequate to ensure the institution's effectiveness and sustainability.

See [Appendix A Standard 2 Evidence](#)

### STANDARD 2.A – GOVERNANCE

#### **Governance and decision-making processes**

**2.A.1** *The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.*

On a day-to-day basis, Highline College's decision-making processes are collaborative, reflecting community values around mutual respect, inclusion, and the power of synergy. The institution's formal governance structures include clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities.

The college President reports to the Board of Trustees. Six leads report to the President: four vice presidents from their respective divisions and the executive directors for Information Technology Services and Human Resources. Additionally, the Director of the Office of the President sits on Executive Cabinet, serving as the liaison for the Board of Trustees and the President in their absence, providing guidance and direction, and acting as a project manager. Collectively, these seven administrators comprise the Executive Cabinet which meets weekly to manage the college's strategic planning, operations, and division-level policies. Each of these individuals works within their divisions and cross-campus committees to bring information and recommendations forward for consideration.

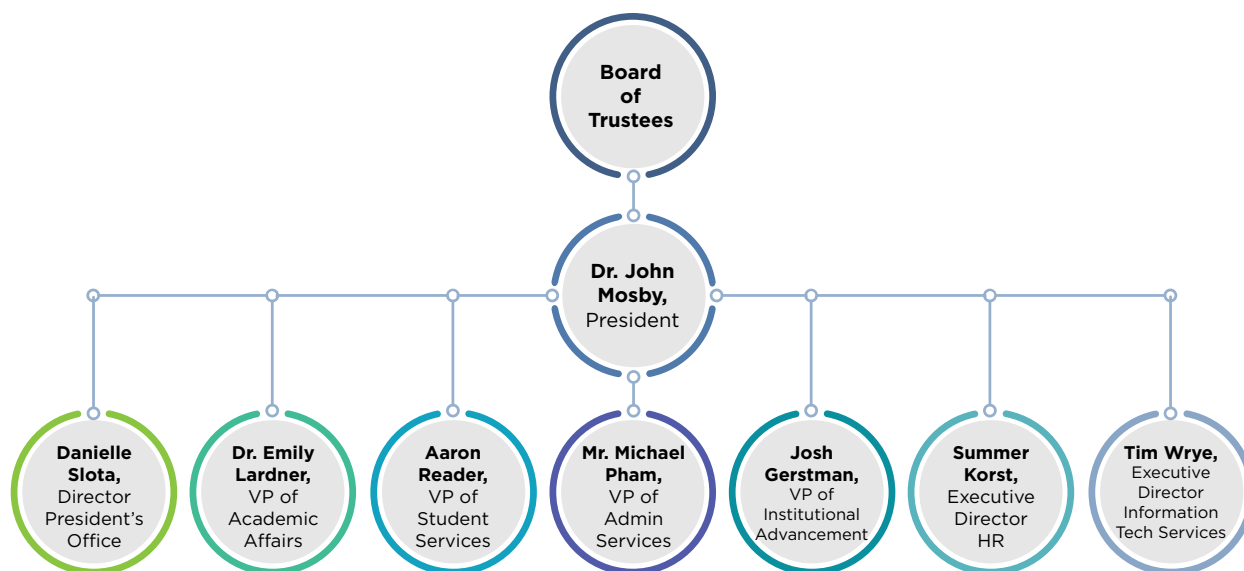


Figure 5. Highline College Organizational Chart

To provide for constituent input in decision-making, a variety of committees play a formal role in Highline’s deliberative processes:

- [Instruction Cabinet](#) consists of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), the Executive Assistant to the VPAA, the four instructional deans, the two associate deans, the director of budget and planning, and the chairs of the five faculty divisions: Arts and Humanities; Social Sciences; Pure and Applied Science; Business; and Health, Physical Education, and Education. Membership also includes select direct reports to the vice president. The cabinet meets bi-weekly and considers issues, policies, and procedures primarily related to instruction.
- Student Affairs Cabinet is chaired by the Vice President for Student Services with membership including the deans and associate deans of the Student Services division. The cabinet meets weekly and includes one meeting per month dedicated to convening an extended group of additional leadership with the division, including the direct reports to the deans and key partners on campus. The cabinet focuses on assessment, planning, policies, and organizational development.
- The [Faculty Senate](#) consists of an executive committee (chair, vice-chair, secretary, and two senators-at-large) elected by the faculty as a whole, and two representatives from each of the five academic divisions, selected by the members of the divisions. It “provides a forum for faculty discussion, advocacy, and leadership regarding academic affairs at Highline College.” The Senate’s [Constitution](#) defines it as the “paramount recommending body to the president and Board of Trustees to establish and revise college-wide academic standards, grading policies, degree requirements, and educational outcomes after considering input from all interested parties.” It also serves as an advisory board to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the deans of instruction on curricular issues. The Faculty Senate meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month during the academic year.



- All currently enrolled students are members of the [Associated Students of Highline College](#) (ASHC). It represents students' interests and concerns to the college administration, faculty, staff, and greater community. Representatives from the Associated Students Executive Council, caucuses, and student clubs form the Associated Council. The Associated Council representatives meet approximately every two weeks when school is in session and participate in setting campus policy and procedures, allocate funds, serve on various campus committees, and evaluate student programs.

In addition to these governance bodies, the college actively seeks input, as appropriate, from faculty and staff collective-bargaining units. In this role, classified staff are represented by the Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA) and faculty by the Highline College Education Association (HCEA). The executive committees of both WPEA and HCEA meet quarterly with Highline's Executive Cabinet. Additionally, the trustees' by-laws provide that the WPEA, HCEA, ASHC, and Faculty Senate have access to the board during its regular meetings. Board Resolution No. 35-85 also states in part that the Board of Trustees "supports those processes and procedures which provide for the participation of all major campus groups — faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees — in addressing major campus decisions and formulating policies which govern the college."

### **State and local governance**

**2.A.2** *In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.*

The [Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges](#) (SBCTC) provides clearly limited oversight to the state's 34 community and technical colleges. SBCTC's primary functions include allocating state funds, setting enrollment-reporting procedures, managing statewide data, and advocating for the colleges in legislative and regulatory arenas. Local college boards retain full authority over their district's budgets, curriculum, and governance.

### **Accreditation compliance**

**2.A.3** *The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.*

Highline's compliance with Standards for Accreditation is the responsibility of the college President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who serves as the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). The ALO ensures that compliance is not affected by collective bargaining, legislative action, or external mandates. Further, the [Washington State Public Employment Relations Committee](#) is charged to "prevent or minimize disruptions to public services by the uniform, impartial, efficient and expert resolution of labor-management disputes."

## **Governing board**

**2.A.4** *The institution has a functioning governing board\* consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board, as they relate to the institution, are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.*

**2.A.5** *The board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the board acts on behalf of the board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing board as a whole.*

Highline's five-member Board of Trustees is appointed by the Governor. Washington state law (RCW [28B.50.100](#)) addresses board qualifications and appointments. The powers and duties of the boards are codified in RCW [28B.50.140](#).

For new board members, an annual orientation to state community and technical colleges is held by the [Washington State Association of College Trustees](#) (ACT), run through the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. This orientation provides an overview of the concepts of trusteeship, characteristics of an effective trustee, ethics, differences between policies and administration, and guidelines for board self-evaluation and evaluation of the college President. Additionally, the college provides local orientation meetings to each new Highline trustee. In these sessions, the President, vice presidents, and other administrators provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of their offices, divisions, and departments. The executive assistant to the president also provides a reference notebook of college resources and materials prior to the trustees' initial public board meeting.

Highline's Board of Trustees follow the by-laws found in the Washington Administrative Code Title [132I.104](#). Washington administrative code "[Restrictions of Individual Authority](#)" provides that "No individual member of the board may act on behalf of the board unless specifically instructed by action of the board. Three members shall constitute a quorum and no action may be taken with less than a quorum present," reiterated locally in the trustees' [Standards of Practice and Roles and Responsibilities](#).

Current board members and their responsibilities and authority, as well as meeting agendas, minutes, and board policies can be found at the board's [website](#). The board chair is determined on an annual basis, typically by rotation.

## **Board authority and delegation**

**2.A.6** *The board establishes, reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.*

**2.A.7** *The board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer board-approved policies related to the operation of the institution.*

Highline's [Standards of Practice and Roles and Responsibilities](#), updated in January 2018, define the board's responsibilities and processes for fulfilling them. These responsibilities include broad oversight functions for campus policies.

These standards further define the board's responsibility to select, retain, and, on an annual basis, evaluate the college President. The [evaluation process](#) is "based on yearly goals approved by the Board of Trustees which support the established current Core Themes of the college." Trustees use an evaluation form that calls for comments or recommendations regarding the President's performance with respect to the college's core themes. The board's standards of practice explicitly state that the trustees "shall delegate all operational responsibilities and appointing/termination authority to the President, upon consent of the Board, to and his/her designees," adding that "Board Members shall act in a manner that is mindful and respectful of the distinction between the Board's governance role versus the operational/administrative roles or activities of the college and the President."

### **Board self-evaluation**

**2.A.8** *The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.*

The board's [standards of practice](#) further provide that "The Board, on a yearly basis, shall conduct a self-evaluation of its performance to identify strengths and strategies for improvement." In this self-evaluation, trustees complete a [form](#) that focuses on board organization and operation, policy development and review, community relations, and strategic planning for the college, including its vision, mission, and goals.

### **Leadership and management**

**2.A.9** *The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.*

Qualifications for Highline's leadership positions are normally drafted by college search committees, which typically include staff, faculty, and student representatives. These draft qualifications are reviewed by Human Resources and are ultimately approved by the President or appropriate vice president.

Administrators and their governance groups are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution, as detailed in Standard 2.A.1 (Governance). Although administrative accountability is maintained through supervisory structures, Highline's culture values collaboration and collegiality in management and decision-making.

The college's six divisions — Academic Affairs, Student Services, Administrative Services, Institutional Advancement, Information Technology Services, and Human Resources — all undertake regular planning and assessment activities specific to their responsibilities.

- [Academic Affairs](#) holds bi-weekly Instruction Cabinet meetings, where it conducts long-term academic planning and policy development activities largely through

topic-specific subcommittees. In addition, cabinet members hold an annual retreat during which a division work plan is developed and the outcomes from the prior year's plan are evaluated. As the largest division in the college, comprising not only faculty but nearly 100 exempt and classified staff, planning necessarily extends beyond Instruction Cabinet. In 2019-20, the Deans & Directors group within the division used the Academic Affairs work plan, tied to core themes and objectives, as a way to strengthen collaboration across units. These discussions led to an end-of-year retreat that included both Instruction Cabinet and the Deans & Directors group. For 2020-21, an additional group of stakeholders — program managers — will be included in developing the division work plan. For division-level assessment, Academic Affairs draws heavily on the work of the [Assessment Committee](#) (see Standard 2.C.5) and the Office of Institutional Research, as well as on the new [Institutional Effectiveness](#) reporting process that was launched in summer 2020.

- In addition to its annual planning retreat for all staff, [Student Services](#) holds regular meetings of the vice president, department heads, and direct reports to engage in planning and operational management. In addition to its annual planning retreat for all staff, [Student Services](#) holds regular meetings of the vice president, department heads, and direct reports to engage in planning and operational management. In addition to its annual planning retreat for all staff, Student Services holds divisional meetings approximately two times a month to engage in planning, assessment, and professional development. Student Services maintains a systematized assessment process centered around the Student Affairs Cabinet, which was restructured in May 2019 to coordinate departmental assessment and coordinate continuous improvement efforts.
- [Administrative Services](#) holds a weekly leadership team meeting of the vice president and direct reports where the leadership team collaborates and shares updates from their areas. Administrative Services is comprised of Public Safety, Financial Services, Facilities, Budgets and Grants, Highline Bookstore, and Conference and Event Services. The division holds an annual retreat to engage in longer-term planning. Each department in the division sets goals in the form of a project-oriented work plan and completes quarterly assessment reviews.
- [Institutional Advancement](#) (IA) holds bi-monthly division, department, and team meetings to report, request assistance, and carry out the annual work plan. IA oversees in-person/face-to-face engagement, online/web/social media, print, and mass media to potential and current students, alumni relations, and interactions with prospective and current donors, organizations, and community partners. The IA division includes the Foundation, Alumni Relations, Government Relations, Grants, Communications and Marketing, the Print Shop, and Community Engagement and Outreach Services. The division holds a retreat in fall where division members engage in strategic planning and create an annual work plan. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Center of Excellence for Global Trade and Supply Chain Management (COE) also report to the Vice President for Institutional Advancement (VPIA).

Within IA, the SBDC and the COE are accountable to external entities; thus their strategic priorities are set in conjunction with those entities. The role of IA with these

programs is to provide fiscal oversight, to help secure financial support, and to keep them connected to college leadership. That leadership, including Executive Cabinet, has established a process to meet annually with those external entities to examine and confirm that each program is meeting its mission; additionally, the VPIA meets regularly with these programs and, similar to the IA team process, identifies priorities and focuses resources to achieve their program goals.

- [Information Technology Services](#) (ITS) functioned as a sub-unit of Academic Affairs prior to a July 2019 reorganization, and previously participated in the planning activities of that division. In preparation for the departmental realignment, ITS Leadership Team developed the department's first standalone [strategic plan](#) in the spring of 2019. ITS Leadership meets monthly for ongoing planning and operational purposes. ITS Leadership is currently working on identifying appropriate metrics for assessment, and planning how to better engage the rest of the campus in ongoing technology planning.
- [Human Resources](#) (HR) holds weekly staff meetings where the Executive Director of Human Resources and all HR staff discuss current issues related to benefits, organizational development, personnel, recruitment, payroll, compliance, and policy. In addition, the executive director meets individually with managers who oversee key areas in the department (recruitment, payroll, and personnel) on a weekly basis. Weekly staff meetings are also used as a time to assess priorities and ensure progress towards the department's goals. These goals were set in summer 2019 as part of planning between the new executive director, hired in 2019, and the college President.

On a college-wide level, the [Office of Institutional Research](#) coordinates the college's research and reporting functions and contributes to program, grant, and accreditation evaluation efforts. Specifically, this office compiles data for Highline's [Mission Fulfillment Report \(MFR\)](#), which provides an annual summary of the college's key indicators derived directly from core themes. The Office of Institutional Research draws data for the MFR from several state and local sources, including the state's Student Achievement Initiative, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the Employee Satisfaction Survey.

### **President's qualifications and role**

**2.A.10** *The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board, but may not serve as its chair.*

Highline's chief executive officer is its President, who reports to the Board of Trustees and serves at their will. The President serves as secretary to the board, not as an ex officio member. The President has full-time responsibility for the institution.

The current President holds an earned doctorate in higher education administration from the University of San Diego. At the time of his permanent appointment in July 2018, he had accumulated 16 years of experience in community college leadership, serving earlier as Dean of Enrollment Services at Skyline College in San Bruno, Calif., and then as Vice President for Student Services at Mission College in Santa Clara, Calif.

## **Administrative staff adequacy and effectiveness**

**2.A.11** *The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.*

As noted in Standards 2.A.1 and 2.A.9, Highline's management structure strives to strike a balance between broad constituent participation and clear administrative accountability. Each operational division is led by a vice president or executive director who not only occupies a seat on the Executive Cabinet but also engages directly with division staff, college governance bodies, and advisory groups. In keeping with campus culture, administrative leaders and managers are expected to foster a climate of collaboration, mutual respect, and leadership development across constituencies. These expectations are, in fact, commonly integrated into administrative job descriptions, which describe each position's qualifications, responsibilities, and accountability.

In filling its administrative vacancies over time, Highline College has consistently attracted well-qualified candidates with strong credentials and extensive experience, particularly at the most-senior levels. Compared to both state and regional averages, the college offers competitive compensation for those positions. The Puget Sound area's diversity and vibrancy offer additional attractions. So does Highline's positive reputation for campus climate, bolstered by repeat recognition as one of the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* "[Great Colleges to Work For](#)."

In the past few years, after decades of stability in senior leadership, Highline has experienced a near-total turnover in its top-level administrators. Though accelerated by the unexpected illness and retirement of longtime President Jack Birmingham in 2017, the subsequent changes were primarily driven by demographics, as the senior team's 20- and 30-year veterans either retired or, in one case, accepted a presidency elsewhere.

Today, despite the changes in membership, the executive team is arguably stronger than ever. The college's new President, Dr. John Mosby, has expanded his cabinet, incorporating the executive directors for Information Technology Services and Human Resources and authorizing a search for a Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The new executives are uniformly well-qualified, with strong credentials and substantial experience. The same can be said of dean- and direct-level administrators who work for them.

Of course, on that scale, leadership transitions can be expected to bring temporary uncertainties. In Academic Affairs, for example, retirements and realignments ushered in a two-year period of multiple interim appointments at the dean and vice president levels. Searches conducted in 2019-20 finalized two of four deans in the division. Over roughly the same period, the Student Services vice presidency changed hands twice, as a 2019-20 interim appointment bridged between the former incumbent and a new

permanent vice president was named in March 2020. In the interim period, the division underwent some important realignments of department functions and management roles, resulting in a more streamlined, consolidated organization. Today the division is led by the Vice President for Student Services, two deans, and two associate deans. As the division continues to stabilize, its updated structure will facilitate management of both day-to-day and future initiatives.

Over a longer timeframe, Highline's mid-management positions have historically experienced higher turnover rates than their senior counterparts. In these tiers, the rapidly increasing cost of living in King County, coupled with a relatively flat organizational structure with relatively few opportunities for promotion, contributed to this challenge. While it is unrealistic to out-compete other employers, the college has worked to increase retention among mid-managers through increased attention to professional growth pathways and, where possible, salary adjustments.

### **Policies and procedures**

Despite our day-to-day informality and preference for collaborative problem-solving, Highline College maintains regular and stable processes for policy development and approval.

Chartered by the Board of Trustees in 1985, the [Policy Development Council](#) (PDC) is at the center of these processes. The chairs of each constituent governance group — Faculty Senate, student government, and three Executive Cabinet members — comprise the PDC membership, with *ex officio* representation from the staff and faculty collective bargaining units. PDC is chaired by the college President or designee, usually the Vice President for Administrative Services. It meets on average twice a year or whenever policies impacting the college and requiring approval by the President or board are proposed. Any PDC member may bring a policy proposal to the PDC. PDC representatives take the proposed policies to their constituents for comment and then reconvene. This process ensures that all areas of the campus are aware of — and have substantive input into — important policy changes under consideration.

Established policies and procedures are well-defined, widely understood, and clearly communicated through a variety of avenues.

### **Academic policies**

**2.A.12** *Academic policies, including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation, are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.*

**2.A.13** *Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources, regardless of format, location, and delivery method, are documented, published, and enforced.*

**2.A.14** *The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.*

Highline's general policies around teaching and learning are well established and easily accessed on the college website. Links to all policies made through the Policy Development Council have been gathered into a college-wide [Policies](#) website. The [Instructional Policies](#) section of the [college catalog](#) includes academic freedom and honesty statements, academic standards, course requirements, and other instruction policies. The Highline College Education Association (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-2021](#) delineates faculty operational and professional responsibilities, including teaching and service, copyrights and patents, research and sabbaticals, and other rights and responsibilities. The [Students Rights and Responsibilities Code](#) addresses the rights of students concerning their scholarly and artistic creations.

In addition, specific guidelines address library and credit transfer:

- *Information resources:* Library policies, posted on the Highline College Library's [Operational Policies and Procedures](#) webpage, are written and approved by the Library Management Team after review by all library staff. Policy discussion and training occurs as needed at quarterly library staff meetings.
- *Credit transfer:* Highline's transfer-of-credit policy is published in the catalog's [Registration and Records](#) section under "Transfer Students." The college accepts academic credits earned at other regionally accredited institutions which align with Highline's academic offerings. The college's [Transfer Center](#), part of the Advising Center, provides guidance to students around transfer issues. On a day-to-day basis, our credentials evaluator, who reports to the registrar, determines how external credits transfer. Information on this process is available online on the Registration and Records department's [Transcript Evaluation](#) webpage. The student has the responsibility of providing necessary documentation to determine course equivalency. When necessary, the evaluator consults with the appropriate faculty department or program coordinator in making a final determination. Credits transferred from other Washington community and technical colleges are accepted under the statewide reciprocity policy. Further, Highline uses the state's [common course numbering system](#), instituted to facilitate intra-system transfer among two-year colleges. Because Washington's Inter-College Relations Commission (ICRC) maintains a statewide two- to four-year transfer agreement, college-to-college articulation agreements are few. When such agreements are deemed advantageous to Highline students, they are negotiated by the Dean for Academic Pathways and Partnerships, whose office maintains those records.

## **Student policies**

**2.A.15** *Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities, including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities, are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.*

**2.A.16** *The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding*



*continuation in and termination from its educational programs, including its appeals process and readmission policy, are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.*

**2.A.17** *The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.*

At the broadest level, Highline's [Student Conduct Code](#) (SCC) outlines expectations of students, their rights, and the processes for resolving alleged code violations, including academic dishonesty. The SCC was last revised in 2015. The Vice President for Student Services, who serves as the chief student judicial affairs administrator, assigns, trains, and oversees a judicial officer team.

Highline College provides a process through which students can seek resolution of complaints about instructional matters identified as the [instructional grievance process](#). Typically, these matters include grade and classroom practices. The Student Conduct Code and instructional grievance process are available on the Highline College website as well as in printed brochures.

Additional policies address more particular areas of student rights and responsibilities.

- *Accommodations:* [Access Services](#) facilitates reasonable accommodations for v students, employees, and applicants with disabilities in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act and the Federal Rehabilitation Act. Services include classroom reassignments, course substitution requests, service animal policies, and complaint resolution. Students with disabilities are provided a [handbook](#) outlining services, policies, and procedures.
- *Placement:* Highline is an open-access institution. New students are advised into the correct levels of English and math based on multiple measures, including directed self-placement, high school transcripts, Smarter Balanced scores (Washington state college-ready tests), prior college transcripts, GED score, ESL placement, or for international students, Accuplacer for reading. High school transcripts are used for placement if available; otherwise, Highline's own MyMathTest placement test is used for math prior to registering for classes. Though placement is not required for admission, placement scores are prerequisites for many Highline classes required for degree attainment. The [Placement and Testing Center](#) works with [Admissions](#) and [Academic Advising](#) to provide accurate placement advisement. [The Associate Degree in Nursing](#) (ADN) program and the [BAS programs](#) require competitive-entry admissions. Criteria are available on the program web pages. To ensure objectivity, admissions decisions are handled by Admissions.

Highline's placement practices have been shaped by the extraordinary linguistic diversity of our district. The Accuplacer is offered to international students for more accurate placement into pre-college level classes. In addition, the college's [I-BEST](#) (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) programs allow pre-college level

students to enroll in business, education, or health and wellness courses team-taught by ESL and content-area faculty, allowing enrollees to gain language skills while earning degree credit.

- *Academic standards:* Students whose performance drops below stated academic standards are placed on academic probation or suspension as outlined in the [College Policies and Procedures](#) in the catalog. Also included are policies for returning from academic suspension and a petition processes for appealing suspension. The policies ensure consistency in academic sanctions and provide timelines for their implementation.
- *Co-curricular activities:* Associated Students of Highline College (ASHC) Student Government manages the allocation of student fees through the Service and Activities Budget led by a student subcommittee. The S&A fund is guided by provisions outlined in the [S&A Financial Code](#). The S&A budget committee allocates over \$3 million annually to support a broad spectrum of [activities and offerings](#) with over 60 program lines that enhance students' extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Additional information is made available to students through the [Center for Leadership & Service](#) website.

The [Thunderword](#) is Highline's weekly student newspaper, and the [Arcturus](#) is our annual literary journal. Funded by ASHC, both have long legacies of award-winning excellence. The faculty advisers of these publications are affiliated with professional organizations, such as Society of Professional Journalists and Pacific Northwest Journalism Educators Association, which guide their practice and support the production of these publications.

## **Human Resources policies**

**2.A.18** *The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews them to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.*

**2.B.2** *Administrators and staff are evaluated regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities*

**2.A.19** *Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.*

**2.A.20** *The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.*

The Human Resources division maintains a [Policies and Procedures](#) webpage as the main access point to its policy resources. The Human Resources website also links to faculty and classified staff [collective bargaining agreements](#).

Human Resources policies and procedures are updated according to the needs of the college or legislative actions or mandates. To some degree, these policies vary by employee category:

- Exempt at-will employees are issued [annual contracts](#) which provide the terms of employment. For most of this accreditation cycle, exempt employees were evaluated on a three-year cycle under the college's Exempt and Administrative Performance Appraisal System (EAPAS). Beginning with the 2019-20 academic year, the new Executive Director of Human Resources guided the college toward [an annual evaluation cycle for all exempt employees](#), following best practices in Human Resource management.
- Highline's classified employees are represented by the Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA). Accordingly, the conditions of their employment, including an annual evaluation, are outlined in the WPEA Highline [Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019-2021](#).
- Conditions of employment for faculty, including evaluations, are found in the Highline College Education Association (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-2021](#). Beginning with the 2020-21 academic year, Instruction Cabinet approved procedures aimed at documenting adherence to the evaluation policies outlined in the HCEA contract for adjunct and one-year faculty.

All new employees are required to be on-boarded by the Human Resources division. Included in that session are policies and procedures which affect their employment and benefits provided by the employer.

Employment records are stored in a locked file room inside the Human Resources office. Files are kept up to date by human resource staff. Access to the file room and other confidential areas is controlled by a front desk employee during working hours. Entry is controlled during non-office hours by a key-card system with an alarm monitored by Public Safety and Information Technology Services staff. Some types of records are stored electronically. Access to those records is limited to authorized staff. Campus screening committee members are approved by Human Resources to obtain access to NEOGOV in order to review applications online.

**2.B.1** *The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.*

Human Resources (HR) relies on managers and vice presidents/executive directors from each division to determine appropriate staffing levels to maintain its support and operations functions. HR, in partnerships with Finance and Administration, closely reviews all requests to refill vacant positions or create new positions with an eye towards financial prudence. We continually make sure that we are not creating positions we don't need, while ensuring that our staffing levels are sufficient to meet our student and faculty need. Historically, staffing requests are made to executive heads and HR, as part of the review process, ensures there is sufficient funding to support the position. Since COVID has led to budgeting shortages, requests are taken to Executive Cabinet, which is currently reviewing all requests for new positions to ensure that we are spending our few dollars in the most effective way possible.

Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. All minimum and desired qualifications are clearly stated in all [job advertisements](#). HR screens applicants for minimum qualifications. Before a position is posted, HR works with hiring managers to ensure minimum qualifications are accurate and do not pose unseen barriers to specific applicant groups. Furthermore, HR evaluates every job description to be sure it properly classified. Departments are encouraged to work with HR to generate accurate job descriptions. The college makes every effort to ensure that consistent duties and qualifications are used for similar positions. The college established basic minimums of experience for various positions except where it produced barriers. Highline uses the [state specifications](#) for classified staff as a guide when writing job descriptions. In 2019-20, the evaluation process adopted for exempt staff includes a review of current job description to ensure accuracy.

**2.B.3** *The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.*

Training and employee development for classified staff is covered in the WPEA Highline [Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019-2021](#) and further defined in the Washington Administrative Code [357.34](#). The code contains the purpose, procedures, stipulations, and circumstances that apply to training and employee development for classified staff at Highline. The [President's Education Fund](#) and the [Classified Staff Training Funds](#) are available to those classified staff employees pursuing educational degrees and certificate programs.

Exempt employees have access to the President's Education Fund, and have access to department and divisional funds for reimbursement of tuition, fees, and books for exempt employees who are pursuing a degree or certificate. Applications are approved by Executive Cabinet.

College divisions contribute to Highline's two Professional Development Days, serving all employees.

Additional professional development activities for staff are funded from contingency funds managed by the appropriate appointing authority. A tuition waiver is an additional resource available to all permanent college employees.

### **Communications policies**

**2.A.21** *The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.*

The Highline College Catalog communicates the college's academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public. The catalog lists the number of credits required for degrees and certificates. The majority of undergraduate associate

degrees can be completed in [90 credits](#); the majority of applied baccalaureate degrees can be completed in [180 credits](#).

Highline College represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its website, online presence through social media, and printed publications. Student Services communicates services to students and to the public through the website. [Institutional Advancement](#), through the marketing director and lead web developer, regularly reviews the college website, subdomains, and printed publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

### **Institution-wide publications**

For most program-level communications, the college employs a distributive model. Institutional Advancement (IA) staff consult with campus clients to identify promotional strategies. These strategies may include publications, advertisements, press releases, or electronic media. Once a plan is established, the client provides the content while IA oversees design and editorial services. Similarly, the Office of Academic Affairs, as a campus client, annually reviews the Highline College Catalog to ensure its integrity and accuracy in all representations, and makes changes to that end.

### **Ethics and conflicts of interest**

**2.A.22** *The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.*

**2.A.23** *The institution adheres to a clearly defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.*

**2.A.24** *The institution maintains clearly defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.*

Highline College is committed to the pursuit of truth and to the equitable, inclusive treatment of people. Accordingly, we strive to manage all of our affairs with integrity.

College employees are bound by the provisions of the [Washington State Ethics Act](#), as interpreted by the [State Executive Ethics Board](#). These state-level resources provide a framework for local agencies to develop ethics policies of their own. The [Highline College Ethics Tutorial](#) states that “Highline College (HC) expects that employees will observe the highest standards of ethical conduct. Each employee is expected to place the college’s interest above his or her own self-interest in all education, business, and other work-related matters where there is any actual or potential conflict or

the appearance of a conflict. The Washington State Executive Ethics Board Training enhances the ability of Highline College employees to make ethical decisions and maintain the high standards of conduct required of all state of Washington employees. This training introduces Highline College employees to ethics in the workplace so they are able to apply ethical concepts and principles to their HC responsibilities. New employees are required to complete this training within the first month of their employment.”

Additional ethics guidelines have been established for specific constituencies.

- The [Board of Trustees’ Code of Ethics](#), reviewed in 2018, begins with the statement that “The Highline College Trustees will set the ethical tone for their institution through both their personal conduct and their institutional leadership.” The code also reminds readers that the trustees are subject to the Ethics in Public Service Act (Revised Code of Washington [42.52](#)). This code of ethics is intended to supplement the requirements of that act, not to substitute for or replace the requirements.
- For faculty, Section 303 of the Highline College Education Association (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#) reaffirms the responsibility of both full- and part-time faculty to “maintain a standard of honest and ethical behavior in their professional duties” (p. 20).

The Washington State Ethics Act specifically addresses issues of potential conflict, including financial or business interests, misuse of state positions, outside compensation, and gifts.

Policies regarding ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue from the creation and production of intellectual property are addressed in Section 902 (Copyright Policy) of the Highline Education Association (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#). The language encourages the publication of scholarly works and acknowledges “the right of faculty, staff and students to prepare and publish, through individual initiative, articles, pamphlets, and books, software, or devices that are copyrightable, trademark-able or patentable.” Sections 902.2 and 902.3 specify the exceptions, conditions, and the types of materials covered in the policy. Further, the college’s [Student Rights and Responsibilities Code](#) protects student work from use without written consent.

Processes for resolving complaints and grievances are outlined in the relevant codes and their associated documents. For example, the Washington State Ethics Act sections RCW [42.52.410](#) and [42.52.420](#) address the filing and investigation of ethics complaints, as does the [Highline College Ethics Policy](#) (General Operations: 4190).

### **Accreditation status**

**2.A.25** *The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms “Accreditation” and “Candidacy” (and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.*

The [About Us](#) section of the college website addresses Highline’s accreditation status,

stating simply that “Highline College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the secretary of the United States Department of Education.” No language speculates on the college’s future accreditation status. Specifically, the [Accreditation Information and Documentation](#) page details the college’s most recent reports.

### **Contractual relationships**

**2.A.26** *If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation.*

All contractual agreements with external entities for products or services have clearly defined roles and responsibilities as part of the contract’s written scope of work. All contracts for personal or client services are approved as to form, content, and consistency with the college’s mission and goals by the Vice President for Administrative Services. They also comply with NWCCU’s standards. Highline follows the State of Washington [Office of Financial Management](#) (OFM) guidelines for soliciting, awarding, and reporting of all [personal](#) and [client](#) services agreements. In no case does the college relinquish or diminish its control of curriculum or operational policy through its contracts with service providers.

### **Academic freedom and freedom of inquiry**

**2.A.27** *The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.*

**2.A.28** *Within the context of its mission, core themes, and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.*

**2.A.29** *Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such.*

Highline College’s catalog section on Instructional Policies and Procedures contains an [Academic Freedom Policy](#). That language affirms that “Faculty members are free to explore problems and issues, without fear of interference from administrators, the Board of Trustees, governmental agencies, the public, students or parents of

students. Faculty members have a basic responsibility to promote freedom of thought, expression, and the pursuit of knowledge.”

Academic freedom is further guaranteed by Section 301 of the Highline College Education Association [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#). In part this section states that:

“Academic freedom allows all faculty to seek and present knowledge in their respective disciplines. Faculty should be free to explore problems and issues without fear of interference from administrators, the board, governmental agencies, the public, students or parents of students. Faculty have a basic responsibility to promote freedom of thought, expression, and the pursuit of knowledge. Faculty have an obligation to protect students’ right to freedom of inquiry.”

For students, the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Code](#) includes a detailed statement specifying the academic freedoms to which students are entitled. These rights include free inquiry, expression, and assembly. Student interests are represented as well in the college catalog’s [Academic Freedom Policy](#) language. Additionally students are protected from arbitrary academic evaluation and from discrimination, disrespect, and sexual harassment. Of course, with rights come responsibilities. Accordingly, the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Code](#) reiterates the college’s expectations that students “are expected to maintain a high standard of honesty in their academic work.”

Similarly, Section 303 of the Highline College Education Association [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#) includes the expectation that all faculty “maintain a standard of honest and ethical behavior in their professional duties.” [The criteria for tenure](#) in each of the five academic divisions also include standards of ethical practice in teaching and scholarship. These criteria are employed in regular evaluation of faculty throughout the tenure and post-tenure evaluation process, ensuring the ethical presentation and use of scholarship throughout an individual’s tenure with the college.

Highline College’s commitment to free expression and civility reflects an equally deep commitment to diversity. The institution’s values, found in the [Mission Statement, Vision, and Values](#), include a commitment to “respect the rights and perspectives of the diverse populations who live, learn, and work in [the college’s] community.” Core Theme 2 echoes these values, stating that “diversity and globalism are infused throughout the curriculum [and that] faculty employ a pedagogy that integrates diversity and globalism.” These ideas guide college policy on academic freedom and ethics.

## **Finance policies**

**2.A.30** *The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources, including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.*

Highline College adheres to clearly defined financial management policies approved by the Board of Trustees. The board approves the college’s annual operating and



capital budgets, and has [granted authority to the President](#) to make adjustments to those budgets as necessary throughout the year, with the requirement to report any adjustments to the board on a quarterly basis. Each year in June the Board of Trustees votes to expend funds for the upcoming academic year via a resolution. Due to campus being closed, this resolution does not have physical signatures, but the motion being passed is reflected in the [meeting minutes](#). The President also has board-delegated authority to transfer unobligated fund balances to cover cash deficits and to provide working capital. The college is authorized to invest cash balances through the Office of the State Treasurer's Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) through board resolution. Highline College maintains a board-approved reserve of 10% of its annual operating budget. Reserve funds may be accessed by the college President in an emergency, provided that the trustees are informed of and approve the expenditures no later than its next regular meeting.

As an agency of the state of Washington, Highline also follows all applicable Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) accounting policies and procedures, published in the [State Administrative and Accounting Manual](#) (SAAM) as well as accounting policies and procedures documented in the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) [Fiscal Affairs Manual](#). Compliance with college, OFM, and SBCTC policies and procedures is reviewed as part of the college's regular audit conducted by the Office of the State Auditor.

## **STANDARD 2.B – FACULTY RESOURCES**

### **Faculty professional development**

***2.B.3** The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.*

(2.B.3 is addressed for Highline's non-faculty personnel in the Human Resources Policies section of this self-evaluation report, above, under 2.B.3. Here, the focus is specifically faculty.)

Highline College faculty are provided with a variety of professional development resources. Section 610 of the Highline College Education Association [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#) guarantees that tenured and tenure-track faculty receive \$1,500 every year to be used for professional development. Faculty on temporary one-year contracts receive \$750 per year. In addition, a separate fund of \$20,000 is set aside each year to fund professional development projects by part-time faculty. Any unused allocations are retained in a general fund that can be drawn on by other faculty for professional development purposes, at the discretion of Instruction Cabinet. Grants, federal allocations, and administrative contingency funds often supplement the pool of professional development resources.

Faculty also participate in campus-based professional growth activities. The Academic Affairs division funds a full-time program manager plus .67 full-time equivalent (FTE) in release-time for faculty in residence to staff the [Learning and Teaching Center](#) (LTC) in Building 9. This three-member team organizes a year-long calendar

of programs and services that are responsive to and advance needs and initiatives as defined by the division, including workshops, presentations, and faculty learning communities. In addition to the LTC, the college maintains an Educational Technology (EdTech) department that provides instructional design, technical assistance, and troubleshooting for use of technology in teaching, across all modes of instruction (online, hybrid, and face-to-face). EdTech is staffed by one full-time administrator and several “faculty fellows” who receive partial release-time to offer peer coaching. The Multimedia Instructional Design Studio (MIDS), in Building 25, offers state-of-the-art equipment to support faculty projects and hands-on training. EdTech and the LTC regularly collaborate on professional development planning. For instance, in winter 2020 the groups jointly offered a faculty inquiry group focused on James Lang’s *Small Teaching* and Flower Darby and James Lang’s *Small Teaching Online* books. Sabbatical leaves are available to faculty holding tenure-track appointments. Section 604 of the HCEA Agreement addresses the procedures and criteria for professional leave and growth and enrichment leave. For single-quarter leaves, faculty may receive up to their full salary. Two- and three-quarter leaves are typically paid at 75% of salary.

### **Faculty qualifications and staffing levels**

**2.B.4** *Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs, wherever offered and however delivered.*

Highline employs a sufficient number of qualified faculty to achieve its educational objectives.

The process for appointing tenure-track faculty is included in Section 801 of the Highline College Education Association (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#). This section states that the college “seeks to hire the most qualified educators available to fill approved vacancies for tenure-track faculty, consistent with the institution’s commitment to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and campus diversity.” Job descriptions include both required and desirable qualifications. These criteria are drafted by the department, reviewed by the division chair and dean, and approved by the vice president before openings are posted. For tenure-track appointments, the typical search committee consists of the academic division chair, the coordinator (or equivalent) of the new faculty’s department, a division faculty member, an at-large faculty member, and an administrator appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Both this representation and the perspective it provides promote the selection of highly qualified faculty who are full members of the campus community, beyond their departments. The selection process is similar for full-time, non-tenure appointments.

Department coordinators manage the scheduling of part-time faculty members for class assignments, subject to approval of their employment contract by the division chair and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Selection processes for part-time faculty vary somewhat by department but at a minimum require a review of the applicant’s resume, transcripts, and references.

Statewide minimum qualifications for faculty appointments appear in Washington Administrative Code [131-16-091](#). These basic requirements apply to both full- and part-time instructors:

- *Professional teaching personnel performing services for which advanced degrees are commonly available* shall hold the equivalent of a master's degree in the field of their educational service from an accredited college or university or a bachelor's degree and professional expertise in the field of their educational service.
- *Professional-technical teaching personnel performing services for which bachelor's or master's degrees are not commonly available* shall hold sufficient broad and comprehensive training, an industry recognized certification (when available), and two years relevant work or teaching experience.

According to the [State Board for Community and Technical Colleges \(SBCTC\) 2018-2019 Academic Year Report](#), Highline employed 163 full-time (tenure and non-tenure-track) and 364 part-time faculty. Of the full-time instructors, 42 hold a doctoral degree, 94 a master's, and 11 a bachelor's degree or less. Among full-time appointees, the median length of service is 14 years, with a range of four to 46 years. Highline's average full-time faculty salary, currently the state's ninth-highest at \$64,121, is \$2,149 below the Washington system average. The majority of Highline's part-time faculty earn \$4,477 to \$4,802 for a typical five-credit course. The most recent negotiations saw a significant increase for all faculty, with the largest increase going to part-time faculty. While it is still not the state's highest rate, it is more competitive with other suburban institutions. Although the college is proud of its successes in attracting and retaining highly-qualified faculty, there are reasons for continued attention to faculty recruitment, compensation, and development:

- *Diversity*: Highline's success in fulfilling its Core Theme 2, "*Integrate and institutionalize diversity and globalism throughout the college,*" can be measured in part through the diversity of the faculty. From a comparative perspective, Highline's diversity initiatives have been effective. According to the [State Board for Community and Technical Colleges \(SBCTC\) 2018-2019 Academic Year Report](#), Highline employs one of the most diverse faculties in the state, with 33.7% full-time faculty of color (state average 17.1%), 25% part-time faculty of color (state average 16.4%), and overall 26% faculty of color (state average 16%). One of two main recommendations from a [2015 study](#) of the college's DGS requirement conducted by the Center for Cultural & Inclusive Excellence resulted in the hiring of two full-time faculty in 2017 to teach Ethnic and Gender Studies. In 2019, Highline's new Talent Acquisition manager worked collaboratively with faculty hiring committee chairs to ensure that position descriptions would be attractive to diverse applicants. With support from the VPAA, additional funds were allocated to increase the advertising for faculty positions with the goal of recruiting more diverse candidates. Yet, from the perspective of Highline's student body — over two-thirds of whom are students of color — more work remains to be done.
- *Full-time to part-time ratio*: Over the past five years between hiring and retirements and/or resignations, we've stayed constant at 130 tenured and tenure-track faculty. In the 2019-20 academic year, we hired six faculty into tenure-track positions.

An additional 10 have been hired to start in fall of 2020, bringing us up to 139. Even with softening enrollment over the past two years, Highline has been very strategic in determining how to use its vacant faculty lines from retirements and resignations to strengthen and stabilize its academic programs. Instead of tying lines to departments, decisions of where to hire were based on growth areas such as BAS programs, retirements in smaller departments with strong enrollment, and departments that have historically relied heavily on part-time faculty. Because of this and the slightly lower enrollment, Highline's number of part-time faculty has gone down from 381 to 364 in 2018-19. In 2018-19, 53% of Highline's state-funded course sections were taught by adjunct instructors.

Within the limits of current state funding, we continue to look for ways to improve support for our adjunct faculty, both in compensation and in professional development. In 2019-20, the interim VPAA convened an Adjunct Faculty Task Force in collaboration with Human Resources and HCEA, to assess Highline's practices in the context of [statewide guidelines on best practices for contingent faculty](#). As a result of those meetings, an Adjunct Faculty Advisory Group has been established, reporting to the VPAA. Key functions include: identifying a stable funding source so adjuncts can participate in campus governance; identifying appropriate office spaces and make office hour expectations commensurate with those for full-time faculty; developing an onboarding checklist with a single designated point person; and improving the process for getting contracts to adjunct faculty in a timely manner.

- *Salary competitiveness:* The college administration and faculty association continue to discuss strategies to achieve an attractive yet sustainable compensation plan for faculty. A 2018 SBCTC faculty and administrator salary study, conducted by the Center for Economic and Business Research at Western Washington University, highlighted the compensation problem. On average, Washington community and technical college faculty are paid 12.4% below peer states, and administrators are paid as much as 30% lower than peer states. The competitiveness issue is even more acute in the Seattle-King County metro area where the cost of living is 22.8% higher than the state as a whole, and for high-demand programs where applicant pools tend to be small. Several recent developments have sought to partially address the problem: 1) The 2018-21 faculty negotiated agreement established significant increases in adjunct faculty pay, as well as in the lower steps of the full-time faculty salary schedule relative to previous years; 2) The 2019-20 biennial budget passed by the legislature included a 5% regional pay adjustment for state agencies and educational institutions in King County; and 3) The 2019 Workforce Education Investment Act allocated a significant amount of additional funding for Nursing faculty effective fall 2019, and a minor amount for high-demand programs effective fall 2020. (Funding for salary increases for faculty teaching in high-demand programs is uncertain at this time.) While these recent changes have had a positive impact on the college's salary competitiveness, the college will need to continue to monitor its relative salary position and advocate for compensation funding enhancements from the Washington State Legislature to be able to recruit and retain qualified adjunct and full-time faculty.

## Faculty workloads

**2.B.5** *Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution's expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation.*

Full-time faculty workloads are addressed in Section 300 of the Highline College Education Association (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#). Section 303.1 addresses responsibilities in teaching, participating in college governance, advising students, and pursuing appropriate professional development to maintain currency in the assigned discipline(s). Section 303.2 concerns operational responsibilities such as working collaboratively with colleagues, participating in institutional activities, and providing information related to program or institutional accreditation. Section 305 (Responsibilities of Non-Classroom Faculty) details the responsibilities of counselors and librarians. The responsibilities and workloads for part-time faculty are addressed in Section 704 of the agreement. In all cases, these workloads are aligned with common expectations among two-year college faculty.

## Faculty evaluation

**2.B.6** *All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.*

Highline College's faculty evaluation procedures meet the standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Moreover, the college's practices are collaborative, transparent, well documented, and constructive.

Tenure-track faculty initially undergo a three-year tenure review process described in Section 400 of the Highline College Education Association (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-21](#). That process calls for quarterly student evaluations, collegial observations, and regular self-evaluations throughout the evaluation period. Once tenured, faculty are subject to the college's post-tenure review procedure, outlined in Section 308 every five years. The schedule of evaluations is maintained by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Part-time faculty evaluation is addressed in [Section 706 of the Faculty Agreement](#), page 65.

## STANDARD 2.C – EDUCATION RESOURCES

### Credentials offered

**2.C.1** *The institution provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.*

Consistent with its mission and core themes, Highline College offers a range of degrees and programs that meet the educational needs of our district. Available credentials are consistent with accepted practice in higher education:

- *Baccalaureate of Applied Science (B.A.S.):* Highline offers six applied baccalaureate degrees, including Youth Development, Global Trade and Logistics, Respiratory Care, Cybersecurity and Forensics, Early Learning and Elementary Education, and Integrated Design. BAS degrees at Highline College [directly transfer to master's degree programs at Western Governors University](#). In addition, four of the six degrees [directly transfer to Pacific Lutheran University's School of Business](#).
- *Associate of Arts (A.A.):* The A.A. degree prepares students to transfer to a four-year institution in pursuit of a bachelor's degree. Its structure corresponds roughly to the first two years of a baccalaureate program. Additionally, the college offers three discipline-specific A.A. degrees — in business, pre-nursing, and biology — that comply with statewide guidelines for pre-major general-education choices in those pathways. All A.A. degrees meet the requirements identified in the Direct Transfer Agreement of Washington's [Inter-College Relations Commission](#) (ICRC).
- *Associate of Science (A.S.):* The college offers A.S. degrees in biology, chemistry, computer science, physics, and engineering. The A.S. degrees provide students with a core curriculum that maintains their progression through the requisite first- and second-year course series that are expected of students in those majors. These degrees are recognized by the ICRC.
- *Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.):* Highline offers 41 A.A.S. degrees in professional-technical areas ranging from accounting to medical assisting to web/database development. These degrees are developed with the skills standards of each profession in mind and with input from industry professionals serving on program advisory committees. A.A.S. programs prepare students for employment and/or licensure in their selected profession. In addition, each of these degrees includes course work in human relations, quantitative skills, and communications. A.A.S. degrees are applicable towards B.A.S programs at Highline and other nearby colleges.
- *Certificates:* Highline's certificates prepare students for entry-level employment or provide special skills to enhance students' employability within their current profession. The college offers 15 certificates that require a year or longer (45-credits or more) of study. Each of these certificates includes course work in human relations, quantitative skills, and communications.

All degrees and certificates are listed and detailed in the [college catalog](#), along with the student learning outcomes for each degree and certificates of 45 or more credits.

## **Course and program-level learning outcomes**

**2.C.2** *The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.*

Highline College identifies its expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. These outcomes are shared with students and the public through the college catalog and individual course syllabi. The percentage of faculty assessing students' achievement of course learning outcomes is one of the objectives used in Highline's MFR. In the course management system used by Highline until 2017-2018, faculty were able to assess and record students' achievement of program and degree learning outcomes as well as course learning outcomes.

The shift to Curriculog precipitated a new review of course learning outcomes through a centralized process built into the course approval process. Faculty were offered a short course on writing and assessing student learning outcomes, and many instructors took advantage of that. However, some courses have not yet been entered into the Curriculog system. For those courses, there may be a disconnect between the course learning outcomes published on syllabi and the course outcomes published in the catalog.

In 2019-20, the director of Institutional Research selected a sample of fall 2019 syllabi from courses across the curriculum, for review by deans in Academic Affairs. While nearly all the syllabi reviewed included the course learning outcomes, in approximately 35% of the syllabi reviewed, the stated learning outcomes did not match those that were published in the catalog. In response to [this assessment](#), Instruction Cabinet has passed a resolution that the student learning outcomes for all courses must be entered into Curriculog by February 2021, or the courses will be de-activated.

Program outcomes are synonymous with degree outcomes for our A.A.S. and B.A.S. degrees. Learning outcomes for professional-technical programs are posted in the Program section of the [Associate Degree and Certification Requirements](#) in the college catalog. Program outcomes for B.A.S. programs are listed in the college catalog. Our primary transfer degree (A.A.-D.T.A.) is the equivalent of the general education component of a four-year B.A. or B.S. degree, and the outcomes for this degree are the same as our core competencies, or college-wide outcomes. These core competencies, along with the outcomes for all the additional transfer degrees, are stated in the catalog.

## **Credit and credential awards**

**2.C.3** *Credit and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.*

As noted in the Instructional Policies section of the college catalog, students are required to [apply for graduation](#) using a form available online or in print at the Registration office. When students apply for graduation, their records are reviewed by the credential evaluators who verify that the student has completed the number and

type of credits necessary for the specified credential. For any degree, students must complete at least 90 college-level credits, 23 of which must be earned at Highline. A 2.0 grade-point average is the minimum required to graduate. The college uses a numeric grading system, generally accepted and understood in higher education, to measure and report student performance. In the 2012-13 catalog, the college changed its grading policy so that a minimum of a D, 1.0 GPA, is required for any course taken in the A.A., A.S., and A.A.S. degrees. Further, any grade under 0.7 (D-) is now recorded as 0.0. Previously, decimal grade points ranged from 4.0 to 0.0, reported in 0.1 increments. The number of credits and general course requirements for A.A. and A.S. degrees reflect policies developed by the Washington State [Inter-College Relations Commission](#) and [Washington State Joint Transfer Council](#). Professional-technical degrees and certificates meet requirements articulated by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and for some programs by external accrediting organizations.

### **Credit hour policy**

Highline defines a “credit hour” in accordance to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) [Policy Manual](#), specifically in Chapter 5, Section 5.40.10, [Class Effort: Credit Values and Credit Equivalents](#).

Credit hour integrity at the college is maintained by the use of a Course Management System (Curriculog), which allows maintenance and editing of course credit hours, contact hours and type (lecture, lab, clinical), course descriptions and outlines, and student learning outcomes. The [Curriculum Approval Committee](#) (formally known as the Instruction Council) approve all new courses, and includes representatives from each division, along with instructional deans and the curriculum manager who develops the quarterly course schedule and proofreads for alignment between credits and contact hours. Courses are created in Curriculog for all new credit classes. Until the shift to Curriculog, existing courses were reviewed on a regular three-year basis. Beginning in 2020-21, courses will be reviewed as part of the [new program/discipline review process](#). The single exception are the courses that have yet to be entered into Curriculog, which must be reviewed in 2020-21, or de-activated for the 2021-22 academic year. Online and hybrid (blended) courses must follow the same course management requirements as their face-to-face counterparts.

### **Curriculum design and sequencing**

***2.C.4** Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.*

Highline College’s degree and certificate programs demonstrate coherent design, with appropriate depth, breadth, and sequencing of courses and synthesis of learning. Transfer degrees follow the structure recommended by the state’s [Inter-college Relations Commission](#) (ICRC). Under the ICRC’s Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) guidelines, A.A. and A.S. degrees must provide general education fundamentals such as written and oral communication and quantitative skills, as well as exposure



to distribution areas of science, social science, and the humanities. Minimum and maximum credit requirements in these areas ensure a balanced educational approach while also meeting the learning goals of the specific degree.

Highline College develops professional-technical degrees with input from business and industry professionals serving as members of program advisory committees. The advisory committees, required to meet at least twice a year, contribute information on employer expectations and needs. These committees also provide information on industry changes, standards, and future directions, thus ensuring that program curriculum remains current. Core courses in these programs typically are sequential so that students build upon skills developed and mastered in prior courses. Further, all professional-technical degrees include related instruction in quantitative skills, communication, and human relations. In addition to the core, breadth, and basic skills requirements common to higher education credentials, Highline requires that all degree-seeking students complete at least one course with diversity and globalism content. This requirement reflects the curricular impact of Core Theme 2, *“Integrate and institutionalize diversity and globalism throughout the college.”*

### **Faculty responsibility for curriculum**

**2.C.5** *Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.*

Multiple college offices ensure that Highline’s academic programs maintain appropriate content and rigor. Faculty exert central authority over these processes through two curriculum bodies:

- *Curriculum Approval Committee (CAC, formerly known as Instruction Council):* At the course level, new offerings are first proposed and developed by faculty in the discipline. The CAC (a standing faculty committee with administrative representation) reviews and approves new courses based on submission in the Curriculog course management system. All course submissions include course-level student learning outcomes as well as course contact hours, prerequisites (if any), course organization, and degree requirements fulfilled by the offering. On their way to Curriculum Approval Committee, they are reviewed by the department coordinator, division chair, and appropriate dean.
- *Faculty Senate:* Like individual courses, new degrees and certificates are developed by faculty in the discipline. Upon approval at the department level, new degrees are reviewed and recommended to the VPAA for approval by [Faculty Senate](#). Though the Senate reserves full authority over curricular matters, degree proposals are generally shared with the Policy Development Council so that other constituent groups have an opportunity for comment. This open and inclusive process ensures that all areas of the campus are aware of important changes in the college’s offerings.

In addition to these on-campus groups, curricular guidance is provided by program advisory committees, through the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' professional-technical program approval processes, and through the ICRC. A handful of Highline programs maintain external accreditation as well. Examples include the Paralegal program's American Bar Association accreditation and the Nursing program's National League for Nursing accreditation. While these entities offer valuable input into curriculum, Highline's faculty retain final authority and responsibility for the college's courses and programs.

### **Assessment of student learning**

Assessment of Highline's educational program, occurs at two levels — institutional and departmental.

#### Institution-wide assessment: Student attainment

At the institution-wide level, success is measured through the lens of Core Theme 1, “*Promote Student Engagement, Learning, and Achievement.*” There, the evidence is student attainment and student satisfaction, college-wide. For data, the college relies primarily on local analysis of the state's [Student Achievement Initiative](#) (SAI) data and the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (CCSSE) as reported in the college's [Mission Fulfillment Report](#). Collectively, these sources provide an ongoing picture of the college's impact on students' academic lives and of their perception of the quality of their learning experiences. The data is used to monitor student success trends, to identify gaps and opportunities there, and to task the appropriate bodies with responding to issues identified in the report.

Over the past six years, we have consistently used student-achievement data to assess student learning. Highline's institutional researcher has provided SAI data for student achievement via our MFR. This data guided the college to develop an [Umoja Scholars program](#), followed by a [Puente program](#) and an [AANAPISI program](#) to improve student attainment. Highline also created a Math Attainment Committee to study and recommend improvements in this area, resulting in a new MATH 146 course and the Math in 45 campaign.

#### Departmental assessment: Student learning

At the program, course, and degree level, meanwhile, responsibility for assessment of student learning resides squarely with the faculty. The assessment process is supported and facilitated by the [Assessment Committee](#) (AC), a standing faculty committee comprised of divisional representatives and library faculty, with *ex officio* representation from instructional deans and the institutional researcher. AC has a long history at the college. Over time, it has refined its processes, expanded its scope, and accumulated significant informational and support resources. Today it is one of the college's most important committees. See Chapter 4, Standards 4.A.3 and 4.B.2, for a description of how assessment work is done.

### **Integration of information resources**

**2.C.6** *Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is*

*integrated into the learning process.*

Highline faculty are encouraged to work with the college's reference librarians to embed information literacy (IL) into courses and programs. In a typical year, approximately 180 face-to-face IL sessions are scheduled, both in classrooms and in the library's instructional space. In addition, as described under Standard 2.E.3, besides the Canvas Information Literacy modules, the library offers a comprehensive suite of IL resources for faculty to integrate and assess information literacy in the learning process. Librarians offer their colleagues assistance in person, by email, or through group announcements. Consultations involve students doing research holding individual meetings with librarians at the request of the instructors. The consultations can be for extra-credit or required. At the time of the consultation the librarians [complete a form](#) that the students take back to their instructors. After starting with English classes the consultations have spread across disciplines and [use statistics](#) indicate they have become more popular over the past three years.

Librarians also undertake other activities designed to integrate information resources with other faculty. One recent example is librarians, after conversations with Nursing faculty, cancelling expensive print nursing periodicals and adding the CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature) database. Another is using the Kanopy streaming video database to provide access to specific documentaries requested by faculty. A smaller-scale example includes creating the [PSYCH180 Human Sexuality libguide](#), a collaborative effort between librarians and an adjunct psychology faculty to list books in the library collection approved for Psych180 class presentations.

Library faculty receive notifications for new courses at the same time as Curriculum Approval Committee. At that point, librarians reach out to faculty about the new course(s) and see what resources might be needed. As a result of these mechanisms — as well as the extraordinary professionalism, approachability, and competence of Highline's library staff — the college enjoys an exceptionally high level of engagement between teaching faculty and the library.

### **Credit for prior experiential learning**

**2.C.7** *Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.*

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is Highline College's process for awarding credit for experiential learning that has taken place away from the college classroom. This process for evaluating and awarding PLA credit is guided by Faculty Senate approved

policies and procedures, and is only awarded to enrolled students. Portfolio-style PLA is limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree. PLA is awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning outcomes for courses within the Highline College's regular curricular offerings, and is granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. Highline College makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the documented PLA review process.

Transfer-of-credit practices at Highline are detailed in this report's discussion of Standard 2.A.1.

### **Undergraduate program**

Highline College adopted a set of College-Wide Student Learning Outcomes (see *Table 2.7*) in 2002 that represented an integrated set of foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare each learner for future academic and career success. In spring 2020, Faculty Senate approved a proposal from the Assessment Committee to change the current five College-Wide Outcomes into six [Core Competencies](#) and eliminate the program-level outcomes for academic transfer degrees currently in the catalog.

This proposal was developed in order to improve Highline's processes related to assessment and specifically for assessment at the degree or certificate level. The impetus for change is summarized below:

- To better align Highline College with the best assessment practices as determined by the [Association of American Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#) as well as the [National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment \(NILOA\)](#);
- To increase and promote transparency to our community and to our students and show that students who earn a degree or certificate are meeting certain competencies;
- To help departmental and subject discipline faculty evaluate their courses and teaching as a part of a program review;
- To strengthen Highline's response to the updated [standards](#) from NWCCU which state that:

The institution identifies and publishes the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree, certificate, or credential programs. The institution engages in regular and ongoing assessment to validate student learning and, consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses student learning outcomes (or core competencies) examples of which include, but are not limited to, effective communication, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy that are assessed across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum.

The purpose of reframing college-wide learning outcomes as core competencies is so that they can be read as "students who complete a degree or certificate at Highline

College will be competent in ...” Faculty at Highline have learned and implemented a lot of language and practices around course-level learning outcomes and in order to not confuse the purpose/use of college-wide goals, we have rebranded these “outcomes” as “core competencies.”

These core competencies are expected from all students completing any degree or any certificate that includes at least 45 credits. Below, former “outcomes” are shown on the left and the new core competencies are shown on the right.

Table 2.1

Former College-Wide Outcome	New Core Competency
<p><b>Think Critically:</b> The ability to identify and summarize assumptions, issues, and salient arguments, as well as to draw logically valid conclusions from statements, images, data and other forms of evidence relevant to discipline or occupation-specific content, and to assess the implications and consequences of conclusions.</p>	<p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and summarize complex information, create an argument that acknowledges multiple perspectives, and use reasoning and evidence to draw conclusions.</p>
<p><b>Reason Quantitatively:</b> The ability to comprehend, analyze, estimate, use and evaluate quantitative information arising in a variety of situations and involving a combination of words, data sets, graphs, diagrams and symbols.</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Reasoning:</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to apply numerical, logical, and analytical techniques to analyze, evaluate, and explain quantitative information.</p>
<p><b>Communicate Effectively:</b> The ability to read, write, listen, speak and use visual and other nonverbal means of communication with clarity and purpose while being mindful of audience characteristics; to express original thought, to take a position and defend it using solid evidence and sound reasoning; and to recognize and consider the perspectives and contributions of others.</p>	<p><b>Effective Communication:</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate ideas through written, oral, and/or visual formats by utilizing their own voice to address various audiences and consider the perspectives of others.</p>
<p><b>Develop Information and Visual Literacy:</b> The ability to assess the information requirements of complex projects, to identify potential textual, visual and electronic resources, to obtain the needed information, to interpret, evaluate, synthesize, organize and use that information, regardless of format, while adhering strictly to the legal and ethical guidelines governing information access in today’s society.</p>	<p><b>Information &amp; Visual Literacy:</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret, evaluate, synthesize, and organize selected textual, visual, or electronic resources for a given situation, maintaining strict adherence to legal and ethical guidelines governing information access.</p>

<p><b>Demonstrate Civic Responsibility in Diverse and Multifaceted Environments:</b> The ability to understand and interact productively and ethically with others in diverse local, national and global communities with an informed awareness of contemporary issues, their historical contexts and their personal relevance.</p>	<p><b>Community and Social Responsibility:</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to interact productively and equitably with others in diverse local, national, and global communities; address social justice issues based on awareness of historical and contemporary systemic inequalities; proactively engage in their physical and mental health.</p>
	<p><b>Globalism:</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate how environmental, relational and cultural processes and interactions impact the world, people’s lives, and their own views.</p>

Until 2020, assessment of student achievement of Highline’s College-Wide Outcomes was done through course mapping and documented in the previous course management system. Individual faculty reported assessment results through the Assessment Tool. Departments were encouraged to discuss results together, and the number of departments having these discussions is an indicator on our current [MFR](#). The Assessment Committee is developing a more collaborative approach to the assessment of core competencies, aligned with recommendations from [AAC&U](#) and [NILOA](#) and consistent with the focus on program learning outcomes that is part of the Guided Pathways reform movement.

General education

**2.C.8** *The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students’ programs, and integrity of the receiving institution’s degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.*

**2.C.9** *The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.*

**2.C.10** *The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.*

For our transfer degrees, Highline follows the structure recommended by the [Intercollege Relations Commission's Direct Transfer Agreement](#), which has been agreed to by all of Washington state's community and technical colleges, all the public colleges and universities, and nearly all the independent colleges. This framework ensures that students complete a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge. Though some degree options may increase the requirements, the minimum credits in each skill and distribution area are as follows:

*Written and Oral Communications:* 15 credits

*Quantitative Skills:* 5 credits

*Physical Education:* 3 credits

*Diversity and Globalism:* 3 credits

*Humanities:* 10 credits

*Social Sciences:* 15 credits

*Science:* 15 credits

For each requirement, the list of course options is clearly delineated in the catalog.

Because the Associate in Science programs require a larger block of pre-major and sequenced coursework in the first two years of study, these degrees require fewer general education credits — typically five credits in communications, five to 10 credits in humanities, and five to 10 credits in social sciences. The mathematics and science requirements in these degrees are correspondingly much larger, totaling as many as 70 credits in those areas. Under the Direct Transfer Agreement's provisions, A.S. graduates may complete any outstanding general education requirements at the receiving four-year institution.

Over time, Highline has devoted considerable resources and has worked diligently to improve the assessment of our general education learning outcomes, which we now refer to as our core competencies. The core competencies are published in the [college catalog](#). For nearly all of this accreditation cycle, these learning outcomes have regularly been assessed by faculty via the [Assessment Tool](#) and now through the [Program Review process](#) (see Standards 4.A.3 and 4.B.2). Through department-level mapping, faculty identified alignment between individual course outcomes and the general education/transfer degree learning outcomes. Recognizing that the assessment of general education outcomes could be strengthened by adopting a more collaborative and systematic approach, in 2019-2020, the Assessment Committee researched effective strategies used at other campuses and proposed a revision to the general education learning outcome assessment process at Highline. The detailed [proposal](#) from the Assessment Committee was [approved](#) by the Faculty Senate in March 2020.

All of our B.A.S. programs have an identifiable core of general education courses, designed to help students achieve the core competencies. Through the mapping process, B.A.S. faculty have identified alignment between individual course outcomes, B.A.S. program outcomes, and general education outcomes (aka core competencies).

#### Related instruction

**2.C.11** *The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas.*

In all cases, Highline College's applied degrees and certificates of 45 credits or more require related instruction coursework in human relations, computation, and communication. Though many Associate in Applied Science degrees require more, the minimum related instruction requirement is 15 credits: five credits each in communications, computation, and human relations. Applied degree requirements are reviewed annually and additionally during the [program review process](#).

The specific courses that meet these requirements vary somewhat among A.A.S. degrees, in keeping with the need for such instruction to align with and support program goals. However, a master list of [allowable Related Instruction Classes](#) is maintained on the Academic Affairs Department Coordinators website. Highline College does not embed related instruction. All related instruction courses are taught by faculty in those disciplines. The specific courses identified as requirements are published in the college catalog and in program-specific publications such as brochures.

As with all Highline courses, those meeting the degree requirements for related instruction have clear, measurable student learning outcomes which appear in the catalog under the course descriptions and are managed through Curriculog. Course learning outcomes are mapped to program-level outcomes and college-wide outcomes during the [program review process](#). They are disclosed to students in class syllabi, as required in the inclusive [syllabus template](#) published on the Academic Affairs homepage.

Like their counterparts in transfer education, faculty in the professional-technical programs invested significant effort in assessment of student learning within their programs. In these programs, faculty have mapped all degree and certificate learning outcomes to the outcomes for specific courses within their curricula, including related instruction courses. Through the mapping process, the connection between the related instruction components of a degree and the purpose they serve in the degree itself is made quite clear.

#### **Graduate programs (Standards 2.C.12-15)**

Highline College does not offer graduate programs.



## Continuing education

**2.C.16** *Credit and non-credit continuing education programs and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals.*

**2.C.17** *The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses. Continuing education and/or special learning activities, programs, or courses offered for academic credit are approved by the appropriate institutional body, monitored through established procedures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and assessed with regard to student achievement. Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution's continuing education and special learning activities.*

Highline College's [Continuing Education](#) plays an integral part in the college's connection with the community. Its unit-level mission, "*Continuing Education commits to student success and community enhancement by providing accessible, diverse and innovative quality education and support services to adult learners in pursuit of personal enrichment, professional training, career advancement and pathways to college,*" echoes the language of our Core Theme 3, "*Build valuable relationships and establish a meaningful presence within Highline College's ... communities.*"

To this end, Continuing Education offers a variety of educational services designed to meet community needs, including these primary areas:

- *Professional development and personal enrichment:* These courses and workshops, both face-to-face and online, help individual community members to improve their lives.
- *Customized training:* Our training clients include area municipalities, local business and industry, and workforce-development entities like the Workforce Development Council and the Port of Seattle's Port JOBS program. Offerings may be grant or contract funded and may serve incumbent workers, applicant trainees, or the unemployed.

Although Continuing Education is a self-support unit of the college, it is fully integrated with the academic and governance structures of the institution. Its director reports to the Dean for Organizational Development and Extended Learning and sits on Instruction's Deans and Directors Leadership Team. In all cases, the college maintains direct responsibility for the quality of academic programming in Continuing Education. All Continuing Education courses are developed and taught by local professionals who are experts in their fields. These courses, both credit and non-credit, are evaluated by students.

The vast majority of Continuing Education's services are non-credit. In a limited number of instances, however, Continuing Education has partnered with Highline's academic departments to develop short courses, certificates, or pilot programs for credit. A typical example is the Human Resource Certificate Program, a partnership between Continuing Education and the Business department. In cases of this kind,

Continuing Education staff follow a standard process in which they collaborate with the faculty division chair or department coordinator representing the discipline. Faculty hiring follows the practices common to the department involved. Credit courses are developed and updated according to college guidelines for all credit-bearing courses. This includes completion and approval of courses in Curriculog. In no case does Continuing Education offer credentials outside the college's core disciplines.

**2.C.18** *The granting of credit or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for continuing education courses and special learning activities is: a) guided by generally accepted norms; b) based on institutional mission and policy; c) consistent across the institution, wherever offered and however delivered; d) appropriate to the objectives of the course; and e) determined by student achievement of identified learning outcomes.*

**2.C.19** *The institution maintains records which describe the number of courses and nature of learning provided through non-credit instruction.*

Where academic credit is awarded for Continuing Education courses, grades and credit determinations are consistent with institutional practices. Where Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are awarded, one CEU is defined as 10 clock hours of participation in an accredited and organized Continuing Education program with qualified instruction. The primary purpose of CEUs is to provide a permanent record of the educational accomplishments of an individual who has completed one or more significant, non-credit courses. Continuing Education maintains copies of quarterly catalogs and class offerings in a centralized file room. Additionally, course names and enrollment records can be tracked by quarter through the college's Student Management System (SMS).

## **STANDARD 2.D – STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES**

Highline College's Core Theme 1, "*Promote student engagement, learning and achievement,*" includes as its second objective that diverse "*student support services fulfill the learning needs of students.*" An important complementary component of learning is the support services that Highline offers to meet the unique learning needs of each student.

### **Student programs and services**

**2.D.1** *Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.*

To support students' learning and their progression on educational pathways, we offer a comprehensive and diverse array of services to our student communities. In general terms, these services may be categorized in five major groups:

- *Student-specific services:* The college responds to specific student needs through its [Counseling Center](#), [Center for Cultural and Inclusive Excellence](#), [Intercultural Center](#), [Veterans Services](#), [Women's Programs](#), [WorkFirst](#), [Workforce Education Services](#), [Benefits Hub](#), [Student Support Center](#), [While in School Housing Program](#), [Passport to Careers](#), [International Student Programs](#), [High School Programs \(high school](#)

[completion, enhancement, Running Start](#)), [Community Pantry](#), [Transition Success Center](#), [TRiO](#), [UMOJA](#), [AANAPISI](#), [PUENTE](#), [Math Engineering Science Achievement Program \(MESA\)](#), [Access Services and Career and Student Employment \(CASE\)](#) programs. Another example is the [Puget Sound Welcome Back Center](#) which assists healthcare and other professionals who were trained in other countries to reenter their profession in the local workforce.

- *Academic supports:* The Academic Affairs division also coordinates specialized services to support learning outside of the classroom. The [Tutoring Center](#), [Math Resource Center](#) and [Writing Center](#) provide individualized and small-group support, both peer- and faculty-led, for students seeking to enhance their classroom performance.
- *Student Engagement:* Highline's students are invited to engage in leadership and service roles throughout campus. The [Center for Leadership and Service](#) and [Center for Cultural and Inclusive Excellence](#) work to provide an environment that promotes inclusion, connection and relationships.
- *Enrollment Services:* Highline provides efficient and effective management of processes that administratively support student on-boarding, retention, and completion. Enrollment Services includes the departments of [Admissions](#), [Registration and Records](#), and [Veterans Services](#). Auxiliary supports are provided by [Financial Aid](#), [Cashiering](#), and [Financial Services](#).
- *Student Funding Services:* Highline provides multiple methods for students to receive funding to cover cost of attendance and emergency needs. Student Funding Services includes the departments of [Financial Aid](#), [Women's Programs](#), [WorkFirst](#), [Workforce Education Services](#), [Benefits Hub](#), [Student Support Center](#), [WISH](#) program, and [Passport to Careers](#).

Beyond programming, student success depends on access to physical spaces that promote community development and engagement. To meet that end, the college's Student Union, [Intercultural Center](#), [Tutoring Center](#), [MESA Center](#), [Wellness Center](#), [Umoja](#), [AANAPISI](#), [Puente](#), and [TRiO](#), collaborative work spaces, dedicated student spaces throughout the campus, and the open study spaces in the library and Student Services building have all been built and maintained as welcoming, attractive places for student collaboration, reflection, and community engagement.

### **Safety and security**

**2.D.2** *The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.*

The [Department of Public Safety](#), a unit of the Administrative Services division, is responsible for campus safety and security. The department consists of a director, a sergeant, seven (7) full-time public safety officers, and between two to four part-time officers, depending on need and availability. In addition, an Associate Director of Emergency Management and an administrative assistant/dispatcher provide organizational and administrative support to the department. The Department of

Public Safety operates on a 24/7 basis, 365 days a year. At any given time, students and employees may be able to reach one of our officers through the Public Safety office phone at (206) 592-3218.

All of the Public Safety staff are fully trained and maintain current certifications in first aid and CPR/AED. All of the Public Safety officers are required to attend and complete the Security Officer Academy at the University of Washington within six months of hiring. The academy consists of five, all-day classes, with topics including violence prevention, security patrol, and investigation. In addition to the academy, periodic training is provided to all officers on a variety of subjects, including customer service, de-escalation, and the use of non-lethal defensive devices, such as expandable batons, pepper spray, and tasers.

The department staff is also responsible for maintaining emergency management standards and training. All officers have certificates in the National Incident Management System. The department routinely rehearses responses for inclement weather, violent-intruder events, continuity of operations, and earthquake scenarios. On a weekly basis the Public Safety staff tests the campus' comprehensive [HC Alert](#) system by practicing sending out emergency warning notices.

To foster cooperation and effective response from the local Des Moines Police Department (DMPD), the Public Safety Director has made it a priority to establish a respectful and close working relationship with the Chief of Police and the Police Commander. As a result of this partnership, representatives of the police department have participated in various public safety forums for students and employees, including Coffee with a Cop and active shooter drills. Several of the DMPD officers have also been teaching as adjunct faculty at Highline College in the Criminal Justice program.

Public Safety is committed to providing accessible daily crime logs for the public in accordance with the [Jeanne Clery Act of 1990](#). The department utilizes the Report Exec database to assist in the compilation of statistics and ensure accurate reporting. These statistics are compiled and reported to the college Executive Cabinet and the Des Moines Police Department (DMPD) on a quarterly basis. The department publishes an annual [Campus Safety Report](#), including reportable crime statistics for the previous three years, by October 1 of each year. The Campus Safety Report is distributed to students, staff, and faculty through the campus email and is posted on the Public Safety website. The report is also filed with the United States Department of Education in accordance with federal law.

In order to assist the Public Safety with accurate [Clery reporting](#), the Clery Compliance Committee, made up of members from Human Resources, Student Services, Administrative Services, and Public Safety, meets on a quarterly basis to review reportable Clery crimes to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Altogether, the Clery Compliance Committee members represent Title IX, Violence Against Women Act, and student code conduct on campus. In cases where victims are involved, the committee works with various on-campus departments and programs to provide support and service, as necessary and appropriate.

Public Safety takes the safety and security of our students and employees very seriously. Whenever there is a threat of an ongoing serious crime, occurring on campus or in the surrounding streets, the department sends out timely warning notices via email and text alerts, to immediately inform the campus community. These notifications will contain as much information as available about the nature of the crime, the location, the time, identifying characteristics of the suspect(s), and any continuing danger to the campus community. Additionally, specific advice regarding safety precautions and recommendations may be included in the warning as appropriate.

The department has established a quarterly “Crime Prevention Cleanup” to encourage students and staff to participate in crime prevention opportunities. The cleanup is based on the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) concept of the broken window theory. It is a criminological theory that visible signs of civil disorder create an environment which encourages further crime and disorder. The program allows students and staff to participate in efforts to reduce crime and show the community we care what happens on campus. In addition, the department has created a “Club” program to provide steering wheel locks at a deeply discounted price to students and staff who own vulnerable vehicles, those makes and models on the top ten stolen vehicles in the state of Washington.

Public Safety provides [emergency procedure training](#) to students and staff throughout the year in an effort to maintain preparedness and assist in creating department safety plans. The training focuses on individual safety and providing tools to create and have an individual safety plan. Additionally, the department plays a large role in training [Building Evacuation Coordinators](#), a group of staff who are tasked with helping the evacuation process during emergencies.

Public Safety also provides other services to students and employees on campus. The department maintains a “lost and found” program. Lost and found items are logged and stored for 60 days in the department storage. Unclaimed items beyond 60 days are donated to the Highline College Foundation, Women’s Programs, or Goodwill. Department officers are available to provide on-campus escort services for any reason to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and faculty. Additionally, officers are equipped to assist motorists in jumpstarting vehicles and unlocking locked doors to vehicles.

Emergency Management at Highline College is an institutional program coordinated by the Director of Public Safety and the Associate Director of Emergency Management. These two individuals are tasked with managing the emergency preparedness and responses of the institution to maintain a level of readiness at the same time reduces the vulnerability to hazards in times of disasters. The Emergency Management program’s mission is to protect the college community by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and man-made disasters. Highline’s comprehensive [Emergency Operations Plan](#) (EOP) drives the mission forward and serves as a guide to conducting incident response. The EOP is based upon the FEMA

[National Incident Management System](#) principles and coordinates duties, roles, and systems to align with federal standards.

Cross-campus integration is important to sustainable preparedness. As such, the Emergency Response Team, made up of selectively trained employees from Public Safety, Facilities, Information Technology Services, and the Vice President for Administration, was created in 2015 to manage the institutional emergency responses. The primary purpose in creating the [Emergency Response Team](#) (see page 8, Emergency Operations Plan) was to integrate and unify communication and effort among these key departments when responding to emergencies. The Emergency Response Team meets on a quarterly basis and is charged with applying the EOP to drills, exercises, and actual incident response on campus. For example, each year, in late fall, the members of the Emergency Response Team practice a vehicle evacuation drill for the entire campus to remain prepared for inclement weather situations. Other quarterly response drills include shelter-in-place/deny entry, fire drills, power-outage scenarios, and earthquake responses. In addition to the quarterly drills, the Emergency Response Team and Executive Cabinet hold an annual tabletop exercise to test and maintain operational readiness. To encourage personal preparedness of our students and staff, emergency procedures posters that include response instructions to various scenarios and were distributed to all offices and classrooms. Given the large number of non-English speaking students at Highline College, a new pictorial emergency procedures poster was also created last year to provide alternative instructions to emergency responses.

In cooperation with Information Technology Systems, Public Safety maintains an “eLaunch” emergency notification system that is integrated with campus telephone and email systems, Canvas, digital signage, desktop alerts, a text messaging service, social media channels, outdoor speakers, and IP speakers in large common areas in order to broadcast emergency messages as broadly as possible.

Highline College has long established good working relationships with several emergency responder partners in emergency management. King County Emergency Management provides quarterly meetings and training for emergency management professionals. South King County Fire and Rescue makes regular visits to the Highline College campus. Des Moines Police Department, Kent Police Department, and Valley SWAT teams have held exercises on our campus. Highline Public School District has collaborated with us on a relocation memorandum of understanding. Public Safety is also a part of Washington State Board Safety, Security and Emergency Management. The college utilizes these partners as a resource during incidents and as an educational opportunity throughout the year.

All of our emergency preparedness and planning were put to a test in February 2018. Highline College was forced to react to a lockdown/shelter-in-place scenario when gunshots were reported near the campus. The Emergency Response Team reacted and utilized the emergency communication system to reach the campus community via office phones, desktop alerts, text messages, social media, email, and indoor and outdoor speakers. Throughout the three-hour long incident, emergency

instructions were disseminated to the community and members of the Emergency Response Team joined the unified command with law enforcement personnel. Luckily, no one was seriously harmed during the incident and the lessons we took away regarding door access infrastructure, emergency messaging, and the recovery process were invaluable.

[Emergency preparedness](#) and management for an open campus like Highline College is always a challenge. While we are confident of our program, there is always more to be done to keep the students, staff, and faculty safe and ready. We are constantly learning and looking for new ideas and tools to improve our emergency responses. Some of the upcoming priorities and projects include expanding the camera surveillance system, enhancing access control, and adding a new communication system.

### **Recruitment, admission, and orientation**

***2.D.3** Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.*

Student recruitment is primarily the responsibility of the [Institutional Advancement division](#) at Highline College. That office produces the college's promotional materials, organizes recruitment events, and employs professional staff who conduct outreach into area schools and develop relationships throughout the community through community engagement strategies.

As an open-access institution, the college attempts to meet the educational needs of any adult who can benefit from its educational services. Appropriate to that mission, Highline College's [Admissions department](#) provides information on the college's entry processes and procedures. Potential students can apply online and register, either in-person or through the college website, as long as they meet any class prerequisites.

Information about academic requirements and transfer policies is the initial responsibility of the [Advising Center](#). Students receive orientation and academic and program advising from professional academic advising staff. Mandatory new student orientation is provided for all new students who have not attended college previously. Orientation sessions are offered on a regular basis aligned with registration cycles and online orientation is available for students unable to attend an on-campus session. The purpose of these orientations is to provide an overview of academic program options, teach students to navigate their college enrollment, and how to be successful as a college student, including key considerations to graduate and transfer.

Additionally, many specialized programs offer targeted orientations for certain student populations, including [International Student Programs](#), some professional-technical programs, language-based cohorts and learning communities.

Academic program publications and websites are reviewed and updated annually, with

official changes reflected in the [Highline College Catalog](#). The [Advising Center](#) tracks changes that occur through the year to ensure communication with students and advisors across campus.

### **Program revision or elimination**

**2.D.4** *In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.*

Program closures at Highline are rare. When they occur, the decision is almost certainly budget- or demand-driven. [Section 501.5 in the HCEA Faculty Agreement](#) describes the process for determining that a program may be at risk of closing due to changing patterns of student enrollment and class utilization. In such cases, the Vice President for Academic Affairs works with the appropriate dean in Academic Affairs, the division chair, and the faculty coordinator to draft a plan for students to complete the program with minimal disruption. This plan is clearly communicated to the students in person, in writing, and through the program website. Typically, program elimination involves ending new enrollment while teaching out the remaining students so they can complete their certificate and/or degree within the normal timeframe for earning that credential. Program closures are reported to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Program revisions may occur as a result of the program review process, because of shifts in the related industries, or through recommendations from external advisory committees. If program requirements change, students have the option of graduating under the original or under the updated program requirements.

### **College catalog and publications**

**2.D.5** *The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes:*

- *Institutional mission and core themes;*
- *Entrance requirements and procedures;*
- *Grading policy;*
- *Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings;*
- *Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty;*
- *Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities;*
- *Tuition, fees, and other program costs;*
- *Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment;*
- *Opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and j) Academic calendar.*



**2.D.6** Publications describing educational programs include accurate information on:

- National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;
- Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession.

The [Highline College Catalog](#), available on the college website, is updated annually. A comprehensive update and review of the catalog occurs every two years. In 2011, the college converted from a print-only catalog to the online Acalog tool. A limited number of hard-copy catalogs are available in the Highline Bookstore. To provide convenient web access, kiosks are available on campus in public areas of Student Services (Building 6), faculty office buildings, and the Outreach Center (Building 99). In addition, the library has over 70 general-use computers available to students, prospective students, and the public.

The [catalog](#) and other publications consistently include the information required by Standards for Accreditation and common higher education practice.

The catalog contains the following items in the sections noted:

[Institutional mission and core themes](#)

[General Admissions Requirements](#)

[Grading policies](#)

[Board of Trustees/Faculty/Staff](#) section

[Academic Calendars](#) section

[About Highline](#) section

[Getting Started](#) section

[Instructional Policies](#) section

[Associate Degrees & Certificates Programs](#)

[Professional Technical Associate Degrees & Certificates](#)

Course offerings are found at the [Class Schedule](#) webpage. [Student rights and conduct regulations](#) appear in the [College Policies](#) section. [Tuition, fees](#), [refund policies](#), and [financial aid information](#) are available as well.

Highline uses its website as the primary source of accurate information regarding programs and courses. When professional-technical programs have eligibility requirements for licensure or occupational entry, that information appears on the program websites as well as in the catalog. Additionally, all students are encouraged to establish [myHighline](#) login accounts. These accounts provide access to most college systems, such as Canvas, and provide a student email account through which the college disseminates updates, reminders, and other important notices to the general student population.

## **Student records**

**2.D.7** *The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.*

Highline's [Registration and Records department](#) in the Student Services division maintains student records. All student data is backed up daily by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, which also extracts student records on a quarterly and annual basis. Local records are retained following the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' [record retention schedule](#). The college maintains confidentiality of student records as provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). An [explanation](#) of student FERPA rights appears in the Registration and Records webpage as well as the [College Policies and Procedures](#) in the college catalog.

## **Financial aid**

**2.D.8** *The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.*

**2.D.9** *Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution's loan default rate.*

Poverty rates and unemployment in South King County are substantially higher than regional averages. As a result, Highline's student population relies heavily on financial support to access the college's academic programs. In 2018-19, the college awarded approximately 4,330 students some form of financial assistance. Given the community's need, providing accurate and comprehensive financial aid information is a crucial task. Consequently, financial assistance is a standard topic when prospective students first interact with Enrollment Services and Admission/Entry Services, Advising, Financial Aid office, or Outreach Services. Highline's Financial Aid website is the primary information portal for both incoming and returning students. The site provides information on scholarships and student loans, as well as traditional aid sources. The website invites students to attend financial aid workshops. The college updates the site when information changes; print publications containing financial aid information are updated annually. In addition, Financial Aid office staff are available to meet students in person to provide additional information or clarification. Students are notified of any repayment obligations by letter. Copies of repayment obligation letters are retained in student files. The college's Student Loans webpage outlines student responsibilities and requirements associated with student loans. Students are also required to complete the Federal Online Direct Student Loan Entrance Counseling at the United States Department of Education Student Loans website.

All student loan disbursements are reconciled monthly. Default rates for Highline are

published annually by the Department of Education at its Official Cohort Default Rates for Schools webpage.

### **Academic advising**

**2.D.10** *The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.*

Academic advisement at Highline is a joint responsibility shared between Student Services and Academic Affairs. Significant energy has been devoted to improving advising over the past four years. In 2016, a faculty and staff cross-divisional [Advising Task Force](#) (ATF) was established. At the time, the college published six pathways of study to help students to choose their classes more easily. Faculty were brought in during Professional Development Day to brainstorm connections between different divisions in these pathways, and to create meaningful slogans to help students and faculty clarify the pathways. At this same time, the ATF began a campaign of best practices for advising. These practices were then shared regularly with faculty via frequent emails and at faculty meetings and professional development workshops. Faculty and staff have been collaborating closely since then to offer professional development for faculty advisors. Part of this work was the development of an [Advising Tool](#) for faculty to use. Based on the success of this work and the recommendations of the ATF, the Task Force was reconstituted as the [cross-divisional Advising Council](#) in spring 2019. In 2019-20, Highline committed additional resources to provide support for advising, including hiring new pathway advisors in Student Services and a full-time program manager to support faculty advising in Academic Affairs, which the Advising Council recommended. At the February 2020 President's Town Hall, the Advising Council presented its four-phase model of advising, which includes more professional development for faculty advising, assisted by the Learning and Teaching Center. The President's Town Hall was followed by a series of workshops designed to get campus feedback on the new Advising model. The Advising Council used the feedback to revise the model, which has been incorporated into Highline's [Guided Pathways work plan for 2020-21](#).

The goal of Highline College's advising system is to support students throughout their educational experience, tailored to provide just-in-time and individualized services to meet the needs of a diverse student population. In addition to general advising provided by professional academic advisors in the college's [Advising Center](#), students are connected with faculty and staff advisors based on their academic program, cultural or career interests or goals. All students have access to professional advising staff in the Advising Center. Placement advisors in the [Placement and Testing Center](#) help students with entering the college and determining ways to demonstrate eligibility for English and math classes. Advising responsibilities are included in the (HCEA) [Faculty Agreement 2018-2021](#) (Section 303 - Responsibilities of all Faculty) and are considered an important responsibility. Full-time faculty provide both classroom-based

advising and individualized advising to students in their classes, and those pursuing future transfer majors, or professional-technical careers in their discipline. Numerous special programs provide high-touch, individualized advising to students including high school completion, Running Start, TRiO, and Achieve for students with disabilities. Funding advisors assist students with obtaining state and federal financial assistance. Students in English Language for Career and Academic Prep (ELCAP) classes and programs are assisted in transitioning to college-credit based programs by both the ELCAP faculty and the [Transition Success Center/Highline Support Center](#).

Advising is required for students who earn below a 2.0 GPA per the Academic Standards Policy to ensure students are contacted for assistance if their GPA is off-track of meeting graduation requirements. Professional development and training is a collaborative effort led by the Advising Center in Student Services and the Learning and Teaching Center in Academic Affairs. Advising training is offered year-round to new and experienced advisors across campus. One day of each Opening Week prior to the beginning of fall quarter, faculty and staff come together to focus on professional development for advising, and learn of important changes and updates.

Updated program and degree requirements are reviewed, published, and posted on the college website annually and are found in the catalog online. [Programs A to Z webpage](#) lists each area of study, the associated certificate or degree programs, academic departments, and faculty advisors for all college offerings. Students can also officially request and check their advisor assignment online.

### **Co-curricular programs**

**2.D.11** *Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services and are governed appropriately.*

Highline College's Center for Leadership and Service (CLS) manages and coordinates the institution's co-curricular offerings. Its work aligns directly with Core Theme 1, particularly in the first objective's goal that "students engage with their curriculum, campus, and community for a meaningful educational experience."

[Center for Leadership and Service](#) provides opportunities for growth and learning through student leadership roles in campus governance. It also develops and maintains student-funded programs that build and support student community — clubs, campus publications, and athletics, for example — as well as advancing the college's diversity and global initiatives by providing funding and coordination of diversity, international, and social justice programs. The list of chartered clubs is extensive, with over 65 active organizations representing the diversity of Highline's students and their interests. Governance of Highline's co-curricular programs is the responsibility of the [Associated Students of Highline College](#) (ASHC). As the college's representative student government, ASHC provides program oversight and funding to the many co-curricular programs offered across campus. As outlined in its Constitution, ASHC's responsibilities include allocating student activities funds, providing leadership and involvement opportunities for students, and acting as the collective voice of enrolled students. Its budget policies can be found in the ASHC Financial Code. Highline's co-

curricular programs are managed by the Associate Dean for Student Life who, along with the Director for the Center for Leadership & Service, serves as budget authority for student funds. The associate dean delegates financial monitoring to budget managers for each program offered. These budget managers are accountable to both the ASHC and the college to assure compliance with relevant institutional and state policies.

### **Auxiliary services**

**2.D.12** *If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution's mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.*

The college engages in enterprise activities appropriate to its mission, its core themes, and the needs of its students. Auxiliary Services include: the [Bookstore](#), [Campus Food Services](#), [Conference and Event Services](#), all under the supervision of Administrative Services.

[College Bookstore](#): Our full-service Highline Bookstore supports the college's mission by providing timely access to fairly priced textbooks, course materials, and supplies. The bookstore offers cost-saving programs such as textbook rentals, electronics rentals, and e-books. The bookstore also sells school supplies, electronics, gifts, greeting cards, snacks, beverages, and various convenience items, and is the primary source for Highline College clothing and insignia merchandise. The bookstore supports student achievement by employing up to 50 student workers each quarter. The bookstore also supports affordability, learning opportunities, and graduation with a textbook buyback program, on-campus author appearances, and commencement.

[Food Service](#): From 2015 through June 2020, Highline College contracted with Lancer Hospitality to provide dining and catering services in support of Core Themes 1-4. Providing access to food, drinks, and social areas, Highline's food service supports student learning, diverse student needs, and meets community needs for students on campus, all in a sustainable way. Lancer maintained a cafeteria-style main dining area (the Union Café), as well as two smaller venues in Building 8 (Fireside Bistro) and Building 29 (Café 29). Lancer also provided catering services for events hosted by the college. Because of campus closure due to COVID-19 in spring 2020, Lancer and Highline have not renewed the contract. Over the years Highline has solicited input from employees as to the quality and usefulness of Lancer food services.

[Conference and Event Services](#): Campus facilities are for the priority use of activities relating to the educational mission and normal operations of the college, but when available Highline College's Conference and Event Services coordinates rental and use of campus space for all non-academic purposes. This includes the rental of classroom or conference spaces to individuals and groups for events such as meetings, conferences, and training. Conference Services strives to uphold Core Theme 3 by collaborating with community partners and making the campus available to external

community groups as outlined in the [Facility Use Policy](#) (General Operations: 4220). In addition, Conference and Event Services collaborated with Lancer to provide catering support for internal and external events prior to the contract ending in June 2020.

Student Housing: In December 2018, Highline welcomed its first student residents to [Campus View Student Housing](#) in support of Core Themes 1, 2, and 4. This supports student learning, meets the needs of diverse students, and supports the sustainability of the college. Campus View was developed by Highline Place LLC, an outside investor. Highline College Foundation LLC leases the space from the owner. Capstone On-Campus Management (COCM) manages housing and works with student services and the Foundation LLC to provide a safe and healthy living environment. As of this writing, Highline's Student Housing department is developing programs and services to establish a vibrant living and learning community at Highline College in support of student's personal and academic goals and to meet the needs of diverse students.

Auxiliary Services contributes to student learning by providing student employment and internship opportunities. The Highline Bookstore and Conference and Event Services also reflect Core Themes 2 and 3 by providing resources in support of extra and co-curricular events such as Global Fest, Unity Through Diversity Week, National Poetry Month, Grad Fair, and various events throughout the year. Conference and Event Services plays a pivotal role in supporting numerous Equity, Diversity and Inclusion centered events as well as Professional Development opportunities across campus.

Input regarding Auxiliary Services is possible by direct conversations with staff and by using contact information found on Highline's website. When Highline College's food service contract is renegotiated, Auxiliary Services convenes a multi-constituent committee to provide input and ideas. A cross-departmental Student Housing Committee meets regularly to discuss housing-related issues.

## **Athletics**

**2.D.13** *Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution's mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.*

Highline College's [Athletic department](#) is dedicated to the academic, athletic, and social growth of every student-athlete. The program and its students are closely monitored to ensure the educational mission of the college is being met. The college is a member of the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC) and strives to remain consistent with the ideals and goals of this organization. The college's wrestling program is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association.

Highline's scholarship policy exceeds the requirements of both associations to promote the academic success of all student-athletes. Oversight of these programs is conducted by an athletic director who serves as the budget authority and departmental

administrator for all athletic facilities and programs, as well as the supervisor for all coaching staffs.

Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for any students. No exceptions or special access is granted to students involved in athletics, the student community, or leadership roles.

### **Identity verification**

**2.D.14** *The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.*

Highline's online and hybrid courses are delivered through the college's Learning Management System (LMS), [Canvas](#). Canvas is accessed by students through their myHighline accounts, which are established at the time of admission through a one-time activation code provided in the new student admission packet. This activation code, combined with additional personal information, is used to verify the student's identity when creating the myHighline account, which then becomes the primary authenticator of identity for future interactions. The student is required to set a strong password and to answer a set of security questions for purposes of later identification. If the student cannot answer the security questions, he or she must present photo identification at the [ITS Help Desk](#), or answer a set of personal identification questions via telephone or email, in order to gain account access. There are no general admissions fees, and no charge for establishing the [myHighline](#) account.

Instructors of individual online courses employ a variety of methods to verify student identity in the assessment process. Highline's online faculty also emphasize short written assignments as a means to develop a sense of each student's voice before any major written work is assigned. [Learning and Teaching Center](#) (LTC) and [Educational Technology](#) provide support to help faculty employ assessment strategies that require ongoing commitment to the class and student participation in a way that helps verify identity.

## **STANDARD 2.E - LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES**

### **Resource adequacy and planning**

**2.E.1** *Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

**2.E.2** *Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources faculty, staff, and administrators.*

The Highline College Library, open 84 hours per week, 7 days a week, provides access to both physical and electronic resources to meet the information needs of the college community. A 24/7 live online chat service is available during closed hours. With an average weekly door count at over 5,000 persons, the library, with the writing, tutoring, and math resources center located on its sixth floor since 2018, provides a full-service learning environment. With the college closed during the spring quarter 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, librarians established a schedule to be available for student/faculty/staff email and chat questions seven days a week and also implemented the use of Zoom to meet with students.

The library staff is comprised of 7.5 FTE faculty librarians, 8.9 FTE contracted staff. The Library Management Team (LMT), chaired by the director of the library, is also comprised of representatives from the Circulation, Reference, and Technical Services departments. It regularly meets to establish library goals, engage in strategic planning, and review [library policies](#) and processes. Individual library departments meet on a regular basis to discuss daily operations and longer-term planning that support the campus strategic plan and core themes. All library staff meet quarterly to share progress.

In addition, the faculty reference librarians and library administrators participate actively in shared governance at Highline. Selected activities include membership on the Assessment Committee, Veterans Services Committee, Faculty Senate, Instructional Design, Learning and Teaching Center, and serving on or chairing Tenure Working Committees. The director is part of the Academic Affairs division leadership team and also serves on various cross-campus committees. In addition, library staff actively engage in campus professional development opportunities. In performing these tasks, library staff receive regular feedback about the library from their college colleagues.

[The Library Collection Development Policy](#) (updated Feb. 2019) provides that the main collection is maintained at the [Research Libraries Group Conspectus](#) Level Two (basic information level) for most subject areas, and bachelor's degree areas at the instructional level. In addition to its main collection, the library has smaller collections (ESL, anatomy/physiology models, legal), and most recently a [Children's Book collection](#) at the request of the Education faculty after adding a bachelor's degree in Teaching and Early Learning. The library is a virtual depository in the Federal Depository Library program.

Under the coordination of the collection development lead, librarians solicit title requests from faculty, staff, and students through email, one-on-one conversations, and announcements made at instructional division and faculty meetings. Students, faculty, and staff can submit requests at the reference desk, by email, or using a [web form](#) created for this purpose. Requesters are automatically notified when the title is received. All this serves to keep the print and electronic collection current and relevant to meet college information needs.

In terms of increasing its collection resources to reflect Highline offering B.A.S. programs, the library asked for and received a permanent \$30,000 increase its



materials budget. The library also benefits from consortia database savings as a member of both [Orbis Cascade](#) and the [Washington Community and Technical College Library Consortium](#).

In 2016, the Highline College Library transitioned to a new integrated library system. This system greatly increases the amount and access of data relevant to collection development. An example of using this data is an [age and distribution snapshot](#) of the main collection. These enhanced reports have also provided data leading to the library reducing the size of its print reference collection, moving from a print to virtual government documents depository, and slashing the print periodicals collections from over 200 titles to approximately 50 titles, with the reallocated funds now going to adding databases and electronic reference sources.

### **Information literacy instruction**

**2.E.3** *Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

The importance of information literacy at Highline is demonstrated in that it is one of the college's [core competencies](#). Every patron interaction is seen as an opportunity to teach information literacy. In one-on-one reference interactions, librarians discuss database selection, explain search strategies, and guide students in evaluating the quality and authority of sources.

All full- and part-time librarians provide formal IL instruction, averaging 180 classes per year from 2014-19. To encourage the use of this service, the library developed a password-protected online form to simplify the process for faculty to request instruction for their classes.

In research related to support its IL efforts, librarians participated in Assessment in Action (AiA) grants from the Association of College and Research Libraries in 2017-18 and 2018-19. Three librarians studied the impact of information literacy sessions on student success. [The results](#) showed a positive correlation between IL instruction and factors relating to student success. Librarians used this data to encourage faculty teaching the research-intensive courses of ENGL205 (Research and Persuasive Writing) and CMST220 (Public Speaking) to request IL sessions. The result was a [substantial increase in IL requests](#) for both courses. As a follow-up, librarians are expanding its outreach efforts to include ENG101 and CMST101 classes. With the library physically closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, reference librarians have switched to real-time live instruction using Zoom.

The second 2017-18 AiA grant was a collaboration of one Highline librarian and two Bellevue College librarians to assess online IL instruction (in Canvas) versus face-to-face IL instruction. They found that student learning was comparable between the two delivery methods. That grant led to a year two project of librarians from Highline and four sister colleges to help improve online IL modules (also in Canvas). The result of this grant, as stated in the report "[Best Practices for Library Modules](#)," was the

creation of [Canvas Information Literacy modules](#) that faculty can use in their hybrid and online classes.

As a result of such outreach efforts, librarians are constantly looking to increase and improve IL offerings and instruction.

### **Resources and services evaluation**

**2.E.4** *The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.*

Within the library itself, assessment is conducted primarily at the department and program levels and is closely tied to planning and other administrative activities. An excellent example is how the [Associated Students of Highline College](#) (ASHC) partnered with the library in an assessment process to learn what space enhancements students wanted in the library. Following a one-time \$30,000 contribution by ASHC, a committee consisting of staff from the library, the [Center for Cultural and Inclusive Excellence](#), and students from ASHC selected, purchased, and installed new furniture. Informal feedback gathered from whiteboards as well as formal student focus groups also contributed to this process. This investment transformed the physical space of the library to include moveable tables, chairs, and whiteboards to accommodate group study as well as more power outlets. In addition, feedback methods such as student surveys and staff walk-throughs to assess student seating patterns have informed subsequent space-planning decisions. Informal feedback includes using whiteboards to solicit student responses for specific library- or college-related questions.

Work is ongoing to implement a structural improvement of internal library processes and work. Examples of internal process tracking includes the Gimlet statistics tool, which tracks reference interaction details, general library service patterns, and trends. A recent use of Gimlet was in how [analyzing reference desk interactions](#), along with library gate counts, led to the library closing on Fridays at 5 p.m. instead of 9 p.m., resulting in staff budget savings. A notable addition to library assessment capabilities was the creation of the [Library Data Analysis Team](#) (DAT) in 2018, which is charged with “identifying, collecting, and analyzing information concerning library services and resources and reporting on and making recommendations (when requested) based on the analysis.” This can include developing and implementing systematic processes as well as working on special projects as assigned by the Library Management Team. The first task for the DAT was a use analysis (spring 2020) of selected databases. This [analysis](#) led to the cancellation of two databases which use-per-cost calculations indicated were of marginal value.

The security of patron records is a high priority. The Highline College Library is committed to the intellectual freedom and privacy of its users. It supports the principles of the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. These principles are reflected in the formal regulations adopted

by the Highline College Library ([WAC 132I-168A](#)). Consistent with its commitment to privacy, the library does not retain patron borrowing records beyond the return of materials. All library computers are accessible without user identification, and temporary computer files are regularly erased. For the technologies that do require a login, sessions automatically log out several seconds after use.

## **STANDARD 2.F - FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

### **Financial stability and risk management**

**2.F.1** *The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.*

Highline College is financially stable, with sufficient cash flow and reserves to cover all operations and commitments. For every fiscal year since 2015-16, the college has consistently underspent its annual operating budget. Highline College has also benefited financially from the new state allocation model implemented in 2016-17. As a result of several years of strong enrollments, the college receives a slightly larger share of the state allocation under the new allocation model. The college has also seen substantial growth in other local funding sources, including grants and contracts, in the past several years. The Running Start program, a dual-enrollment program for high school students, for example, brings in over \$7 million of contract revenue per academic year for the college. Per the [Board of Trustees' policy on financial reserve](#) to manage uncertain economic environment, Highline College has also set aside and maintained approximately 10% of operating reserve for the last several years. In addition, the college maintains separate reserves for capital improvements and litigation contingencies.

While the college remained financially stable overall, Highline College continues to face some fiscal challenges, most notably the increasing reliance on financial resources other than state funding. During the great recession of 2008, state allocations to Highline College decreased nearly \$9 million between 2008 and 2012. While state funding has recovered in the recent years, state allocations represent slightly less than 50% of the total [fiscal year budget in 2019-20](#) (Board of Trustees: policy #1040) compared to 67% prior to the recession. The softening of enrollments beginning in the academic year 2018-19 likely presents another fiscal challenge for the college in the future. As Highline has increasingly relied on student tuition to support its overall operating budget, declining enrollment will have an impact on the overall revenue.

As part of its strategy to risk management and to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the college, Highline College has been very conservative in revenue and expenditure estimates in its financial planning model. The college, for example, sets its tuition target of the next budget based on actual collection of the previous year without including tuition rate increases. Similarly enrollment targets are established to take into account the trends and other economic uncertainties of the environment.

On a quarterly basis, the Finance Office compiles and presents detailed [financial reports](#) to the Executive Cabinet and to the Board of Trustees, allowing for institutional monitoring of the financial status of the college.

### **Resource planning**

*2.F.2 Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources.*

Highline College follows an annual budget cycle, with planning for the next fiscal year beginning during the current winter quarter. As a key element of that process, the college develops careful revenue estimates for each of its major fund sources: state allocations, tuition revenue, contracted-enrollment income, and grants and contracts.

State allocations, while declining in terms of percentage as part of the total college budget, still account for the largest funding source at Highline College. During the budget planning cycle, the [Budget office](#) employs state allocation information, distributed by the State Board, as the base for financial resource planning. For the FY2019-20, Highline College received approximately \$26M in state allocations altogether. Tuition revenue represents the second largest source of revenue behind state allocations. The college conservatively projects tuition target for the next budget year based on the actual collection of the previous years, typically without including any anticipated tuition rate increases. It must be noted that the State Board actually sets the tuition rates uniformly across all community and technical colleges in Washington state.

In addition to state allocations and tuition, contracted-enrollment income is a significant portion of the college's revenue stream. Highline's two largest contract-enrollment programs are [Running Start](#) co-enrollment and [International Student Programs](#). For students who participate in the Running Start high school co-enrollment program, the college receives revenue from the sending high school to support all instructional activity related to that student population, as well as wraparound services including advising and student programs. As of FY2019-20, Highline College has one of the state's largest Running Start programs with over 1,300 enrolled students. International Student Programs make up the second largest contracted-enrollment revenue at Highline College. From a peak enrollment of over 600 international students in 2016, the college has seen a gradual decline to approximately less than 400 international students in the FY2019-20, as a result of changing global environment. The college's operating budget realizes support from both of these programs, with projections based on anticipated enrollment levels and a formula that calculates direct instructional costs. The college conducts enrollment planning for these two contract-enrollment programs annually as part of our budget development process.

Along with realistic enrollment-based revenue estimates, the college exercises prudent judgment in projecting grant and contract revenue. While grants and local revenues are an important part of Highline's overall funding picture, college officials recognize

that grants are restricted funds, and so we do not rely on either grants or indirect monies from grants to support regular college operations. Rather, we see grants as a way to supplement and enhance the college mission and to provide resources for new partnerships and innovations. The [Grants Process](#) is outlined on the website. Those wanting to pursue a grant are asked to complete a [Grant Application Approval Form](#). The form needs to be approved by the department chair or dean and division vice president and, ultimately, through the Vice President for Administration. The completed form is then discussed by Executive Cabinet and either approved or denied. Grant budgets are developed in consultation with the Grants office and the Budget and Grants office. The Budgets and Grants director assists with calculating salary and benefit information. The Budget and Grants office initiates all invoicing for grants, with invoices processed through financial services.

### **Budget development**

**2.F.3** *The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies.*

The budget development at Highline College is a continual process involving various campus stakeholders. Typically, however, budget development for the next fiscal year begins during late winter quarter (early March). The Vice President for Administrative Services and the Budget office are primarily responsible for initiating the process by establishing a [budget planning calendar](#). The [budget planning and development process](#) is then communicated to the campus. Executive Cabinet members are also initially tasked with soliciting input from their respective divisions to draft the budget planning principles. Once approved, the budget planning principles are communicated to the campus community, marking the official budget development process. The [Budget Request form](#), Budget Review form, and Fee Request form are distributed electronically to all employees on campus. Departments, programs, and individual employees may all submit a budget request during the budget development process. The requests could be either one-time or on-going.

Each Executive Cabinet member, leading and representing a major division on campus, plays a key role in budget development. All division budget and fee request forms are submitted to the respective Executive Cabinet member for review. The Executive Cabinet member then works collaboratively with his or her senior leadership team to evaluate and prioritize all of the division's budget and fee requests. These requests are then forwarded to the full Executive Cabinet for consideration and approval. Once approved, the requests or changes become part of the carry-forward budgets for the division.

The Vice President for Administrative Services and the Budget office are ultimately responsible for putting together the proposed college budget as approved by the Executive Cabinet. The proposed college budget includes all projected revenue and planned expenditures for the fiscal year. The proposed college budget is typically submitted to the Board of Trustees for preliminary review in early June, with final

adoption takes place in September of each year. [For FY2019-20](#), Highline College's operating budget exceeded \$70 million. On a quarterly basis, the Finance office prepares a quarterly financial report, detailing actuals versus projected revenue and expenditures, for review by both Executive Cabinet and Board of Trustees. When and where necessary, the Vice President for Administrative Services may propose changes and amendments to the fiscal year budget to ensure fiscal sustainability as well as fiscal reality.

In an effort to be more inclusive, transparent, and deliberate with the budget planning process, beginning with the FY2020-21 budget, the college has activated a standing [Budget Advisory Council](#). The Council is comprised of members representing all major divisions and employee groups across the campus, including the Faculty Senate, the Highline College Education Association (faculty union), and the Washington Public Employee Association (classified staff union). The Council [bylaws](#) state it is to advise the President and Executive Cabinet on matters relating to the college budget, to evaluate and provide feedback on funding models and budget adjustments, and to keep their respective constituencies informed about the college budget process.

### **Financial information systems**

**2.F.4** *The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.*

The college ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of the Washington community and technical college system's Financial Management System (FMS). FMS is an integrated system supporting cashiering, customer accounts, accounts payable, inventory, and chart of account management. System-generated monthly financial reports are available to campus users, as are ad hoc reports generated through FMS's reporting module. The college also uses a utility that provides budget status, revenue, and expenditure updates daily.

The Vice President for Administrative Services is responsible for the fiscal functions of the college. Financial functions reporting through the vice president include financial accounting and reporting, banking and investments, accounts payable, customer accounts, budget, purchasing, grants and contracts, contract administration, risk management, and payroll.

The director of financial services, a CPA with eighteen years of experience in Washington's community college system, is responsible for the quality of financial information recorded in the college's management system and the preparation of the college's financial statements for audit. The accounting manager, who is responsible for general ledger accounting, financial reporting, and adherence to generally accepted accounting principles, holds a master's degree in accounting and also has previous experience in higher education accounting.

[Financial Services](#) is responsible for internal control assessment, monitoring, and reporting at the college. All major college departments complete [risk assessments](#)

annually. Additionally, finance and purchasing management review and monitor several functions, including cash receipting, inventory control, and procurement card transactions.

Throughout the college, individual budget managers are required to reconcile accounts under their area of responsibility and to report discrepancies to Financial Services staff in a timely manner. Budgets are monitored regularly by the college Budget office. Any over-expenditures at the department level are brought to the attention of the budget manager, who is responsible to ensure that budgets are not overspent.

Purchases are made within the guidelines of RCW 28B.10.029. Under that statute, institutions of higher education and their boards of trustees have independent purchase authority, and do not have to go through the Department of Enterprise Services for the procurement and contracting of goods and services. By state regulation, all purchases that exceed \$10,000 must be competitively solicited. Where other legislative restrictions apply, expenditures require prior approval by a vice president. All purchasing documents are reviewed prior to the issuance of payment.

### **Capital budgets**

**2.F.5** *Capital budgets reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution's mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.*

The college develops capital budgets following [guidelines](#) prescribed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Fund sources may be legislatively allocated or local. Biennially, the college undergoes a facilities condition survey, which provides the basis for routine state funding of repairs, minor projects, and maintenance. The college also can request state allocations for major renovations and new construction. Major projects are submitted as part of the college's biennial capital budget request and are developed in accordance with the [Highline College Master Plan](#). The college's most recent Master Plan was completed in 2016 with short-range and mid-range projects planned through the 2027 biennium.

Highline College's Master Plan is closely aligned with the college's core themes, particularly with our focus on providing quality-learning environments. The campus Master Plan's goal of promoting environmentally friendly facilities corresponds to the sustainability focus of Core Theme 4. The college just completed a major capital renovation of Building 26. The renovated Building 26 houses Health and Life Science programs and approximately 44 new faculty offices. Highline College has submitted the next major construction project request for a new Student Welcome Center. This is a complete replacement of Building 16, fronting the future new main entrance to Highline College from Pacific Highway South. The new main entrance is a major collaboration effort with the City of Des Moines and Sound Transit, as part of the future development of the Sound Transit light rail station to be located directly across Pacific

Highway South from the college campus. The anticipated arrival of the light rail station presents an opportunity for the college to improve parking infrastructure and traffic flows on campus.

In addition, Highline College continues to make improvements to buildings and interior spaces. Since 2012 interior spaces and finishes in Buildings 1, 7, 16, 23, 25 (2nd and 6th floors) and 27 have been updated. A new metal maintenance and grounds shop (Building 24B) was completed in 2016 in order to properly support campus operations. With the completion of the Health and Life Science Building (Building 26), the life science labs and classrooms have been removed from Building 12, leaving it available for our next minor project in the 2019-21 Biennium. This will entail repurposing this approximately 6,300-square-foot building into large lecture hall-style, multi-purpose classrooms.

By state law, debt for capital outlay must be funded through the Office of the State Treasurer's Certificate of Participation (COP) program, which allows borrowing for capital projects or equipment at favorable interest rates. Highline has made limited use of that program to garner additional capital funding. The college currently makes debt-service payments on two major construction projects. The college identifies specific fund sources for repayment prior to initiating the financing process, and the college Executive Cabinet and Financial Services staff carefully review all potential debt outlays prior to requesting approval. Budgets for major capital projects take into consideration furniture, equipment, cost-escalation factors, and ongoing building operations. After the initial COP is funded, the State Treasurer's finance staff continually review its interest rate to determine if a more advantageous interest rate could be acquired through refinancing.

### **Auxiliary enterprises**

**2.F.6** *The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.*

As a part of the Administrative Services division, the auxiliary enterprises at the college consist of four separate areas: Highline Bookstore, Conference & Event Services, Food Service, and Student Housing. These auxiliary enterprises are provided in support of the needs of students and employees. Each of these activities is accounted for either in separate funds or distinct organizational codes within a fund. In general, auxiliary enterprises are self-sustaining and do not rely on general operational funds for support. Neither do the college's basic operations depend on enterprise income.

**Bookstore:** While the Highline Bookstore business has changed — and continues to change — dramatically, the bookstore has remained competitive by offering innovative programs such as textbook rentals, electronics rentals, and e-books. The bookstore also sells school supplies, electronics, gifts, greeting cards, snacks, beverages, and various convenience items, and is the primary source for Highline College clothing and insignia



merchandise. Our bookstore supports students by employing up to 50 student workers each quarter. The student workers are instrumental in the day-to-day operation of the store, as well as assisting at various events such as textbook buyback, on-campus author appearances, departmental partnerships, and commencement.

**Conference and Event Services:** This area provides support services to both college and external events. As a self-sustaining enterprise, the Conference and Event Services receives enterprise income from facility rental activities to external renters. Campus facilities are for the priority use of activities relating to the educational mission and normal operations of the college, but when available Highline College's Conference and Event Services coordinates rental and use of campus space for all non-academic purposes. This includes the rentals of classroom or conference spaces to individuals and groups for events such as meetings, conferences, and training. Income from these activities supports the event management function of the college, covering the salaries of two full-time employees. Other rental activities include renting classroom and office space to a private educational provider, Kaplan International, as well as leasing the childcare building to Children's Home Society of Washington. Revenues from these long-term rentals offset facility repairs and upgrades.

**Food Service:** From 2015 until June 2020, Highline College contracted with Lancer Hospitality to provide dining and catering services. Lancer maintained a cafeteria-style main dining area (the Union Café), as well as two smaller venues in Building 8 (Fireside Bistro) and Building 29 (Café 29). Lancer also provided catering services for events hosted by the college. Due to COVID-19 campus closure, as of June 2020 the contract between Highline and Lancer ended and the college is in the process of finding a new food service provider.

**Student Housing:** Open in December 2018, Campus View Student Housing was developed by Highline Place LLC, an outside investor. Highline College Foundation LLC leases the space from the owner. Capstone On-Campus Management (COCM) manages housing and works with student services and the Foundation LLC to provide a safe and healthy living environment. Campus View has 160 beds in 2- and 4-bedroom units.

Unauthorized vehicles parking on campus may be subject to citations. The revenues received from parking permit sales and fines are used to support the operations of the Public Safety department, parking lot maintenance and repairs, and to fund financial incentives and subsidies for mass transit riders. Beginning in the 2019-20 academic year, in response to an advisory vote taken by ASHC, a \$20 per quarter transportation and safety fee to fund the expansion of parking as well as other safety improvements to the parking program has been imposed.

## **Financial audits**

**2.F.7** *For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an annual external financial audit by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The audit is to be completed no later than nine months after the end of the fiscal year. Results from the audit, including findings and management*

*letter recommendations, are considered annually in an appropriate and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.*

Highline College annually produces independent, complete, and GASB-compliant financial statements. Audits are conducted by qualified state auditors in accordance with governmental accounting standards and can be found on the [Financial Services webpage](#). Findings and management letter items are carried forward to subsequent audit cycles until each issue is resolved. Prior to and at the conclusion of each audit, State Auditor's Office (SAO) staff and management meet with the Vice President for Administrative Services, the Director of Financial Services, and at least one board member to review and discuss recommendations or action items.

For the period July 2018 through June 2019, Highline received no audit findings or management letter items.

State law requires the SAO to conduct "post audit" audits of the financial transactions of the college known as accountability audits. Accountability audits are a specific type of audit that evaluate whether there is reasonable assurance the state agency adhered to applicable federal or state laws, regulations and its own policies and procedures, in addition to accounting for public resources. Highline College is scheduled for this type of assessment in conjunction with the financial statement audit in December 2020.

Highline's financial information is also reported and audited through the [State of Washington's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#) and is part of the State's Single Audit Report, an entity audit that examines both the financial statements and the expenditures of federal awards by all state agencies, including institutions of higher education.

Highline undergoes periodic internal audits by internal audit staff from the State Board for Community and Technical College (SBCTC) referred to as "operation reviews." Typically, this review covers operational activities including faculty pay increments, local capital projects, and course coding. It also examines federally funded activities including WorkFirst, Worker Retraining, and Job Skills programs.

### **Institutional fundraising**

**2.F.8** *All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.*

Fundraising activities at Highline College are coordinated through the Highline College Foundation. Established in 1972, the Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supporting the educational mission of the college through scholarships, emergency need awards, and special projects. Additionally, the Foundation provides capital fundraising assistance and ongoing operational funding for the college's Marine Science and Technology (MaST) Center on the water in nearby Redondo. The college also contracts with the Foundation to provide support for the International Student

Program and manages the business operations of Campus View Student Housing through the Highline College Foundation LLC.

The relationship between the college and the Foundation is governed by a [formal agreement](#) that clearly defines roles and responsibilities of each partner. The [Foundation](#) is governed by an [independent board of directors](#), comprised of community members, alumni, and retired faculty/staff; the college President and Vice President for Institutional Advancement serve as ex officio members. The Foundation is a separate financial entity from the college and undergoes an [independent audit](#) of its financial statements annually. Auditor's opinions consistently indicate that the financial statements are free of material misstatement. The Foundation Board adopted policy 1002 which states that it adheres to the Donor Bill of Rights as published by the Association of Fundraising Professionals and included in the [board policy manual](#).

## **STANDARD 2.G - PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

As called for in its Core Theme 4, "Model sustainability in human resources, operations, and teaching and learning," Highline College is committed to maintaining physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and conducive to healthful and productive learning and working. Overlooking Puget Sound, Highline's 77-acre campus is home to 569,134 square feet of classroom, office, and maintenance space. Despite some funding and infrastructure challenges, the college maintains an attractive, functional learning environment for its students, staff, and community.

### **Adequacy of facilities**

***2.G.1** Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.*

The task of maintaining Highline's physical environment varies greatly between buildings. At one extreme, the newest buildings — the Health and Life Sciences Building (Building 26), the Higher Education Center (Building 29), and the Student Union Building (Building 8) — are models of attractiveness, efficiency, and functionality. On the other hand, the oldest facilities, now approaching 56 years of service, require considerable attention, ingenuity, and investment to maintain. Highline's hillside location compounds some of the challenges, particularly around accessibility.

Where these challenges have emerged, the college's Facilities department has responded with innovation and dedication, forming partnerships with other constituencies as needed. Below are some key examples of these successful collaborations:

**Accessibility:** In 2008, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) conducted a routine accessibility audit on behalf of the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). That audit identified a number of barriers to accessibility across campus. In a follow-up memorandum of agreement, the college agreed to remedy the concerns. To guide the work, a Campus Access Advisory Group

was established to draw up a plan addressing the audit findings and any other barriers to accessibility that the group identified. The college remedied a number of problems immediately, with the more extensive projects scheduled over a series of fiscal years. The college received a complimentary report in spring 2010 on its substantial progress in addressing the audit findings. The remaining work was completed in the summer of 2013 and maintained since.

Nonetheless, physical access remains a focus of the college. Recent repair projects include restroom upgrades, door replacements, signage enhancements, and improvements to accessibility routes in and around campus facilities. Highline's [Access Services](#) department works closely with Academic Affairs to schedule classrooms that accommodate students with special needs. [The Access Services Handbook for Student Accommodation](#) includes an "Accessible Room Reassignment" procedure, developed in February 2009, to improve students' access to classrooms, recognizing that the topographical layout of the campus makes some buildings more accessible than others.

**Building security:** Following a rash of equipment thefts in the early 2000s, the college undertook a major rekeying project that was completed in 2013. All classrooms can be locked, with most being converted to a new master keying system. The Public Safety department issues keys to faculty for the classrooms in which they teach. Faculty have been instructed to lock classrooms when leaving. Custodial staff and Public Safety officers check doors and windows in the evenings to ensure that spaces are secure. As a result, the college has significantly reduced its equipment losses. Improvements for better administration of this program continue to be discussed and the college recently looked into phasing in better, safer opportunities to lock down the open campus.

Additionally, the college has begun implementing new specifications for lockdown capabilities in its capital and minor improvement projects. Specifically the college is using card access hard wired points at electronic locks at external entrances for a one button lockdown capability and Wi-Fi card access points internally in classrooms that also have lockdown capabilities locally.

**Classroom availability:** Increased enrollment over the past few years has impacted classroom scheduling. The Academic Affairs Curriculum Manager, who has responsibility for room assignments, matches faculty classroom requests with appropriately sized and equipped spaces. Though this informal method has worked well over many years, the college is exploring a process for classroom scheduling that is fair and equitable, yet still meets institutional needs.

**Office space:** Faculty office assignments remain a challenge, especially for part-time adjunct instructors. Offices are often shared, providing limited space for private conversations. This issue is not new to the college, and the updated [Master Plan](#) identifies the need to create additional faculty offices closer to their instructional spaces. The model for creating faculty space adjacent to teaching areas/classrooms was implemented in the Building 26 capital renovation project starting in May 2018. Capital funding from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will be

critical to allow Highline to address this challenge fully. In the meantime, the college has created new cubicle space in formerly open areas of Building 6, 16 and 19.

Though focused on service, the Facilities department's activities are not purely reactive. In recent years, this department has launched an aggressive effort to reduce energy consumption and waste campus-wide, which is a direct contribution to Core Theme 4's goal of "sustainability in human resources, operations, and teaching and learning." As part of that effort, the department has altered campus waste-collection procedures, secured external funding for energy-reduction projects, and revised its efficiency guidelines for fixtures.

The college has invested over \$10 million dollars in mechanical systems improvements/repairs which has resulted in an overall energy reduction of over 20% (31,865,302 KW hours) with an avoided cost savings of \$2,578,178 when compared to base year 2010 as well increased student/employee comfort. Also important to mention is the fact that with this \$10 million dollars spent, the college was also able to leverage an additional \$2.6 million in rebates and grants that support these types of energy projects. [The Energy Savings Contract Report](#) reflects the annual savings. The college will continue to use the State's Energy Service contracting method for these types of needs into the future.

The college has also made improvements to prioritize funding projects that help eliminate deferred maintenance work orders and address end of life equipment and infrastructure. The maintenance team meets twice a year with the Facilities Department Capital Project Manager and Director to prioritize repairs and replacements. This exercise also lends itself to the capital planning process for funding at the state level for high cost projects as discussed in capital budgets (Standard 2.F.5).

The foregoing examples, though specific to facilities, illustrate the college's collegial approach to problem-solving in general. Thanks to this spirit of cross-constituent cooperation, campus facilities remain pleasant, safe, and functional in spite of their occasional challenges.

### **Hazardous materials**

**2.G.2** *The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.*

The college's emphasis on sustainability carries over into our [Facilities department's handling of hazardous materials](#). The department is working to limit the amount of hazardous items introduced to the campus either for operational or instructional purposes. As one example, the college has taken steps to reduce the use of toxic cleansers.

However, some level of hazardous-materials generation and use is unavoidable. We work closely with the Washington State Department of Ecology and follow that [agency's requirements](#) for the safe handling and removal of hazardous materials. Facilities personnel with responsibilities for handling hazardous waste follow written

procedures on its proper handling and removal as stated in the [Dangerous Waste Regulations section \(173-303\) of the Washington Administrative Code](#). “Right to Know” postings and Globally Harmonized Communications System (HCS)/Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are available where specific chemicals are used. In addition, the Central Services Manager in Building 25 maintains a master [list HCS/SDS file](#) for [on-site chemicals](#). Hazardous materials are properly labeled and stored in approved containers. Most are consolidated either at Building 25 (shipping and receiving) or in the grounds shop in Building 24A in secure and safe, dedicated rooms. Trained personnel in these two areas determine proper packaging/removal requirements. Outside vendors are also contracted to pick up and properly dispose of hazardous materials.

Hazardous materials are prominently found in campus buildings housing the biology, chemistry, and physics laboratories, and in buildings housing the Medical Assisting and Nursing programs. The Biology department and Chemistry department, in their respective laboratories, follow their own stringent policies and procedures, administered by laboratory coordinators, for [hazardous materials handling](#). To ensure these policies and procedures are carefully and consistently adhered to, in winter 2020, a designated lab tech supervisor was hired to facilitate college compliance.

### **Facilities master plan**

**2.G.3** *The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.*

The [Highline College Master Plan](#) catalogs the college’s programs, describes its current and future campus facilities requirements, and explains the effect its activities have on the surrounding governmental jurisdictions. The plan focuses on providing facilities that do the following: support educational programs and meet community needs; promote the effective use of contemporary technology; encourage enrollment by presenting a safe, accessible, and welcoming environment; promote environmentally sound college operations, and strengthen the college’s ties with the communities in which it operates.

In 2016, Highline embarked on and completed a detailed comprehensive Master Plan. A Master Plan Committee, comprised of administrators, faculty, and staff, met regularly for five months to complete the review. The group’s work was supported by architectural and engineering consulting firms and incorporated input from representatives from the community and local jurisdictions.

The Master Plan outlines a vision of the Highline campus and prioritizes the continued development and renewal of the college’s Des Moines campus. The Master Plan framework is reviewed annually by the Vice President for Administrative Services and the Facilities department. Updates or changes are incorporated as necessary before submitting budgets or requests for new facilities or for renovation, improvement, or replacement of existing facilities.

For the 2019-21 capital budget cycle, the college submitted to the SBCTC for scoring and possible funding for a major capital replacement project of Building

16 as the future “Student Welcome Center.” The project made the list of to-be-funded projects, but it is estimated to be at least 10 years away from pre-design funding. The [Implementation Plan](#) (Section 4) of the [Highline College Master Plan](#) identifies intermediate-term plans for new, renovated, or replacement of buildings. Minor buildings and grounds projects are planned annually as either preventive maintenance or repairs.

A new Sound Transit light rail station will be located across Pacific Highway South east of the campus and operational by 2024. The station will affect the college’s parking, infrastructure, and main entrance, both during and after construction. With the completion of the light rail station, a major three-lane road, connecting the station across Pacific Highway South to the college, will also be completed. The new road, College Way, will serve as the main entrance to Highline College campus. The college is working with Sound Transit and the City of Des Moines to develop this street. The Des Moines City Council approved a resolution: the street has been renamed to College Way (formerly South 236th Lane). A Development Agreement is underway for Sound Transit to align construction of the street with parking improvements projects on campus. Sound Transit entrance impacts can be found in the Master Plan ([Section 7 Drawings and Diagrams](#) under the Mid-Term Plan 2021-2029 drawing).

## **Equipment**

**2.G.4** *Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution’s mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.*

The college’s equipment stock is sufficient to meet both its operational and instructional needs.

Academic Affairs and the Facilities department conduct an annual inventory of classroom interior assets and furniture. The two offices identify classroom needs for equipment, maintenance, and repairs. The goal is to establish and maintain a standard for classroom setups and, accordingly, a plan for the purchase of additional or replacement classroom furniture. Despite recent budget constraints, the college has made steady progress in this area over the years, gradually equipping more and more classrooms with “smart” instructional technologies and modern, comfortable furnishings. Currently, multimedia instructional equipment has been installed in all regular, non-computer lab classrooms.

Office furniture is budgeted and purchased by individual departments as necessary. The Facilities department has a maintenance shop allowing staff the ability to store parts, supplies, tools, and equipment to make necessary maintenance and repairs.

Academic Affairs maintains a nearly \$360,000 account for instructional equipment purchases annually. Each spring, the division chairs poll their departments for equipment needs. The Instruction Cabinet prioritizes the requests and allocates funding

accordingly. In many cases, non-state funds from federal sources or grant projects, for example, supplement the state-funded allocation for equipment. In recent years, available funds have been more than sufficient to meet the divisions' requests.

The college replaces instructional computing equipment, including workstations in the computer labs, library, and classrooms, on a cycle determined by Information Technology Services.

### **Technology infrastructure**

**2.G.5** *Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

Highline College's technology operations are the responsibility of [Information Technology Services](#) (ITS). ITS is a customer-focused organization that strives to provide secure, reliable, efficient, and accessible technology solutions for Highline College students, faculty, and staff. ITS staff focus is on leveraging current and emerging technologies and resources to support students, faculty, and staff while managing risk and delivering services in the most efficient, cost-effective way.

ITS was formed by the 2014 merger of two previous departments, Administrative Technology and Instructional Computing. From 2014 until 2019, ITS functioned as a sub-unit of Academic Affairs. In July of 2019, ITS was made an independent unit reporting to the President, and the Executive Director joined the college Executive Cabinet.

The Executive Director of ITS functions as the college's Chief Information Officer (CIO). The department consists of four operational teams:

- Customer Services (CS), which is responsible for the Help Desk, computer labs and classrooms, desktop and mobile computing, application support, and vendor licensing and renewals.
- Infrastructure Services (IS), which is responsible for network, telecommunications, servers and storage, and cloud operations.
- Data, Development and Integration Services (DDIS), which is responsible for data operations, internal web development activities, and integrations with third-party systems.
- ctcLink Project Team, which is responsible for coordinating and supporting the college's transition from our current Legacy system to the new state PeopleSoft system, known as ctcLink.

The CS, IS, and DDIS teams are each led by an exempt manager. The Associate Director functions as Deputy CIO, and is also the named PM/OCM lead for the ctcLink project, and leads the ctcLink team. The ITS department is also staffed by an IT project manager and an administrative program manager. In April of 2020, our Information Security Officer resigned to take a position in private industry.



To support the mission of the college, ITS offers a full complement of services and facilities, which are published in the [ITS Service Catalog](#).

Campus technology resources adequately support day-to-day functions in the following areas:

#### Classroom technology

Technology is used extensively in fulfilling the core educational mission of Highline College. ITS installs and supports a [broad mix of presentation technologies in classrooms campus-wide](#) including lectern-based PCs, Macs, document cameras, and video cameras. Current expectations are that 100% of classrooms have a minimum baseline standard configuration, with additional functionality provided in response to demand. ITS staff consult with faculty and administrators in determining classroom technology configurations. Classrooms may receive additional equipment and functionality per instructional demands, such as support for audio and video capture of lectures or interactive projectors.

#### Computer labs

ITS supports more than 25 computer labs across campus, with the bulk of the labs concentrated in the Academic Technology Center, which also houses the [ITS Help Desk](#). These labs provide resources to meet the needs of computing needs of students and provide them with reliable Internet connections, software needed for classroom assignments and projects, and printers. All labs receive a standard set of software, and ITS works directly with academic programs that require specialized software and support to provide technology resources to support their programs. Examples include Business Technology, Computer Science/Computer Information Systems, Engineering, and Visual Communications.

The Academic Technology Center provides a large drop-in open lab space with access to all hardware and software resources used in courses throughout the college. Student technology resources are also offered in the Highline College Library's [Information Commons](#) and in the Academic Success Center, which is located in the library. An additional drop-in open lab is available in the Higher Education Center, the college's shared facility with Central Washington University on Highline's campus.

ITS has been increasing desktop and application virtualization efforts for a number of years, with an eye toward providing more flexible access to instruction-related applications to students and addressing standardization and efficient support services. Resource constraints and vendor licensing restrictions have slowed efforts to reach our goal of anytime/anywhere access. Currently, approximately half of our campus student-use workstations utilize our [Virtual Desktop Infrastructure](#) (VDI), and in fall of 2018 our [AppsAnywhere](#) application virtualization project was launched to provide greater access to specialized applications to students.

#### Enterprise software

Core business functions at Highline (Finance, HR, Student Services) utilize centralized administrative tools hosted by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Those statewide resources, currently known as "Legacy," are scheduled for replacement

with a new enterprise system, known as “[ctcLink](#),” running on the PeopleSoft platform. Originally scheduled for completion by 2019, the statewide project suffered some early delays. Now back on track, Highline is scheduled to go live on the new system in February of 2021. Highline staff, both from ITS and line-of-business units, are heavily involved in the planning and implementation of the new system, and a project team has been established, including permanent business analyst positions to support the functional business areas in their utilization of the system.

Highline has moved many enterprise-level services to the cloud over the last five years, including all email services. Faculty and staff email is hosted in Microsoft’s [Office 365](#), and student email utilizes Google’s [G-Suite for Education](#). Both of those services are also heavily utilized for their collaboration tools. The main campus website, along with primary user authentication services and other supporting services are now hosted in Amazon Web Services in order to provide more flexibility and redundancy. The college’s Learning Management System (LMS) is Instructure’s [Canvas](#), which is also a cloud-hosted solution. Moving these primary services to the cloud allows for continuity of many communication and online teaching operations in the event of a physical disruption to campus power or network.

#### Telecommunications and computing infrastructure

Highline’s campus network has been continually upgraded to allow increased utilization of video, videoconferencing, Voice-over-IP (VOIP) telephony, and the shift toward cloud computing. All buildings on campus are connected by a fully redundant fiber optic network, and an independent fiber backbone connects the two on-campus data center facilities. The campus wireless network underwent a significant upgrade in 2014, and now includes secure wireless connectivity throughout campus buildings and many outdoor campus spaces for faculty, staff, and students.

The college’s internet bandwidth is sufficient to meet needs both on and off campus. It is provided by the Washington State K-20 Network in cooperation with SBCTC. Bandwidth to main campus was increased tenfold to 1Gbs/second during our last contract renewal. Off campus is serviced by a 100Mb/s K-20 link, Highline’s traditional firewall and packet-shaping applications have been replaced with next-generation application-based firewalls at each of our locations.

For over a decade, Highline has been working toward sustainability and efficiency of computing resources through virtualization, first of server infrastructure, and later of [desktop computing](#) where feasible. While traditional PCs remain a mainstay on faculty and staff desks for now, Highline’s server infrastructure is now over 90% virtualized, and VDI powers roughly half of our student-use workstations on campus. This has allowed us to realize cost savings in equipment, maintenance, and power consumption while continuing to provide the necessary tools for successful instruction.

Over the last several years, ITS has begun to move key infrastructure to the cloud, specifically in [Amazon Web Services](#). While the initial intent was to address issues of redundancy and availability, we are now working toward utilizing the more flexible and

innovative options that cloud services offer in order to achieve greater sustainability and efficiency of operations.

ITS is working towards improving the security of our infrastructure and being more adaptable as threat actors become more sophisticated. We are striving to reach a Zero Trust Network model by improving access control and improving training of our staff and faculty.

#### Data, development, and integrations

Prior to the 2014 IT reorganization that created ITS, the Instructional Computing department had developed capacity to build internal, web-based applications that filled gaps in the online tools provided by our Legacy systems, provided operational efficiencies, and helped the college transition off of many paper-based processes. After the merger, this function was combined with data support functions to create Data and Development and Integrations Services.

As we evaluate capabilities of the incoming [ctcLink](#) system, review changes in the marketplace for appropriate third-party Software-As-A-Service (SAAS) offerings, and evaluate the sustainability of our internally developed tools, the focus of the team is shifting from developing internal web applications to managing integrations with available and supported tools. Additionally, we have put focus into improving our data operations, investing in both software and personnel to help ITS better support campus efforts to make data-driven decisions, including new data analyst positions in both ITS and Institutional Research (IR).

#### Accessible technology

Since 2016, the college has engaged in a concerted effort to improve the accessibility of technology on campus for all users. Initially driven by state-level regulation, Highline formed an [Accessible Technology Committee](#) (ATC), which worked to develop an [Accessible Technology Policy](#). The policy was approved by college governance in December of 2017. The committee's joint leadership includes two college divisions, and members are drawn from areas of the college with high levels of contact with students. The committee has a standing budget for conducting work such as third-party testing of assets and providing training to faculty and staff. The ATC is enacting a [five-year plan](#), focusing first on highest-impact concerns such as the public-facing website, and professional development for faculty and staff to ensure long-term sustainability of the effort. The committee continues establishing standards and processes to deal holistically with the issue of accessibility across campus.

### **Technology support and instruction**

**2.G.6** *The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.*

[ITS Customer Services](#) (CS) provides individualized support to students, faculty, and staff through a physical Help Desk location in the Academic Technology Center, as well as by email, phone, and through an online Help Desk. This unit operates seven days

a week when classes are in session and handles most of the day-to-day technology needs of the campus community through tiered level support. In 2016, ITS invested in a new Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) based help desk ticketing system to assist in better tracking and responding to customer needs. Since implementation, the Help Desk has closed on average 26,000 tickets per year, and the CS manager utilizes system reports to track and respond to user needs. The system also allows for direct user feedback on ITS services which helps ITS to focus on continual service improvement.

Additionally, ITS provides service information, documentation, tutorials on the ITS website, and updates the campus community on technology issues via email, blog posts, and social media channels. Reference librarians also provide point-of-service support for applications with a focus on digital literacy in the Library Information Commons. ITS also provides periodic workshops on campus technology tools for faculty, staff, and students, particularly as part of the annual Opening Week and Professional Development Day offerings. IT Security training for end users is offered through a series of micro-lessons delivered over time, and face-to-face IT Security training is delivered to departments as requested, or in response to specific incidents or risk assessments. As new software tools are implemented, training is planned and delivered to users as needed.

The [Instructional Design Department](#) (ID) led by the Director of Education Technology, provides pedagogy consulting and technology training on everything from developing an online course, to accessibility, to using a specific feature of online teaching tools. Instructional Design maintains a Faculty-in-Residence program which provides release time for faculty experts in instructional technology to provide support to their colleagues. ID staff and faculty-in-residence are available to meet individually with faculty and staff who are teaching online, hybrid, and web-enhanced courses, and regularly host open “[CanvAssistance](#)” help sessions, both in person and online through Zoom. The release time also allows the faculty-in-residence the opportunity to learn new tools and techniques and teach these to others.

### **Technology planning**

**2.G.7** *Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services.*

**2.G.8** *The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.*

The college’s previous Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) was disbanded by college leadership in 2014 at the time of the IT reorganization and the creation of ITS, due to a perception that the creation of a single department for technology operations removed the need for external guidance. In the year or so following, ITS Leadership decided that perception was incorrect and made an attempt to reconstitute TAC, as well as form a Faculty Technology Committee, but those endeavors faltered.

Meanwhile, ITS was heavily focused on internal reorganization issues, as well as preparing for our ctcLink implementation. Governance energy has been focused on ctcLink governance, which has a highly functional Core Team and Change Management Team. Thus, ITS has not yet created an IT governance structure separate from the ctcLink project.

[Information Technology Services](#) (ITS) functioned as a sub-unit of Academic Affairs prior to a July 2019 reorganization, and previously participated in the planning activities of that division. In preparation for the departmental realignment, ITS Leadership Team developed the department's first standalone [strategic plan](#) in the spring of 2019. ITS Leadership meets monthly for ongoing planning and operational purposes. ITS Leadership is currently working on identifying appropriate metrics for assessment, and planning how to better engage the rest of the campus in ongoing technology planning. One of the components of the current plan is to reengage the campus with a new IT governance structure. While we know campus and ITS resources must be largely focused on our ctcLink implementation between now and the spring of 2021, in parallel to that effort we are working to establish a new data governance structure, and plan to have it in place by the time of our go-live date. We are working toward establishing governance that can pick up as our ctcLink implementation is completed and help guide ITS to clearly define campus technology needs into the future.

Meanwhile, ITS maintains a regular technology update and replacement plans for [classrooms and desktops](#), servers, and [network](#) hardware. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring of 2020 has resulted in the revisiting of some long-held expectations, including looking toward revising the staff desktop plan to a mobile-first device plan, and working on better options for mobile devices for student use. Our long-term efforts toward virtualization and utilization of cloud services have relieved some replacement pressures, and have allowed us to extend the expected life cycles of certain equipment. Regular budgets for PC replacements and network equipment had been established for some time, but historically (pre-reorganization) classroom and instructional equipment was funded year-to-year from a variety of sources. After the creation of ITS, and with changes in campus leadership, that practice began to change. In 2018, ITS was given the opportunity to submit a plan for a budget that would sustain all technology replacements and operations, including classroom and lab equipment, and expenses incurred from significant changes in software licensing structures. The college's Executive Cabinet funded this new sustainable budget for ITS beginning in the 2019-20 academic year.

For programs with highly specialized equipment needs, the Vice President for Academic Affairs maintains an Instructional Equipment fund, to which academic departments can submit requests annually. These requests are reviewed in cooperation with ITS and approved by the Instruction Cabinet. ITS reserves a portion of revenue from student fees to use towards small innovative projects and trials by faculty. If successful, these efforts often lead to wider adoption on campus. ITS also works with campus departments and Institutional Advancement to pursue appropriate grant opportunities as they arise.

## CHAPTER THREE: INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

### STANDARD THREE - PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

*The institution engages in ongoing, participatory planning that provides direction for the institution and leads to the achievement of the intended outcomes of its programs and services, accomplishment of its core themes, and fulfillment of its mission. The resulting plans reflect the interdependent nature of the institution's operations, functions, and resources. The institution demonstrates that the plans are implemented and are evident in the relevant activities of its programs and services, the adequacy of its resource allocation, and the effective application of institutional capacity. In addition, the institution demonstrates that its planning and implementation processes are sufficiently flexible so that the institution is able to address unexpected circumstances that have the potential to impact the institution's ability to accomplish its core theme objectives and to fulfill its mission.*

Highline College's planning and implementation practices were tested in spring 2020, with the shift to emergency remote teaching and services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The interdependence of the college's operations, functions, and resources was brought into sharp relief. The timing of the campus closure, which came in response to public health directives from the Washington Department of Health and Governor Jay Inslee, allowed us to complete winter quarter, albeit with some modifications to finals week. Preparation for the shift to remote teaching and learning began prior to the closing of campus, however, led by Highline's Public Safety department. An [Incident Command System \(ICS\)](#) was established which included a central planning team representing leads from 11 critical areas. Leads met weekly to update others on the status of work in their areas. Discussions of resources, operations, functions, and campus communications were central to this effort, with the goal of supporting students, staff, and faculty in making the shift to emergency remote teaching and service delivery. Lessons learned from this experience, including the deep experience of interdependence across divisions, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

#### STANDARD 3.A - INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

##### **Institutional planning processes**

**3.A.1** *The institution engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission. Its plans are implemented and made available to appropriate constituencies.*

##### Annual planning cycle

For over a decade, Highline College has relied on its mission, core themes, objectives, and [Mission Fulfillment Report](#) data to guide its planning activities. As the 2017-18 to 2020-21 [Strategic Plan](#) notes, because of unexpected changes in executive leadership that began midyear in 2016-17, "executive staff agreed to revert to a planning

framework that addressed all four Core Themes, identifying key initiatives based on challenges and opportunities that arose from current *Mission Fulfillment Report* (MFR) data.” Highline’s current President, Dr. John Mosby, followed this course when he began in 2018. For the past two years, the campus’s new leaders have aligned the annual planning cycle with the MFR. One change that was made was to allow each division to identify where its work contributed to the MFR, rather than to assign core themes to specific divisions.

The cycle (Figure 6) begins in the summer, when Executive Cabinet meets in retreat with the Board of Trustees to review the *Mission Fulfillment Report* and, in response, to develop long- and medium-term goals and objectives for each core theme area. The Office of the President synthesizes these divisional plans into an institution-wide plan as the basis for annual goal-setting with the Board of Trustees. The final plan, organized by core theme, is published on the Highline College President’s [website](#) for access by the entire campus community.

At the same time, each Executive Cabinet member is responsible for the planning, organization, and management of the operations of their respective area. The vice presidents and executive directors work with appropriate campus committees and governance groups within their division to develop annual work plans, organized under each core theme. Each divisional work plan describes a set of action items used to assess progress. Executive Cabinet members track progress on the implementation of their individual division’s work plans over the year, providing monthly reports to the Board of Trustees on achievements made by committees and governance groups.

### **Division Work Plans**

- [Academic Affairs](#)
- [Administrative Services](#)
- [Student Services](#)
- [Institutional Advancement](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Instructional Technology Services](#)

As the annual cycle draws to a close, Executive Cabinet members submit a comprehensive [progress report](#) to the Office of the President. These reports, once again organized around core themes, form the basis of the [President’s annual update to the trustees](#). From there, the cycle begins again, with priorities set for the upcoming year. In budget development, these priorities drive resource allocation.

Examples of progress reports: [Advising and Enrollment Services](#), [Center for Leadership & Service](#), [Library](#), [ELCAP](#), [HR](#), [Marketing and Communications](#), [ITS](#).

This planning model, particularly with its recent refinements, has served Highline College well in the following ways:

- Consistently organizes institutional resources and energy around the core themes and the [Mission Fulfillment Report](#)
- Invites active participation by college committees and employee groups, while holding Executive Cabinet members accountable for goal-attainment in their divisions
- Allows long-term planning processes to build on annual performance assessments in each core theme area, capitalizing on strengths and focusing resources on improving weaknesses

Throughout the sequence of annual plans, the Mission Fulfillment Report has provided mission-level feedback on institutional performance over time. As a constant in the process, the MFR informs planning conversations at the board executive, and governance of the institution. Measures that fall below benchmark receive attention and resources to improve performance; at the same time, measures that meet or exceed benchmark receive assessment and resources to build on success and, where so directed, to stretch to a higher goal.

At an operations level, each division maintains its own set of planning, assessment, and improvement processes. To understand how these divisional systems interact with the stewardship of core themes, it may be useful to have an overview of the planning, assessment, and improvement processes within each major college division.

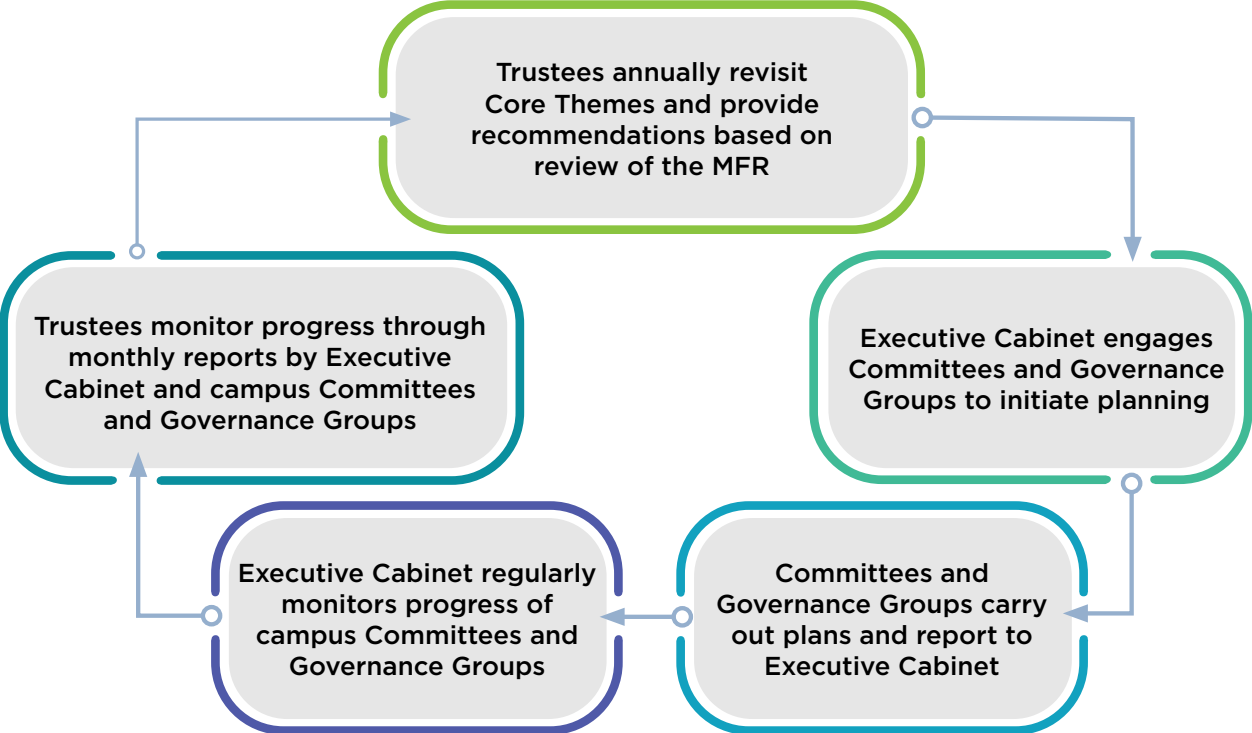


Figure 6. Overview of Planning, Assessment, and Improvement Processes



### Long-range and strategic planning

Augmenting its annual planning and evaluation cycles, Highline College has drawn on its core theme framework to set longer-term, strategic goals. Though their lifespans have varied somewhat over the years, these plans typically reflect a multi-year commitment to focus on a more limited set of key, core theme-related opportunities. Often, the plans' focal points reflect either:

- Persistent, year-to-year challenges in core theme performance or
- A decision to raise performance expectations in an area of strength

Though it took shape during a period of presidential transition, the [most recent plan](#) retained many traits of its predecessors. Intended to span academic years 2017-18 to 2020-21, the plan was crafted and, ultimately, adopted by the Accreditation Steering Committee and Executive Cabinet before confirmation by the trustees in spring 2018. Typical of earlier plans, the document identified under-performance areas as “challenges” and stretch goals as “opportunities” to raise expectations. Work-plan tasks were developed for each goal. Organized by core theme, the plan assigned accountability for each theme to a vice president.

With the transition to a new president in July 2018, the planning process shifted as well. Rather than assigning a single vice president or area to a theme, Dr. Mosby asked all members of Executive Cabinet to report on division accomplishments in terms of relevant core themes and to outline goals for the coming year. This occurred in summer 2019, so reports were based on 2018-19 accomplishments and 2019-20 goals. This process was repeated in summer 2020, with accomplishments related to core themes reported for 2019-20 and goals for 2020-21 identified. These division reports formed the basis for the President's overall plan for each year. The format of past and current [plans](#) reflects this interest in consistency.

### **Constituent participation**

**3.A.2** *The institution's comprehensive planning process is broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies.*

In a participatory governance model like Highline's, institutional plans are only as valuable as the credibility, functionality, and commitment that participants assign to them. To facilitate constituent support, the college integrates its planning processes across administrative units and key policy bodies.

### Administrative-unit planning

For each of the college's major administrative units, the senior leader is accountable for engaging staff in regular unit-level planning that aligns with the institution-wide framework.

**Student Services:** Student Affairs Cabinet (SAC) holds responsibility for planning and assessment of the division's services and activities. SAC is chaired by the Vice President for Student Services, with membership including the division's deans and associate deans. SAC engages in a strategic planning process, beginning with clearly

defined goals and shared values from the college-wide annual work plan. SAC meets on a weekly basis, and the division meets on a quarterly basis. Deans and associate deans meet with their area directors and program managers on a monthly basis to connect staff with divisional goals and gather feedback from staff. In addition to weekly SAC meetings, the Student Services Leadership Team (SSLT) consisting of department administrators and deans meet on a monthly basis. Lastly an all-division meeting occurs on a quarterly basis. The monthly divisional meeting and quarterly SSLT meeting connects department administrators and staff with divisional goals and provides opportunity to gather feedback from staff on how their work can advance divisional goals and college core themes.

**Institutional Advancement:** Institutional Advancement (IA) fulfills the college's mission by recruiting, retaining, and engaging students, building relationships within the community, and securing financial resources. IA begins its planning cycle with an annual, division-wide summer retreat to review division performance and to set goals for the upcoming year and work plan. Throughout the year, all teams in IA meet together twice a month to identify key priorities and focus resources to achieve division goals in the work plan.

**Administrative Services:** The mission of Administrative Services is to provide essential functions and services in support of Highline College, using collaborative means and sustainable practices. Administrative Services' annual work plan development process is inclusive of all staff at different levels and positions. Frontline staff join the Vice President for Administrative Services (VPAS) and the directors in an annual summer retreat to collaboratively plan and determine departmental projects and goals in support of the college mission and core themes. Each department develops work plans and goals with major projects under a selected core theme. Periodically, the directors and the VPAS review the projects together to monitor progress and to maintain focus, when and where necessary. At the end of each fiscal year, the entire work plan is reviewed and assessed to determine achievement of measurement targets. The VPAS has incorporated the annual work plan as part of the employee performance evaluation process for all of the Administrative Services Leadership Team members.

**Human Resources and Information Technology:** Newly added to the Executive Cabinet, these units are currently developing annual planning and strategic planning protocols distinct from those of their former divisional homes in, respectively, Administrative Services and Academic Affairs.

**Academic Affairs:** Within Academic Affairs, planning, assessment, and improvement processes rest with four primary bodies — Instruction Cabinet, Deans and Directors, Faculty Senate, and the Assessment Committee — that incorporate both administrative and committee structures.

- *Instruction Cabinet:* The planning, assessment, and improvement process for Instruction Cabinet follows an annual calendar, beginning with the group's yearly fall retreat. There, members review data from the [Mission Fulfillment Report](#) and assess accomplishments from the prior year. Using that information as a platform, Instruction Cabinet develops an annual work plan that is organized around core themes. Organizationally, Instruction Cabinet relies on a variety of other committees and groups to carry out its overarching policy directions.

Some of these organizational units — like the Learning and Teaching Center — are permanent. In many cases, however, the groups are temporary, appointed by Instruction Cabinet to study a specific issue or to develop a specific plan. Examples of such temporary groups are the Placement Task Force, Inclusive Syllabus Template Committee, and Math Attainment Task Force.

- *Deans and Directors*: This group includes all deans and directors in Academic Affairs. Similar to Instruction Cabinet, the planning, assessment, and improvement process for Deans and Directors follows an annual calendar, beginning with an annual fall retreat where members review the Mission Fulfillment Report and the previous year's work plan to assess accomplishments and prioritize work for the coming year. Members of the Deans and Directors group integrate their team's work into the Academic Affairs work plan; they also integrate individual goals drawn from their annual professional development plans which are tied to annual performance reviews.
- *Assessment Committee*: Convened over 20 years ago as the Student Outcomes and Competencies Committee (SOCC), the Assessment Committee (AC) continues its role as a faculty-led body charged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs with coordinating and supporting faculty-driven assessment of student learning to improve the effectiveness of our educational programs.

Although the [Assessment Committee](#) has historically concentrated on Core Theme 1 (Student Engagement, Learning, and Achievement) — and, in particular, its student learning-related objectives — the group has recently expanded its profile in institutional planning. In 2019 the AC added other faculty ad hoc members from various disciplines to make revisions to the degree-level and program-level assessment process. In 2019, the committee launched an extensive assessment, planning, and improvement cycle, beginning with a gathering of its members with Faculty Senate and Instruction Cabinet. The resulting comprehensive [Assessment Plan](#) is now structured into five key areas: course assessment, program/degree assessment, program/discipline outcomes creation, program/discipline review creation, and faculty engagement. The plan both increases the scope of the AC's responsibilities and clarifies accountabilities within each of the five areas. Additionally, as part of the faculty engagement strategy, the AC now has a formal relationship with Faculty Senate. Guiding the work of the Assessment Committee, including the redesign of the [Assessment Committee website](#), is the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment' [transparency framework](#).

- *Faculty Senate*: As a forum for faculty discussion, advocacy, and leadership regarding academic affairs at Highline College, the [Faculty Senate](#) offers an important resource for deliberation and feedback on institutional planning, particularly around instructional matters like curriculum and advising. As part of a campus-wide effort to increase communications, participation, and transparency, the Faculty Senate has expanded its profile in recent collaborations around Guided Pathways implementation, Equity Task Force initiatives, and, as noted above, Assessment Committee plans.

#### Committee participation

Alongside these administrative leadership groups, faculty- and staff-led committees provide substantive input into both institutional and instructional planning.

- *Equity Task Force*: Representing both formal governance and self-organizing interest groups across campus, the 12-member [Equity Task Force \(ETF\)](#) has since 2017 advised Executive Cabinet on matters related primarily to Core Theme 2 (diversity and globalism), but also Core Theme 4 (sustainability). The group has advocated for investments in operational responses such as the Bias Incident Response Team, and significant expansion of large-scale professional development initiatives, including spring 2019's first annual campus-wide Equity Development Institute, followed by a second Equity Institute in May 2020. Since winter 2018, a representative from the ETF has served on the screening committees for the president, vice presidents, and most dean positions. The college's 2017-18 to 2020-21 [Strategic Plan](#) identified ETF as the potential author of a campus equity plan, but resources were not allocated in support of this vision. ETF took up the work, however, in 2017-18, and determined that campus climate surveys were needed to inform the development of a campus equity plan. ETF researched options and selected a survey instrument, but at that time, management of the instrument was shifting from one university to another, which meant it was unavailable for use the following year. In 2018-19, with support from President Mosby, ETF focused on developing the position description for the college's first Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The search for the position which occurred in winter 2020 failed. Plans are underway to identify and conduct an equity focused climate survey in 2020-21 in preparation for the development of a new strategic plan, and a reposting of the VPEDI position.

### **Evaluation of institutional data**

**3.A.3** *The institution's comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate fulfillment of its mission.*

The dashboard-format [MFR](#) presents a comprehensive data picture of Highline's success in attaining its mission and core themes. Though more particular data sets may inform unit operational plans or topic-specific decisions, the MFR remains the campus' single, prominent source of evidence for institution-wide self-evaluation of mission fulfillment. As noted in Standard 1, the MFR's metrics are drawn from stable, sustainable and, wherever possible, inter-institutionally comparable sources. Its achievement benchmarks in most cases reflect acceptable minimums, with improvement targets added as achievements allow. This strategic, culture-driven choice reinforces a commitment to acknowledge successes, build on them for continuous improvement, and, where necessary, sustain a clear-eyed view of challenge areas, no matter how stubborn. The Accreditation Steering Committee works closely with Executive Cabinet to hold ourselves as a college accountable to our most cherished values: our four core themes.

As Highline begins implementing Guided Pathways as a strategy to increase student completions and close equity gaps, identifying and using leading indicators as well as completion metrics will be important in order to engage in ongoing assessment. While the MFR contains both, we think our students will be better served if we focus in on these leading indicators. To that end, in 2019-20, Highline's Institutional Research team compiled a set of leading indicators based on [CCRC's study of the predictive value of "early momentum metrics"](#) to share with the initial Guided Pathways Steering

Committee. Moving forward, the Institutional Research team has developed a [set of data dashboards](#) showing these leading indicators which can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, age, full-time/part-time, and Pell status and is in the process of creating a user-guide for staff and faculty.

### Resource allocation and prioritization

**3.A.4** *The institution's comprehensive plan articulates priorities and guides decisions on resource allocation and application of institutional capacity.*

As discussed earlier, institutional comprehensive planning has articulated priorities and guided decisions on allocation of resources for well over a decade, seen in the 2017-21 [MidCycle Strategic Plan](#) and now in President Mosby's [annual plans](#) which roll up from division plans, all based on a review of MFR results as well as constituent input.

Highline College's leadership and campus community understand that resource allocation includes not only monetary investment but also the application of institutional energy and collaboration. Over time, the deep integration of core theme goals and metrics into campus planning has helped to focus and sustain campus attention on widely held institutional priorities. For a full discussion see Standards 3.B and 4.

Of course, budget allocations are the most direct levers for improving outcomes, and in an institution where over 80% of expenditures are for personnel, staff investments clearly illustrate a fiscal commitment to underwrite college goals. In recent years, based on assessment of MFR metrics, the college's regular planning processes has yielded allocations for a number of strategically chosen staff positions, as shown in the following table.

Investment	MFR-driven improvement goal(s)
Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	Equitable student attainment; staff diversity, climate, retention (Core Theme 2, Objectives 2 and 4)
Dean of Student Support and Funding Services and Associate Dean of Funding Services	Equitable student attainment, coordinated funding services, community responsiveness (Core Theme 2, Objective 2, and Core Theme 3, Objective 2)
Learning community cohort program staffing	Equitable student attainment (Core Theme 2, Objective 2)
Dean of College and Career Readiness	ABE/ESL transition to college (Core Theme 1, Objective 3)
Associate Dean for B.A.S. and Workforce Pathways	Local workforce development (Core Theme 3, Objective 3)
Program Manager for Faculty Advising	Equitable student attainment, ABE/ESL transition to college (Core Theme 2, Objective 2, Core Theme 1, Objective 3)

Once below-threshold areas have been addressed, additional resources (when available) are directed by the Executive Cabinet toward moving past acceptable minimums and building on existing successes in areas key to Highline's mission. Additional examples appear in Standards 3.B and 4.

## Emergency preparedness

**3.A.5** *The institution's planning includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupt normal institutional operations.*

The institution's planning includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupt normal institutional operations.

The planning process for [emergency preparedness](#) and recovery is a constant, on-going effort by the Emergency Response Team (ERT). As the college moves through the emergency preparedness cycle of writing the plan, implementation, testing, and improvement, there is constant multi-departmental collaboration. A few constant principles have helped us feel confident in its approach:

- *Leadership commitment:* The Vice President for Administrative Services sits on the ERT and provides senior leadership support, both financial and political, to the planning process.
- *Customization:* All plans are built around the concepts of the National Incident Management System, modified to address the unique operations and departmental relationships at Highline.
- *Practice:* The plans are regularly tested and exercised with students, faculty and staff.
- *Focus on people:* Personal preparedness and awareness are of critical importance. We want to build a campus community that feels confident in its own ability to avoid threats, survive an unavoidable incident or emergency, and work collaboratively to react and recover.
- *Improvement:* Recognizing that real emergencies and exercises are the best compass to understanding how plans can be improved, the Emergency Manager drafts "lessons learned" documents after each event, listing the vulnerabilities and gaps in current plans. These documents become a list of action items for the ERT to incorporate into existing plans, whether its improving responder communication and structure, planning for community members with access and functional needs, or incorporating international students.

## Self-evaluation of institutional planning

Executive Cabinet used the NWCCU rubric for institutional planning to formally discuss and [evaluate planning](#). The rubric shows that for this new leadership team, there is strength in multi-year planning based on *MFR* data, broad-based participation of constituents, and excellent emergency preparedness planning. Areas that are emerging or in development include formal, comprehensive budget and enrollment planning, formal implementation of all budgeting and annual planning, assessment data being used by each division consistently for planning, and a formal way to provide evidence that planning guides resource allocation. Executive Cabinet has been working to develop clear, transparent planning practices for this past year, has a clear direction, and has equity, transparency, inclusiveness, and sustainability as its guiding values.

# CHAPTER FOUR: CORE THEME PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, AND IMPROVEMENT

Following the Executive Summary, this chapter is organized into three sections: 1) core theme planning and assessment (Standards 3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3, 4.A.1, 4.B.1); 2) program assessment and improvement and student learning assessment and improvement (Standards 4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.2); and 3) holistic institutional level evaluation of the assessment process (Standards 4.A.4, 4.A.5, 4.A.6).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (ER 22)

Highline College identifies its expected course, credential, and college-wide learning outcomes in the college catalog, the college website, and individual course syllabi.

For student achievement data, the college uses the state's Student Achievement Initiative measures and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (Standard 2.C.5). Faculty assess student learning with support from the Assessment Committee. Academic departments submit annual assessment activity reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Standard 2.C.5).

The learning outcomes for every degree and certificate program offered at Highline College are published in Highline's catalog (see Standard 2.C.2). Highline College faculty regularly assess student achievement of these learning outcomes and report their findings annually (see Standard 2.C.5 and Standards 4.A.2 and 3).

### INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (ER 23)

Chapters 1 and 3 of this report (Standards 1, 3.A.1, 3.A.2) detail Highline College's mission fulfillment framework and describe how it is used in the college's planning processes and its assessment of mission attainment. The current chapter, Chapter 4 (Standards 3.B, 4.A, 4.B), documents how results of those assessment effect institutional improvement. The subsequent section, Chapter 5 (Standard 5), demonstrates that Highline regularly monitors its internal and external environments, ensuring that its plans consider the impact of changing circumstances on institutional sustainability.

The section below builds on the discussion of core theme planning introduced in Chapter 3, which describes how core theme planning at Highline is done in response to data in the *MFR* and explains that Highline's comprehensive plan is organized around the core themes (Standards 3.B, 4.A, and 4.B).

## SECTION 1 – CORE THEME PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

**3.B.1** *Planning for each core theme is consistent with the institution's comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme's objectives.*

**3.B.2** *Planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of contributing components of those programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.*

**3.B.3** *Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for programs and services is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.*

**4.A.1** *The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data, quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement, as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.*

**4.B.1** *Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.*

As Standard 3.A.1 documents, annual work planning for each division and establishing goals for the college as a whole is informed first by a review of the results of the *MFR*. As part of this process, within divisions, each department now creates an [Institutional Effectiveness](#) report of their accomplishments and goals, each under relevant core themes, and divisions do the same. The college then plans and carries out improvements under the guidance of divisional leaders and with input from constituent groups, regularly reporting to the trustees on our accomplishments.

At the institution-wide level, the college President's [2019-20 Goals and Priorities](#) represents this single most comprehensive, current, and directive roll-up of these processes in action, identifying both remedial and aspirational goals through the lens of the core themes and shaped by *MFR* data.

In the pages that follow, we reveal the more granular processes that underlie the President's road map. For each core theme, objective, and measure, we provide tables and discussion:

- The **tables** display our performance for each measure, often showing multi-year trend(s), in the color-coded format of the Mission Fulfillment Report:

**Results Meet or Exceed Benchmark**

**Results Below Benchmark; Attention**

**Results Far Below Benchmark; Action**

- The **narrative** begins with a brief assessment of our performance, followed by example(s) of improvement plans, initiatives, and resource allocations for programs and services responding to the data.

Taken together, the examples demonstrate that, as a matter of deeply established



institutional protocol, we make decisions on resource allocation and improvement plans based on data, whether the numbers point to an area of need or to a place where we can stretch ourselves.

## CORE THEME #1: PROMOTE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

<b>Objective 1</b> - Students engage with their curriculum, campus, and community for a meaningful educational experience.				
<i>Indicator 1.1</i> - Students experience meaningful interactions with faculty in and outside of the classroom.	2019	2016	2012	Benchmark
<b>Measure 1.1.A</b> - CCSSE “Student-Faculty Interaction” score	51	51	54	50 (national norm)
<i>Indicator 1.2</i> - Students experience HC courses as challenging and engaging.				
<b>Measure 1.2.A</b> - CCSSE “Academic Challenge/Active & Collaborative Learning” Composite score	53	53	54	50 (national norm)
<i>Indicator 1.3</i> - Students participate in organizations and activities that provide support, mentoring, or leadership opportunities on campus and in the community, allowing them to experience multiple perspectives, practice civic responsibility, and contribute to the global community.				
<b>Measure 1.3.A</b> - Percent of students who participate in student organizations (CCSSE item 13.i.1)	N/A	28%	24%	20% (CCSSE national sample)

### Assessment

While we have consistently met our targets in this objective, we have noted a slight decline in recent years.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**1.1 and 1.2** Since these focus on engagement with learning, we see faculty development as the most direct avenue for improvement. Accordingly, [the Academic Affairs work plan](#) has continued for several years to allocate resources to these goals. One investment was 2018’s appointment of the college’s first [Learning and Teaching Center](#) (LTC) program manager, tasked with promulgating best practices in engaging students in meaningful learning. Among many other new initiatives, the LTC has revamped the yearlong new faculty seminar, led several professional development seminars on best practices in teaching, and organized several [faculty inquiry groups](#) on evidence-based engagement strategies in both face-to-face and online courses.

**1.3** Before CCSSE dropped the third indicator in 2018, we exceeded the minimum for several years. Even so, Student Services further increased student leadership programming and services, including conducting a needs assessment with students from CLS, CCIE, and the Inter-Cultural Center to identify and align professional staff services with co-curricular offerings students were seeking. Thus, student S&A funded the new full-time exempt Mentorship Programs Leadership Advisor. Student Services also added a monthly leadership development workshop series known as the [Connect Program](#).

<b>Objective 2</b> - Diverse teaching methods, innovative curricula, and student support services fulfill the learning needs of students.					
<i>Indicator 2.1</i> - Faculty continually plan, assess, and improve teaching and curricula based on assessment of student learning.		2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	Benchmark
<b>Measure 2.1.A</b>	Percent of departments that document an improvement plan based on a department discussion of annual assessment and improvement data	86% (n=29)	69% (n=29)	60% (n=30)	80% (internal)
<b>Measure 2.1.B</b>	Percent of assessed students who met the course learning outcomes	76%	78%	77%	75% (internal)
<i>Indicator 2.2</i> - Faculty and Student Services personnel provide effective support.		2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	Benchmark
<b>Measure 2.2.A</b>	CCSSE “Support for Learners” scores	51	53	52	50 (national norm)
<b>Measure 2.2.B</b>	Percent of students on academic probation who raise their quarterly GPA to a 2.0 or above in any subsequent quarter in the academic year	47% (n=409)	58% (n=466)	53% (n=477)	57% (internal)

### Assessment

We met all targets but one in this objective. *Indicator 2.1* improved due to increased resources and attention, while *Indicator 2.2* declined.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**2.1** We will discuss this indicator separately in Standards 4.A.3 and 4.B.2 at the end of this chapter.

**2.2** *Measure 2.2.B* was added in 2016 to focus on support for students on academic probation. Student Services allocated considerable energy to year-over-year improvements in this metric, revising their services in several ways, first by rewriting the Academic Standards Policy in order to better identify students who are not meeting minimum GPA requirements early in their experience. This revision to their service included expanding students who fall under the [Academic Standards Policy](#) (Academic Affairs policy #2030) and developing new success and retention services for students who fall into academic probation — among them, an online student success course and “Thrive” academic success workshops — offered with a positive framework meant to inspire students through building community, and learning from alumni who had struggled academically, yet persisted and achieved their goals. The indicator for measuring this objective was changed to reflect the new policy. The data for 2016-17 reflects the percentage of students on probation (using a different standard of measurement) whose status did not lead to suspension. The data for 2017-18 and 2018-19 uses the new more proactive and expansive definition of probation and measures

students who improved their GPA to good academic standing. While the measure appeared to be on an improved trajectory the first year of implementation, this rate was not sustained into the second year of the policy. We plan to see an improvement with the 2019 allocation for a new Program Manager for Advising and Student Success. The position was filled in fall 2019 to oversee the policy, track student progress, and coordinate campus-wide support for students with GPAs below 2.0.

<b>Objective 3</b> - Students achieve their goals by progressing on educational pathways.					
<i>Indicator 3.1</i> - Advanced Basic Skills students will transition from non-credit to college level courses.		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
<b>Measure 3.1.A</b>	Percentage of Advanced Basic Skills students who transition to college-level courses during the academic year	6% (n=1761)	7% (n=1769)	6% (n=1590)	10% (internal)
<i>Indicator 3.2</i> - Degree- or certificate-seeking students will progress through significant educational milestones.					
<b>Measure 3.2.A</b>	Percentage of eligible students who attain 15 college-level credits within the current year	43% (n=5078)	45% (n=5480)	49% (n=4630)	45% (internal)
<b>Measure 3.2.B</b>	Percentage of eligible students who attain five college-level credits in quantitative reasoning within current year	27% (n=2685)	29% (n=2779)	25% (n=2368)	25% (internal)
<b>Measure 3.2.C</b>	Percentage of eligible students who attain 45 credits in the current year	36% (n=2097)	35% (n=2300)	33% (n=2106)	30% (internal)
<i>Indicator 3.3</i> - Degree- or certificate-seeking students will attain credentials.					
<b>Measure 3.3.A</b>	IPEDS graduation rate of full-time, first-time degree-seeking students within six years	33% (n=330)	32% (n=287)	30% (n=442)	31% (WA)

#### SAI Student Group Definitions

**3.1.A** Advanced Basic Skills students include levels ABE3-4, GED 2 and ESL4-5. Transition means that an ABE 3-4, GED 2 or ESL 4-5 student in the current or previous year has attempted college-level credits during the year shown.

**3.2.A** 15 College-level Credits - Transfer/Prof Tech/Running Start who had no prior college level credits.

**3.2.B** Quant Point - Transfer/Prof Tech/Running Start who had some prior college level credits but no college-level math.

**3.3.A** 45 College-level Credits - Transfer/Prof Tech/Running Start who had 15+ prior college level credits.

**3.3.B** Current 2018-19 IPEDS graduation cohort entered during fall of 2013.

## Assessment

For *Indicator 3.1*, the multi-year string of yellow-coded boxes tells a clear tale: While we have been making progress toward this goal, we have yet to meet it. For *Indicators 3.2* and *3.3*, despite a slight dip in *Measure 3.2.A.*, we have consistently met our targets. However, we aspire to improve our performance.

## Improvement plan and resource allocation

**3.1** Because non-credit basic skills students make up a large and valued segment of our student body, this persistent deficit has motivated us to invest significant personnel and budget resources in programs and services every year. For example, under Academic Affairs work plans, Highline created a cross-divisional Transition Team that suggested improvements in communication, navigation, and support for students and, as a consequence, established and staffed a [Transition Success Center](#). It provides services which coordinate advising and financial aid hand-offs between non-credit and credit programs. The Jumpstart program size for high-level ESL to English 91 and then Jumpstart Math ([Jumpstart](#)) was doubled. In late 2019, Executive Cabinet approved the allocation for a new position, [Dean for College and Career Readiness](#), to provide leadership for the effort and to encourage greater inter-area collaboration around it.

**3.2.A** has been the focus of intensive work in the past three years, as we believe that by improving academic advising services, we can improve the completion rates for students. The newly adopted [four phase advising model](#), developed by a cross-divisional team including representatives from Student Services, Academic Affairs, and Institutional Advancement, provides a comprehensive framework for coordinated services that are jointly led by Advising Council co-chairs, both hired for these positions in 2019-20, the Director of Advising, Transfer, and Career Services and Program Manager for Faculty Advising.

**3.2.B** Improvement in services and programming here has been a focus of significant work at Highline. Pathway-based remediation sequences were developed by the Math department. Also, after completing a three-year College Spark funded initiative to *Redesign the Math Placement Process*, contributing stakeholders determined more work was needed to support and develop opportunities to increase college-level math attainment (QSR credit) and address low pass rates in MATH 081. Highline developed a cross-campus Math Attainment Committee to develop recommendations and activities that would meet this goal. Faculty in both English Language for Career and Academic Prep and developmental math piloted new curriculum (TERC) in those courses aimed at increasing success and transition to college math. An in-class advising model that had been successful in science courses was redesigned and delivered to students in developmental math courses. The committee also launched a “Math in 45” campaign targeted towards staff, faculty, and students to increase student completion of degree-required math within the first year (or first 45 credits). Additionally, a Statistics (MATH 146) with Extra Support co-requisite option is now an accelerated math option.

**3.2.C and 3.3** Where we aspire to surpass our benchmarks, we have committed energy and resources to a variety of large-scale program and service initiatives. [Our Guided Pathways plan](#) clearly outlines the next phase of that work. Earlier examples,

however, include a major overhaul of academic placement, with funding to renovate the [Placement and Testing Center](#), hire the college's first placement advisors, and implement student-driven, multiple measure processes. Highline College's comprehensive approach yielded dramatic results. Placement into college-level math between 2014 and 2018 increased 46 percentage points (from 17% to 63%). Placement into college-level English increased 33 percentage points (from 56% to 89%). These changes had a disproportionate, positive impact on students of color. For example, in 2015, entering Black/African American students age 20 and under placing into college-level math increased 26 percentage points over 2014, (from 8% to 34%). Asian and Pacific Islander students saw a similarly positive one-year increase in placement into college level math – 26 percentage points (from 22% to 48%). In 2019, 82% of entering Black/African American students and 91% of Latinx students placed into college-level English (from 54% and 58% in 2013). Since initiating the placement changes, the college has seen more or less steady, year-over-year increases in placement into college-level courses across all student groups while student success in these courses remains successful. These changes address barriers that our data have highlighted.

## CORE THEME #2: INTEGRATE AND INSTITUTIONALIZE DIVERSITY AND GLOBALISM THROUGHOUT THE COLLEGE.

<b>Objective 1</b> - Diversity and globalism are infused throughout the curriculum; faculty employ a pedagogy that integrates diversity and globalism.							
<i>Indicator 1.1</i> - Diversity and globalism are integrated broadly across the curriculum.		2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	Benchmark		
<b>Measure 1.1.A</b>	The percentage of courses with student learning objectives that link to the College Wide Outcome on diversity (courses)	N/A	N/A	21% (n=1606)	35% (internal)		
<i>Indicator 1.2</i> - Students from diverse backgrounds experience positive interactions with faculty in and outside the classroom.		African/Black	Asian/Pacific Isl	Hispanic/Latino	Caucasian/White	Native American**	
<b>Measure 1.2.A</b>	CCSSE "Student-Faculty Interaction" score (2019)*	54	48	53	48	43	50 (national norm)
<i>Indicator 1.3</i> - Students from diverse backgrounds will experience Highline courses as challenging and engaging.							
<b>Measure 1.3.A</b>	CCSSE "Academic Challenge/Active & Collaborative Learning" Composite score (2019)*	58	52	61	50	37	50 (national norm)

\* CCSSE Results are not evaluated for small groups (n < 40) and should be interpreted with caution.

\*\* 13 Native American students filled out the CCSSE in 2019.

## Assessment

For *Indicator 1.1*, as discussed in Chapter 1, because our curriculum management software is no longer able to calculate *Measure 1.1.A*, the Accreditation Steering Committee and Institutional Research office have been studying alternate metrics for the infusion of diversity topics across the course catalog. For *Indicators 1.2* and *1.3*, variances are generally small, and although the data here are relatively positive, the diversity of our students and community demands that we continue to work toward greater equity in student experiences and outcomes.

## Improvement plan and resource allocation

**1.1** Assessing and improving student achievement of the college-wide outcome focused on diversity has been a challenge at Highline. A [2015 study of the diversity/globalism requirement conducted by Multicultural Affairs](#) helped identify questions about the intention behind the requirement, in part by comparing the range of courses that were approved as meeting the outcome with an adaptation of Christine Sleeter’s 2009 framework for assessing multicultural education. The change in course management systems resulted in the loss of documentation showing how courses were approved to meet the requirement. Various [strategies](#) were tried to gather information including a [word search of course outcomes](#). Not until the Assessment Committee’s revision to the core competency did Highline have a solid strategy for assessing this measure. Now, under the new Assessment Plan, each core competency will be assessed in terms of a common rubric. Those rubrics will provide a standard framework not only for assessing student achievement of the competencies but also for aligning course outcomes with college-wide definitions of what the competency means. Once the rubrics have been selected for “community and social responsibility” and “globalism,” faculty who want their courses to be listed as including either (or both) competency will need to submit their courses for review. This alignment process, between competencies, rubrics, and course outcomes, will, we believe, strengthen our work in this area.

**1.2** The campus’s [Racial Equity Resource Tool](#), completed winter 2020, consolidates Highline’s commitments to equity. The college has made significant investments in fostering equitable student experiences through programming. [The Center for Cultural and Inclusive Excellence](#) collaborates with committees such as those for MLK Week and Unity Week, primarily comprised of staff in many divisions who are committed to equity, as well as students and faculty, to integrate in programming issues of diversity and inclusion at events such as MLK Week, Unity Week, and LGBTQIA week, generally with direct funding mostly from Services and Activities budget (student government). To broaden the representation of diverse student experiences in course content, Academic Affairs approved two tenure-track faculty lines to launch an American Ethnic and Identity Studies department in 2016.

**1.3** Highline has continued to provide faculty professional development resources around cultural responsiveness, in part to support 2014’s addition of that proficiency as a tenure criterion. In summer 2020, a faculty team is designing a series of modules that will provide scaffolding for Highline’s six criteria for effective teaching, including practicing culturally responsive teaching.

**Objective 2** - Student support and business services initiatives successfully meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

<i>Indicator 2.1</i> - Support and business services are effectively/successfully delivered to ethnically diverse students.		African/Black	Asian/Pacific Isl	Hispanic/Latino	Caucasian/White	Native American**	Benchmark
<b>Measure 2.1.A</b>	CCSSE “Support for Learners” score (2019)*	60	49	52	49	59	50 (national norm)

\* CCSSE Results are not evaluated for small groups (n < 40) and should be interpreted with caution.

\*\* 13 Native American students filled out the CCSSE in 2019.

**Assessment**

The variations here are relatively narrow — an encouraging sign, at one level, but also a reminder that our commitment to equity requires continual monitoring of disparities in student impressions of our support services and barriers we need to address.

**Improvement plan and resource allocation**

**2.1** To achieve greater equity in student support, Highline created a more holistic service model that intentionally addresses hunger, housing insecurity, and transportation. Highline was among the first campuses in Washington to join the Wisconsin HOPE Lab’s (now the [Hope Center](#)) efforts to study and address the impacts of poverty on college attainment. Highline received a Working Family Success Network (now Working Students Success Network) grant in 2015. A Workforce Program Manager was hired to support student funding needs. During a coach visit in 2015, all Executive Staff (the precursor to Executive Cabinet) members learned how the model for services retains students and helps them complete college, using the three pillars of the WFSN: financial assets and finance building, employment and career advancement, and income and work supports, each with high- and low-touch services. In 2016, Highline allocated a new space for this program, co-locating Workforce Education Services with the Transition Center, the Welcome Back Center, and community partners that provide benefits for students to stay in school. In 2019, the Student Support Center created a streamlined process for students to request emergency funds via one online format, no matter which office on campus they visited. The new process can now distribute funds to students within 48 hours.

Today, with community partners, the program has become the self-sustaining, one-stop [Support Center](#), adding a director position for this program in 2020.

To further improve services for students, Highline has also established a close relationship with King County Housing Authority and United Way. In 2018-20, United Way chose Highline as a signature model of a benefits hub and housing resource support for students. United Way has provided Vista coaches and AmeriCorps

volunteers since 2017; also, based on our successes, in 2019 United Way provided funds to pay for a program assistant for the Workforce Program Manager. The college has forged these and other high-impact partnerships to address student financial needs, including an emergency fund partnership with [United Way](#) and Sound Transit discounts.

Additionally, to achieve greater equity for students, a [community pantry](#) was opened in 2018, based on [The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University](#). The pantry was built in part as a response to survey data collected in our area by the Hope Center, indicating a significant amount of food insecurity among students in our service district. Its success led to the creation of a full-time Community Pantry coordinator, to be hired in 2020.

Also, based on 2,000 responses to a survey from the Community Pantry, Highline established a need for student housing that was greater than we could provide. Thus in 2018-19 a cross-campus effort between the Highline College Foundation, the Support Center, Student Services, and Workforce Education Services, together with community partners Neighborhood House and King County Housing Authority, planned a new program that became the [While in School Housing \(WiSH\)](#) project. The program awarded the first housing vouchers to 40 homeless Highline students in early 2020.

Objective 3 – Students from diverse backgrounds progress, achieve goals, and complete degrees/certificates.								
Indicator 3.1 – Degree and certificate seeking students from diverse backgrounds achieve significant milestones at rates comparable to relevant comparison groups (2018-19).								
		African/Black	Asian/Pacific Isl	Hispanic/Latino	Caucasian/White	Native American	Inter-national	Bench-mark
<b>Measure 3.1.A</b>	Percentage of eligible students who attain 15 college-level credits within the current year	40% (n=670)	59% (n=922)	48% (n=459)	54% (n=1073)	38% (n=24)	63% (n=237)	45% (internal)
<b>Measure 3.1.B</b>	Percentage of eligible students who attain 5 college-level credits in quantitative reasoning within the current year	20% (n=445)	30% (n=517)	21% (n=342)	28% (n=671)	14% (n=14)	31% (n=399)	25% (internal)



Indicator 3.2 - Students from diverse backgrounds complete degrees and certificates at rates comparable to relevant comparison groups (2018-19)								
		African/Black	Asian/Pacific Isl	Hispanic/Latino	Caucasian/White	Native American	Inter-national	Benchmark
<b>Measure 3.2.A</b>	Percentage of eligible students who attain 45 credits within the current year	32% (n=332)	43% (n=519)	30% (n=248)	37% (n=493)	50% (n=10)	81% (n=167)	30% (internal)
<b>Measure 3.2.B</b>	IPEDS graduation rate of full-time, first-time degree-seeking students within 6 years (2013 fall cohort)	12% (n = 33)	36% (n=59)	31% (n = 49)	37% (n = 122)	40% (n = 5)	56% (n = 128)	31% (WA)

Note: Progress data are not evaluated for small groups (n < 40) and should be interpreted with caution.

### SAI Student Group Definitions

**3.1.A** 15 College-level Credits - Transfer/Prof Tech/ RS who had no prior college level credits.

**3.1.B** Quant Point - Transfer/Prof Tech/ RS who had some prior college level credits but no college-level math.

**3.2.A** 45 College-level Credits - Transfer/Prof Tech/ RS who had 15+ prior college level credits.

**3.2.B** International graduation rate calculated manually; international students are not included in the IPEDS cohort due to incompatible coding

### Assessment

Despite incremental improvements over time, we have failed to close equity gaps, most significantly for African-American/Black populations, but also for Latinx students. We also know that as we disaggregate data on our Asian Pacific Islander students, equity gaps among those groups become visible.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**3.1 and 3.2** Notably, these challenges occupy a prominent place in both the [2017-21 Strategic Plan](#) and the more current [2019-20 Goals and Priorities](#). In past years, investments have included data analysis resources, professional development, and programming. In 2016, Student Services reallocated resources to serve marginalized

student populations. Data in the TRiO department suggested many undocumented students and students in foster care did not have sufficient integrated academic and support systems. With the reallocation of resources, a new position was created to create a TRiO-like program for undocumented students and foster youth. In 2018, Highline College applied for and became a member of the state sponsored network of higher education institutions dedicated to support foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth known as “Passport to Careers.” More recently, to improve our ability to analyze data for meaningful equity inquiry, an equity data analyst position was developed and filled in June 2019. Second, as noted elsewhere, the college has maintained a program of professional development to support culturally responsive teaching, including a self-paced, faculty-developed Canvas course [Culturally Responsive Campus](#) launched in 2017 and an Outcomes Alignment Course to support student success by aligning curriculum to assessment and outcomes. Similar resources are available on the [Assessment page](#). Finally, programmatic investments have included grant-funded support services like the [MESA Center](#) and [TRiO Student Support Services](#), as well as the establishment of three [cultural learning cohorts](#) — Umoja, Puente, and AANAPISI — all adapted from successful national models. In launching each cohort, the college committed resources to space renovations, faculty release time, professional affiliations and, ultimately, dedicated staff support. Most recently, practices embedded in these discrete initiatives have been integrated into Highline’s approach to implementing Guided Pathways. For example, planning is underway for a first quarter experience that aims to build a sense of belonging and include identity-based, culturally responsive co-curricular programming. As mentioned above, recognizing the need to strengthen culturally responsive practices, in summer 2020, Highline invested in the development of a professional development course for faculty and administrators focused on criteria for effective teaching.

**3.1.B** Specifically in response to this persistent disparity, in 2019 the Math department secured a College Spark grant to develop programming and offer corequisite math courses. The Highline College Mathematics Corequisite Initiative (MCI) is designed to increase the number of students who earn their first college credit in math by developing and scaling corequisite versions of three high-enrollment, transferable introductory college-level math courses (Introduction to Statistics, Precalculus, and College Algebra). The design of the corequisite courses advances the Guided Pathways work underway at Highline College by contextualizing the instructional materials in corequisite courses through the use of examples and methods relevant to students’ program of study and providing increased Guided Pathways support around advising and building students’ capacity as learners through teaching metacognitive skills. Developing culturally competent teaching pedagogy and consulting with practitioners who have success with low-income, first-generation, and students of color was essential to the development of the curriculum.

**3.2.B** Increasing student completions and closing equity gaps have become focal points for Highline’s work. Highline’s [five-year Guided Pathways plan](#) synthesizes work across many areas, and focuses on making college systems and processes easier for students to navigate. To that end, in fall 2019 we surveyed over 300 students about the current Highline pathways, and by January 2021, we will roll out new pathways,

renamed and reorganized based on student feedback. A faculty team has designed a template for program maps so all degrees and certificates can be mapped by spring 2020. The design team reviewed other college websites, consulted broadly with stakeholders including high school counselors, and shared their draft plans with students. The final version of the program map template will be shared with faculty during Opening Week, September 2020. Another team is developing a revised college success course, designed to increase students' sense of belonging and provide career exploration. A half-time director position has been created for 2020-21 to help move the Guided Pathways work forward.

<b>Objective 4</b> - The college engages in inclusive recruitment and hiring practices, and fosters a campus climate perceived as culturally competent and inclusive by all constituents.					
<i>Indicator 4.1</i> - Recruitment, hiring, and retention of campus personnel are equitable and full-time employees show increasing diversity.		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
<b>Measure 4.1.A</b>	Percentage of people of color in full-time positions	36%	37%	36%	1% increase/year (internal)
<i>Indicator 4.2</i> - Employees from diverse backgrounds experience the campus climate as positive.		<b>Of Color</b>	<b>Caucasian/ White</b>		<b>Benchmark</b>
<b>Measure 4.2.A</b>	Rate of job satisfaction and positive campus climate	78%	71%		75% (internal)

### Assessment

Though Highline's employees are among the most diverse in our state system, we struggled between 2017-18 and 2018-19 to remain within a percentage-point or two of our desired annual gain. In contrast, we are encouraged by the generally positive impressions self-reported by staff and faculty of color. Of course, the below-benchmark rating of Caucasian/White employees is a worry as well, one that we believe echoes concerns discussed later in *Core Theme 4, Indicator 4.1*.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**4.1** Academic Affairs' 2018-19 work plan included a study of Highline faculty recruitment practices and some best practices, resulting in [recommendations](#) for our use. Further steps appear in the [division's 2019-20 plan](#). Also, under new leadership, Human Resources now creates search plans prior to advertising a position, to ensure inclusive and unbiased searches. As a tangible investment in that effort, in 2019, the college hired a Talent Acquisition & Employee Development Manager who guides hiring managers through the recruitment process, focusing on barriers that might unintentionally limit the applicant pool. Human Resources monitors the applicant pool to ensure the demographics of the pool align with the screening committees' goals and, if not, to initiate additional efforts to encourage new applicants.

**4.2** Our work to maintain a positive, culturally responsive campus climate continues by improved programming. Thanks to the collaboration of the Equity Task Force with the Opening Week and Professional Development Day Planning Committee, we have brought nationally prominent speakers to lead Opening Week and fall Professional Development Day sessions on fostering an inclusive campus climate for diverse

employees and students. In 2019, the task force succeeded in securing an additional professional day in spring, specifically with the goal of deepening and sustaining our equity work. That new investment kicked off with a full day [Equity Development Institute](#) with over 250 participants. In spring 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Equity Task Force lead the campus in the second Equity Development Institute, with over 350 employees attending.

### CORE THEME #3: BUILD VALUABLE RELATIONSHIPS AND ESTABLISH A MEANINGFUL PRESENCE WITHIN HIGHLINE COLLEGE’S COMMUNITIES

Objective 1 - The college communicates effectively with its communities.			
Indicator 1.1 - The local community is familiar with the college.		2018	Benchmark
<b>Measure 1.1.A</b>	Percent of community members who indicate familiarity with the college as reported in the Community Perception Survey	81%	80% (internal)

#### Assessment

Results from our periodic Community Perception Survey consistently meet the target indicator of community familiarity.

#### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**1.1** To meet and exceed the benchmark, IA will continue to follow its 2019-2020 visioning statement: “to tell the college story through a variety of medium, including in person/face to face engagement, online/web/social media, print, and mass media to potential and current students, alumni, prospective and current donors, organizations, and community partners.” These activities are evident by presentations to organizations like local chambers of commerce and service clubs, advertising locally in print media, movie theaters, and bus ads; hosting of outreach events on campus and throughout our diverse community, and targeted campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. We measure the outputs of these activities by tracing the number of appearances, events, and audience size, and by recording clicks and return visits. The outcome is measured by continued high rates of agreement recorded in future community perception surveys.

Objective 2 - The college initiates community connections to understand community needs.					
Indicator 2.1 - The college actively offers a variety of programs and makes connections with external organizations.		2018	2011	Benchmark	
<b>Measure 2.1.A</b>	Rates of agreement that the college is meeting the community’s educational needs as reported in the Community Perception Survey	65%	47%	65% (internal)	

<i>Indicator 2.2</i> - Participation rates reflect meaningful community connections and confidence in the quality of college offerings.		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>			
<b>Measure 2.2.A</b>	Participation rate of degree-seeking students in Highline's service district	4.6%	5%	4.5%			
		<b>African/Black</b>	<b>Asian/Pacific Isl</b>	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>Caucasian/White</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
<b>Measure 2.2.B</b>	Participation rate of degree-seeking students by ethnic group (vs. service district 2018)*	17% (13%)	22% (22%)	16% (20%)	27% (39%)	1% (0.5%)	Students of color within 5% points (internal)

\*The remaining 17% of Highline's students identify as more than one race. These students are counted as multi-racial and not included in the single race/ethnicity categories displayed in the Objective 2 table. 6% of Highline's service district identifies as multi-racial.

### Assessment

We met our targets this past decade. For *Indicator 2.1* we increased the benchmark to 65% once we achieved that level in 2018. When we established *Indicator 2.2*, the median age of Highline College students was 31, and we chose to compare ourselves with the demographics in our service district. Since the indicators were established, the median age of Highline students has fallen to 23. As we move into our next accreditation cycle, we anticipate comparing the demographics of the student population at Highline College with the demographics of our surrounding school districts. We discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5. Currently in Highline Public Schools, 39% of students have been identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and while the district continues to serve students with many language backgrounds, Spanish is the second most common language spoken at home. The same demographics characterize the Federal Way Public Schools, with 30% of students identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and Spanish as the second most common language spoken at home. Given this, the participate rate of Latinx students in Highline will be a critical focus in our next cycle.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**2.1 and 2.2** As the President's [2019-20 Goals and Priorities](#) phrased it, while we are "meeting our MFR minimum thresholds [for community awareness and relevance] our goal is to create more opportunities to educate our communities about our services and strengthen our responsiveness." Under the leadership of Institutional Advancement, in the last 18 months, that division has restructured so that individual departments work more collaboratively to build and steward community relationships. Investments have included adding staff to Outreach/Community Engagement and to the Grants/Public Information teams. The division also realigned and increased job responsibilities in Marketing, Foundation/Alumni, Grants/Public Information and

Government Relations in order to more effectively tell the Highline story, connect with community, and bring feedback from community organizations, program partners and individuals to the college. As one tangible outcome of that work, Highline revived its Latinx Summit this year, turning it into a family- and community-oriented event, [La Conferencia](#), and allocating new resources there, including a scholarship for Latinx students (though COVID-19 has postponed this). Similar efforts have strengthened the community-wide elements of events like [Young Educated Ladies Leading \(Y.E.L.L.\)](#) and the [Black and Brown Male Youth Summit](#), which this year incorporated a scholarship drive.

Also, in Academic Affairs, recent years' work plans have incorporated efforts to expand programming and services via in-person access to credit-bearing courses at the northernmost and southernmost corners of Highline's district — respectively, White Center and Federal Way. In White Center, the college has partnered with the YWCA Learning Center to offer specific skills and certifications — primarily in office tools and state-mandated early childhood education competencies — required for residents to retain employment in local businesses. More recently, Highline joined forces with University of Washington Tacoma, Federal Way Public Schools, and the City of Federal Way to open a higher education center in that city's downtown, ultimately securing a \$1 million legislative proviso to underwrite start-up costs. To guide these important community-serving initiatives, Academic Affairs in 2016 allocated funds to create a Dean for Extended Learning position, with staff support.

<b>Objective 3</b> - Highline College contributes to meeting community needs.					
<i>Indicator 3.1</i> - The college serves the ever-changing needs of our service district.		2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	Benchmark
<b>Measure 3.1.A</b>	Number of annual community non-credit programmatic offerings (includes ESL classes, continuing education classes)	912	925	839	750 (internal)
<b>Measure 3.1.B</b>	Number of community members served by community-responsive events such as Black and Brown Summit, Y.E.L.L., ESL night, Pathways Fair, La Familia Primero, etc.	9,230	7,451	12,693	8,000
<i>Indicator 3.2</i> - The college meets regional workforce development needs.					Benchmark
<b>Measure 3.2.A</b>	Post-completion employment rate of students in workforce education programs	78%	75%	74%	77% (WA)
<b>Measure 3.2.B</b>	Percent of Advisory Committee members who agree that our workforce program curricula meet the needs of our community's employers	98% (n=40)	97% (n=72)	96% (n=72)	90% (internal)

### Assessment

We maintain a steady level of non-credit course offerings and educational events to our community members, a goal that we have met in most years. Also, we have generally

met workforce relevance, enjoying strong advisory committee support and remaining within a point or two of statewide rates for graduate employment.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**3.1** We continue to provide non-credit programming for the community, and for community-responsive events. Continuing Education, Institutional Advancement, and English Language, Career and Academic Prep invest sizable effort and resources into non-credit programming in order to meet the everchanging needs of our diverse service district. We pay particular attention to local communities who have traditionally been underserved. For example, Highline’s Welcome Back Center builds bridges between the pool of internationally educated professionals living in Washington state and the need for their professional services. Professionals make their way to the center from inside and outside of the college. Services are free and open to any professional who is internationally educated. The English language program for refugees and immigrants as well as the advising center refer many professionals to the center. Center staff have also partnered with the Continuing Education at Highline College to offer specific industry standard courses and test preparation classes that assist these professionals in getting back into their chosen careers. Institutional Advancement’s grant writing office has assisted the WBC in securing funding to help defray the cost of relicensing for these professionals as many of the costs cannot be covered by traditional financial aid.

**3.2** Recognizing that graduate employment is a community-critical outcome, we prioritize our efforts in maintaining and, where possible, raising those rates. Among other efforts, our [Bachelor of Applied Science](#) initiative stands out as our most visible investment in opening new pathways to high-demand, living-wage jobs. Since launching our first four degrees in 2014, we have added programs in elementary education teacher certification and, more recently, integrated design. Each degree has been built on the foundation of a successful associate degree-level program at Highline. For each, new investments have included the addition of a director-level administrator, support staff, full-time faculty lines, library resources, and in some cases, facility renovations and equipment upgrades. Despite a few inevitable start-up challenges, completion and employment rates have followed the very positive [statewide trends](#). A 2018-19 overhaul of the B.A.S. in Respiratory Care now allows working practitioners to complete the degree online, significantly expanding access and enrollments.

## CORE THEME #4: MODEL SUSTAINABILITY IN HUMAN RESOURCES, OPERATIONS, AND TEACHING AND LEARNING

Objective 1 - The college recruits, retains and develops a highly qualified workforce.				
Indicator 1.1 - Staff and faculty actively pursue continuing professional development opportunities.		2018	2015	Benchmark
<b>Measure 1.1.A</b>	Rate of agreement that employees have opportunities at work to learn and grow professionally	65%	69%	75% (internal)

<i>Indicator 1.2</i> - Current employees indicate satisfaction with working environment and campus climate.					
<b>Measure 1.2.A</b>	Rate of job satisfaction and positive campus climate	68%	80%	75% (internal)	
<i>Indicator 1.3</i> - Employees are retained by the college.		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	
<b>Measure 1.3.A</b>	Short-term (2-year) attrition rate of full-time employees	35%	29%	14%	21% (internal)

## Assessment

**1.1-1.3** Elsewhere in this report — notably, *Core Theme 2, Objective 4*, above — we acknowledge that, in recent years, we have suffered alarming setbacks in employee satisfaction and retention. Initially, these data struck us as counterintuitive, given our campus’s long history of positive ratings on these *MFR* measures, a generally collegial climate, and repeated recognition of that climate by outside organizations, including the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Northwest Jobs*. Needless to say, the drive to study, understand, and address this challenge was — and continues to be — exceedingly strong.

In light of the timing, we hypothesize that the sudden, precipitous drops are a result of a few factors — first, the college’s sweeping changes in leadership and the associated uncertainties of that process; second, the pressures of Puget Sound’s red-hot employment market; and third, the college’s relatively flat structure for staff, where it was difficult to be promoted from within or to find professional development opportunities. It has been common for nearby colleges to swap employees as they advance their career by moving from one college to another in order to advance. Together, those factors have likely contributed to a steep decline in people’s certainty of their futures at Highline.

## Improvement plan and resource allocation

**1.1 and 1.2** We have increased the opportunities for staff to learn and grow professionally. At one level, recent legislative allocations — including a 5% pay increase add-on specifically for King County employees — are expected to improve morale and increase retention. To target some of the college’s most underpaid employees, between 2017 and 2019, the Executive Cabinet boosted salary allocations to lower-tier administrative employees. Offering another avenue to professional advancement, the Academic Affairs division convened its mid-managers as an Instructional Leaders Group in 2018-19, providing new opportunities for collaboration, leadership, and institutional scope. Further, under a new director appointed in 2019, Human Resources began revamping Highline’s system of employee review to provide regular feedback to all employees, including greater clarity in next-step areas for growth. Human Resources has invested considerable effort and resources in recruitment, too, eliminating a backlog of unfilled positions that had given rise to extensive workload complaints. Additionally, in 2018, Highline doubled its investment in faculty professional development, allocating each full-time instructor \$1,500 every year for that purpose.



<b>Objective 2</b> - The college demonstrates good stewardship of financial resources while ensuring sufficient resources will be available in the future.					
<i>Indicator 2.1</i> - The college maintains sufficient financial resources to both maintain programs and to remain strategic in times of financial downturn.		2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	Benchmark
<b>Measure 2.1.A</b>	Percent of general operations budget maintained as operating reserves	10%	10%	10%	10% (internal)
<i>Indicator 2.2</i> - The college maintains strong internal controls over assets and ensures compliance to college and state procedures.					
<b>Measure 2.2.A</b>	Number of annual audit findings	0	0	0	0 (internal)
<i>Indicator 2.3</i> - The college ensures continuing alignment of fiscal resources to meet current operating needs.					
<b>Measure 2.3.A</b>	Attainment of SBCTC FTE target allocation	92%	100%	101%	100%
<b>Measure 2.3.B</b>	Attainment of internal tuition revenue target	110%	106%	108%	100%

### Assessment

It is virtually an expectation that each year’s levels of reserves and audit compliance will be met. Our most recent [audit finding of 2020](#) is zero. After years of reasonably comfortable margins, however, *Indicator 2.3*’s most recent metrics suggest that the statewide declines in community college enrollments have finally begun to impact Highline as well. That trend merits close attention. At the same time, *Measure 2.3.B* reveals an increasing revenue attainment. Highline continues to maintain adequate financial reserves and a strong culture of internal controls.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**2.1 and 2.3** The 2018-19 shortfall in enrollments, coupled with the budget reductions and enrollment reductions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, could gradually undermine Highline’s ability to sustain current service levels. Recognizing that concern, the executive leadership has taken substantive action both to shore up enrollments and, where possible, to better align resources with enrollment priorities. Those initiatives are discussed in detail in Standard 5.

<b>Objective 3</b> - The college demonstrates stewardship of environmental resources.					
<i>Indicator 3.1</i> - The college encourages awareness and use of 'green' practices in its working environments.		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
<b>Measure 3.1.A</b>	Percent reduction in annual waste stream (landfill tonnage) from baseline	13% (141 tons)	17% (135 tons)	17% (134 tons)	5% below baseline
<b>Measure 3.1.B</b>	Percent reduction in annual total energy consumption (electricity and fossil fuels combined) from baseline	22% (61,649 MBTUs)	16% (66,649 MBTUs)	12% (69,741 MBTUs)	2% below baseline

### Assessment

Though our aging infrastructure presents continual obstacles to measurement and efficiency, we are encouraged by our track record of meeting targets in *Indicator 3.1*, suggesting that our planning for conservation is sufficient. Facilities staff deserve much of the credit for this achievement.

### Improvement plan and resource allocation

**3.1** We continue to assess and make improvements in stewarding resources. In recent years, Highline has launched an aggressive effort to reduce energy consumption and waste campus-wide. As part of that effort, the Facilities department has altered campus waste-collection procedures, secured external funding for energy-reduction projects, and revised its efficiency guidelines for fixtures. We have invested over \$7 million dollars in mechanical systems improvements and repairs, resulting in an overall energy reduction of over 20% compared to the 2010 base year – not to mention improvements in student and employee comfort. Highline will continue to use the Washington’s Energy Service contracting method for these types of needs into the future. More details can be found in the [Highline College Master Plan](#).

## SECTION 2 – PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT AND STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

**4.A.2** *The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.*

**4.A.3** *The institution documents, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.*

**4.B.2** *The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.*

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

As described in Chapter 3, planning for all areas of the colleges is guided by the core themes. Until recently, each department engaged in its own evaluation of achievement through processes designed by that division. Recognizing the need for a more systematic approach to the evaluation of programs and services college-wide, in June 2020, Executive Cabinet approved the use of a standard [form](#) for all departments. The form is designed to capture department achievements from the previous year tied to the core themes, an assessment of the department's strengths and challenges, and key goals for the upcoming year, again tied to core themes. This first set of Institutional Effective Reports (IERs) is published on the Institutional Research (IR) website. Posting the departmental IERs on the IR website makes the achievements and goals of departments across the college visible to each year. Next year, departments will be able to use this year's report as the basis for the next report, and our plan is to maintain three years' worth of reports on the IR website.

This systematic process for evaluating the achievement of programs and services that are beyond the scope of faculty responsibility is new, and Highline has a goal to support department employees in improving these [institutional effectiveness](#) goal setting and assessment reports. As well, we have already discovered that not all departments see their work reflected in the core themes as currently stated. This will be discussed further in Standard 5.

## FACULTY ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Highline engages in an effective system of assessment of its educational programs and services to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals. These processes are faculty-driven, incorporate direct and indirect measures, and operate at three levels – course, programmatic/departmental, and institutional.

### Indirect and direct measures

In evaluating the effectiveness of its educational programs, Highline combines both indirect and direct measures to form a comprehensive picture of student learning and attainment:

- *Indirect measures:* Among others, we monitor peer-comparable tools such as IPEDS national benchmarks, state Student Achievement Initiative data, and Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) norms to measure student attainment and satisfaction college-wide. In institutional planning, the results shape not only pedagogy and curriculum but also student support services and student-facing processes.
- *Direct measures:* At the same time, we rely on our local data from direct faculty assessments, Department Annual Reports, and program review processes to ensure, first, that students are in fact mastering course learning outcomes, and second, that our effectiveness in instruction always continues to improve.

Examples of modifications, informed by both types of measures, appear in the discussion of Core Themes 1 and 2 in the Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement section of this report.

## Faculty oversight

As stated in the discussion of Standard 2.C.5, faculty play the leading role in assessment of student learning. Highline's curriculum-control processes assure that course-level outcomes are set by departments, approved by the faculty division chair, and reviewed by the division representatives on the [Curriculum Approval Committee](#). At the institution-wide level, the [Faculty Senate](#) serves as the "paramount recommending body ... to establish and revise college-wide academic standards, grading policies, degree requirements, and educational outcomes," ensuring that Highline's academic programs maintain appropriate content and rigor. The [Assessment Committee](#), comprised primarily of faculty and co-chaired by faculty, coordinates assessment processes across the curriculum.

## RESULTS OF ASSESSMENTS

### Assessment processes and practices: Course, program, and degree learning outcomes

In its direct assessments of student learning, Highline College is currently in a period of transition, building on long-established processes to strengthen and streamline them.

For over 20 years, faculty have regularly assessed student learning at the course level, reporting their results to their department. Departments have analyzed these assessments, planned improvements, and documented these processes in annual reports to the Assessment Committee, overseen by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Both the individual assessments and department annual reports were uploaded into a homegrown, online database called the [Assessment Tool](#). In keeping with NWCCU's rubric on outcomes assessment, in 2019-20, Highline's Assessment Committee elected to conduct an assessment of our work which included asking faculty to complete a survey evaluating the Assessment Tool and soliciting suggestions for revisions and improvements to provide better support for faculty planning, assessment, and improvement. In addition, the Assessment Committee used the NWCCU rubric to assess the current state of outcomes assessment at Highline.

[Results of that assessment](#) show that while Highline faculty have been assessing student learning for over a decade and has clear assets to build upon, at the same time, this assessment reveals that we have work to do to create a more reliable, valid, and constituent-approved method for assessing student achievement of program learning outcomes and college core competencies.

Until 2017, (when Highline adopted Curriculog) to assess student learning at the degree level, Highline relied on a curriculum-wide mapping system. All Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) were mapped to the College-Wide Outcomes (CWO) in our Course Adoption Form (CAF) database. Thus, each time a CLO was assessed, a CWO was assessed. In this way, we regularly assessed and documented student learning at the course and degree levels simultaneously. For degree-wide reporting and analysis, the CAF database allowed for institution-level roll-ups of relevant assessments conducted at the course level. Additionally, professional-technical faculty often assessed and analyzed program-level outcomes as part of their regular reports to external accrediting bodies.

In this long-familiar system, department participation rates exceeded our 90% benchmark, resulting in a wide variety of improvements to pedagogy, materials, curriculum, and professional development to be documented in the Assessment Tool. The system also allowed for a simple calculation of college-wide learning attainment, for several years a key metric in the [Mission Fulfillment Report](#).

In 2017, however, an otherwise routine software upgrade spelled the end of the old system. That year, we replaced the in-house CAF database with an online curriculum-approval tool that, importantly, would auto-populate our online catalog. As an unintended consequence of the switch, we would no longer be able to map CLOs to CWOs in a database.

Knowing that this software change would trigger an overhaul of our assessment processes, we took the opportunity to reconceive and improve them.

First, as we began to redesign our data-collection and analysis processes, we paused to assess and improve our course learning outcomes themselves. To that end, the [Assessment Committee](#) offered face-to-face workshops and an online Canvas course for faculty to write better course learning outcomes that aligned with curriculum and measured exit-level skills. A tenured faculty member was given release-time to develop the training materials and to coach individual faculty in their applications. Now that these professional development resources were available at-scale, faculty are required to complete the training before entering or revising a course in the curriculum tool — an important accountability measure that will sustain the value of these new expectations.

While this process was underway, the Assessment Committee undertook the task of wholesale system redevelopment. Out of that work, the committee went through a restructuring in 2019-20 and developed our current [Assessment Plan](#).

Under that plan, faculty continue to assess outcomes at the course, program, and degree levels, though with some key revisions to the particulars:

- *Course-level assessment:* At the course level, faculty continue to report course-level assessment results in the online [Assessment Tool](#). To create a clear planning, assessment, and improvement process, full-time faculty are expected to complete an assessment every quarter. Departments can request Assessment Committee funds to pay adjuncts for assessment work.

In addition to numerical data, the assessment now includes more challenging self-reflection questions to prompt faculty to close the loop on assessment:

- “Reflect on the effectiveness of your teaching and/or assessment methods. What worked and what did not?”
- “Did you change or do you plan to change your teaching methods and/or assessment methods in response to the data you’ve collected? If yes, please describe these changes.”

These new-format reports promise to deepen faculty participation in meaningful assessment and improvement of student learning. The aggregate results are published annually in our Mission Fulfillment Report, Core Theme 1, Objective

2. Examples of completed assessments can be found in the tool under [Reports, Annual Department Reports](#).

- *Program-level assessment:* At the program level, Highline's Program Level Outcomes (PLO) assessment protocol is explained in the [program review](#) and managed jointly by a PLO subcommittee and the department coordinator. The assessment is designed to be integrated with the program review calendar, occurring every five years (pp. 26-28). The redesigned PLO process requires department faculty in the transfer degrees to use the program review process, determine an assessment approach(es), directly evaluate student work, collectively analyze the results, and map the assessments to program-level outcomes. [See samples](#). For professional-technical departments, the process is the same. Additionally, there are program outcomes that address workplace competencies that supplement the core competencies. Summary conclusions are uploaded to the Assessment Database.
- *Degree-level assessment:* The Assessment Committee's most substantive revisions have been at the degree level. There, the college has identified six general education outcomes called Core Competencies as targets for assessment. Each year, a different Core Competency will undergo the [review process](#) (page 3 Program/Discipline Review) A curriculum mapping process has been instituted to ensure that all students who are completing certificates of 45 credits or more, and all degrees, have opportunities to develop these [Core Competencies](#). Ideally, students will have more than one opportunity, more than one course, in which they have these opportunities. For professional-technical programs and certificate programs, the Core Competencies are mapped to specific courses that are required for all students. For the transfer degrees, particularly the A.A.-D.T.A. degree, students have more choice about the courses they can take to meet degree requirements. Consequently, degree requirements (e.g., communications, distribution requirements) have been mapped to show how students will gain practice in the Core Competencies regardless of specific courses taken. In addition, because courses outside the distribution area might also provide students with opportunities to develop a Core Competency (for instance, a course that is mapped to information literacy may also help students develop critical thinking), individual courses may also be mapped to the Core Competency. In this way, responsibility for helping students meet the Core Competencies is a shared responsibility across departments.
- In order to assess student achievement of the Core Competency, an Assessment subcommittee and the relevant department coordinators work with faculty in the relevant departments to examine their students' performance on an assignment designed to elicit work demonstrating the Core Competency. These samples of student work are evaluated using a common rubric adapted from the [AAC&U's VALUE rubrics](#). Departments then analyze the result and reflect on how successful the overall teaching and learning process was, specifically using their course alignment map to Core Competency distribution map. The department coordinators leading the assessment process seek assistance from the Core

Competency Assessment subcommittee and submit the completed maps and rubrics to the subcommittee by the end of the designated year/quarter ([see samples](#)). The subcommittee will then upload the documents to the Assessment Database cloud-drive. In adopting this approach, Highline is relying heavily on [NILOA's](#) guidance, including their criteria for [excellence in assessment](#). A core principle behind NILOA's work is that for assessments of student learning to be valid, students need clear guidance on how to demonstrate their achievement, hence NILOA's leadership on the [Assignment Charrettes](#), collaborative conversations among faculty that focus on whether drafts of assignments are inviting students to demonstrate the expected competencies. In this vein, NILOA's emphasis on assignment design mirrors a related body of work, Mary-Ann Winkelmes's research on the Transparency in Learning Teaching Framework (*TiLT*), which is also being used widely at Highline.

The institution-wide results of these processes are summarized and reported in the *Mission Fulfillment Report* Core Theme 1, Indicator 2:

<b>Objective 2</b> - Diverse teaching methods, innovative curricula, and student support services fulfill the learning needs of students.					
<i>Indicator 2.1</i> - Faculty continually plan, assess, and improve teaching and curricula based on assessment of student learning.		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
<b>Measure 2.1.A</b>	Percent of departments that document an improvement plan based on a department discussion of annual assessment and improvement data.	86% (n=29)	69% (n=29)	60% (n=30)	80% (internal)
<b>Measure 2.1.B</b>	Percent of assessed students who met the course learning outcomes.	76%	78%	77%	75% (internal)

For *Measure 2.1.A.*, we are encouraged by our progress. Recognizing that our 2017 software change introduced new obstacle to the system — and anticipating that the [Assessment Committee's](#) higher expectations would require time for faculty to meet — we intentionally, temporarily, reset this measure as 80%, down from the prior system's 90%. It will rise to that benchmark as the new Assessment Plan completes its initial cycles. Meantime, despite the changes in reporting systems, we are also pleased that *Measure 2.1.B.*, our global summary of educational value-added, remains above benchmark.

We understand the need to invest resources in quality assessment work. After years of grassroots, faculty-led work, Highline has recently devoted a specific budget to support the Assessment Committee's restructuring, which expanded its duties and its membership to support faculty assessment work at the degree level. Additionally, professional development investments have been ongoing. Beyond the outcomes-writing resources described above, the institution devoted a half-day in Opening Week for departments to discuss their data and develop their annual improvement plan. During this same time, the Executive Director of ITS has worked with the program deans and the Assessment Committee co-chairs to improve the accuracy of the data behind Core Theme 1, *Objective 2, Measure 2.1.A* so that we are reporting an accurate denominator.

## SECTION 3 – HOLISTIC INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL EVALUATION OF ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

**4.A.4** *The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.*

**4.A.5** *The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

**4.A.6** *The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.*

Highline’s Board of Trustees, President, and Executive Cabinet review the results of the *MFR* annually and use the data for planning. Each division uses this data in setting [annual goals for the year](#) (see Standard 3.A.1), which are used to develop the [President’s annual goals](#). In addition, each department now submits an [Institutional Effectiveness Report](#), organized by core theme relevancy, to their vice president or executive director. These reports have clarified for more constituents where their work connects to core themes, objectives, and indicators, and where it does not. The feedback about areas where there is a lack of connection between constituent department goals and core themes and objectives will be used as Highline plans its next iteration of core themes and objectives. We are creating a more standardized, transparent, and more inclusive method of evaluating programs and services in relation to mission and core themes. Our next iteration of core themes and objectives will focus on completion and equity, including the work of all constituents at the college. For example, Student Funding Services, Institutional Advancement, and Information Technology Services have valuable programs and services that could be more clearly reflected in the core themes, objectives, and indicators. This focus on aligning department and individual employee goals is reinforced in the [new exempt employee evaluation form](#), which asks exempt employees to describe how their work contributed to the accomplishment of relevant core themes, and to Highline’s commitment to promoting cultural diversity.

In our next iteration of the core themes, it is important that all Highline employees more clearly see an alignment between their work and the accomplishment of our mission and core themes. That way, all employees will be able orient their own work goals more easily with the goals of the college. We will achieve this through the kind of broad stakeholder feedback that we are already soliciting from Highline employees in hiring, the President’s Town Halls, and in many other college decisions.

As the chapter above illustrates, the results of our core theme assessments and program and service assessments are based on meaningful indicators; they inform our improvement planning and allocation of resources. Chapter 3 details the institution’s decision-making process. The results of our core theme assessments, improvements, and planning are readily available to constituents, with the latest *MFR* being published every March, department effectiveness reports due to division leads every spring, division reports on accomplishments and goals due every summer to the President, and the [President’s goals](#) being published every fall. The [MFR](#) and the President’s goals are available to the public on the website.



# CHAPTER FIVE: MISSION FULFILLMENT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY (ER 24)

As we demonstrate below, Highline's enrollment, resources, and infrastructure are sufficient to fulfill our mission and achieve our core themes now and into our future.

## STANDARD FIVE - MISSION FULFILLMENT, ADAPTATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY

### STANDARD 5.A - MISSION FULFILLMENT

#### Reflection and assessment

**5.A.1** *The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.*

**5.A.2** *Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, the institution uses assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicates its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public.*

As described in earlier chapters, during the period covered by this self-study, Highline College has gone through significant leadership changes in the past four years. After serving for more than a decade as president of Highline College, Jack Bermingham went on leave in December 2016. Jeff Wagnitz, who had been serving as Vice President for Academic Affairs since 2008, was appointed as the interim President in October 2017. Rolita Ezeonu, who had been serving as the Dean of Instruction for Transfer and Precollege Education since 2008, was appointed as the interim VPAA for 2017-18. With the hiring of a new President, Dr. John Mosby, in 2018, Wagnitz resumed his role as VPAA for 2018-19, and subsequently retired. Ezeonu accepted a permanent VPAA position at another institution. The departure of those three individuals alone in a three-year span resulted in the loss of at least 30 years of administrative experience at Highline. Similar changes occurred in other divisions.

In the midst of these transitions, under the leadership of interim President Jeff Wagnitz, in 2017 Highline's strategic plan was revised and approved by the Accreditation Steering Committee and the Executive Staff, and approved by the Board of Trustees. This strategic plan, focused squarely around the core themes, became a blueprint for the new generation of leaders at Highline. Chapter 3, Standard 3A of this report details Highline College's longstanding approach to its evaluation of institutional effectiveness. For over a decade, Highline has maintained a regular, annual cycle of mission-level assessment, relying on a stable set of core themes, objectives, and metrics to draw conclusions about the college's successes and struggles. The process's findings have shaped the allocation of institutional energies and resources.

The college's current executives have taken concrete steps to signal their intention to build upon Highline's established systems, refining them to meet new needs while maintaining the basic framework of core themes. This is evident, among other places, in the process initiated by the President to formalize reporting and planning in all divisions through use of the core themes and objectives. Results of this approach can be seen in the President's most recent annual [board reports](#) and [executive-level planning and evaluation documents](#). In the past, these board-level documents remained primarily with the trustees' records. The current college President has placed a high priority on further increasing transparency in college affairs, ensuring that the college's assessment and planning materials will be, if anything, even more accessible in the future. Thus, the President's goals are on his public [website](#).

The push to make the planning, assessment, and improvement process more transparent across the college is also evident within the divisions, including in the new [Institutional Effectiveness Department Review process](#). All departments across the college are now expected to report on their assessment and improvement plans in terms of core theme objectives. These reports are published on the Institutional Research website.

#### Organizational communication

As part of the move towards greater transparency and inclusion, improving communication across campus is a shared goal of college leadership. Our response to COVID-19 included the creation of an effective, collaborative, campus-wide approach to communication called the "[Joint Information Center](#)" or JIC. The JIC, which included members from across divisions and roles, reviewed both the content and the timing of messages intended for campus stakeholder groups, including students, faculty, and staff. JIC also led the distribution of the EDUCAUSE-based surveys for students, faculty, and staff, and organized the response teams. Because of its diverse membership, JIC also discussed how information would be distributed — through emails, the campus website, and/or social media. JIC conducted its own survey to get feedback from campus about the effectiveness of internal communication around COVID-19, including questions about which emails (emails from which sending address) were more likely to be read.

Through this experience, we have learned the importance of a cross-divisional communication team, particularly in this time when we face unprecedented challenges in budget and enrollment, are still coping with the pandemic, and are in the midst of launching a campus transformation through our Guided Pathways work plan. We plan to maintain the JIC model and expand its mission, highlighting the importance of consistent and effective communication across our organization. As well, President Mosby has placed a high value on ensuring that every Highline employee understands the role they play in helping the college meet its strategic goals, specifically around increasing student completions and closing equity gaps. This commitment to broadening stakeholder engagement in college planning and assessment can be seen in the regular Town Halls, employee-group surveys and focus groups, and careful planning for campus-wide professional development days.

## STANDARD 5.B - ADAPTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Adaptation and sustainability

**5.B.1** *Within the context of its mission and characteristics, the institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

The decision to sustain Highline's core theme framework has, in itself, already contributed significant stability to the institution's planning landscape. Despite sweeping changes in key leadership personnel, there remains widespread confidence in Highline's planning functions. Further, sustainability is itself one of Highline's core themes. In each year's evaluation cycle, leaders and stakeholders consider the college's performance on such indicators as waste and energy consumption, staff retention and satisfaction, and achievement of reserve, tuition, and enrollment targets. Resource allocation follows mission fulfillment, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and the achievement of goals of programs and services.

#### Resource allocation

Historically, Highline College has lived within a relatively modest resource base, particularly when compared to its Washington peers. The college's base-funding limitations arose from three interrelated factors:

- *Low rates of tuition collection:* In response to community needs, Highline has long served an extraordinary number of non-credit English language learners, with roughly [one-third of its state-funded enrollments](#) in this tuition-waivered category.
- *Low K-12 reimbursement rates:* At nearly [1,350 full-time equivalent \(FTE\) students](#) per year, Highline is also one of the state's largest enrollers of Running Start dual-enrollment students, a category whose reimbursement rates long reflected Washington's low base funding of students across K-12.
- *System funding disparities:* For many years, Washington's system-wide funding formula distributed dollars primarily based on each campus's per-student expenditures for the prior year, effectively perpetuating disparities between high- and low-funded campuses.

In that fiscal environment, Highline nonetheless maintained a strong record of fiscal stability. Every year since 2008's downturn, the institution met its mission with expenditures slightly under its annual budget cap. Meantime, the college's culture encouraged entrepreneurship, bringing new resources to the campus through international student recruitment, contract instructional programs, and grants. By strategically capitalizing on unexpected revenue upticks, campus executives managed to set aside fund balances for critical investments such as program pilots, technology upgrades, and renovation and maintenance projects. Recent changes in the fiscal environment helped to offset some of Highline's historical disadvantages in base funding. Legislative reforms of K-12 funding, for example, have substantially boosted

reimbursements for Running Start and other K-12 contract enrollments. Additionally, a mid-2010s funding-formula overhaul redirected new dollars to reverse some of the disparities endured by colleges, like Highline, with higher waiver rates. Robust, board-mandated operational and emergency reserves have remained untouched.

#### Shifts in approach to budget planning

Highline's leadership team has taken recent steps to increase both the accuracy and transparency of annual budget-setting, with the goal of ensuring that Highline College can continue to fulfill its mission within its available resources. Areas of emphasis have included:

- *Forecasting:* Given the enrollment-centric metrics of Washington's new funding formula and the increasing reliance on local tuition and contract revenues to supplement that base, enrollments play an ever-greater role in revenue generation. With enrollments no longer routinely expected to exceed predictions, Executive Cabinet has significantly sharpened its mechanisms for predicting student counts. Administrators in Academic Affairs and Student Services develop evidence-based forecasts for each student type — state-funded tuition-paying, international, Running Start dual enrollment, and K-12 youth-reengagement contracts — which are cross-checked by staff in those areas.
- *Consolidation:* Where past executives generally could retain excess revenues in their divisions, budget planning is now managed more holistically. Administrative Services looks at all funds, regardless of source, so that all revenues are available to meet mission priorities. For new investments, specific budgets are created for each project.
- *Transparency:* Executive Cabinet is also interested in encouraging [wider awareness of budgeting activities](#) and greater participation in those decisions. In part, this interest reflects a belief that, with more people involved, the campus will generate more ideas and energy around revenue-generation, strategic investment, and shared stewardship of Highline's resources.

In some sense, these initiatives are arguably no more than basic good practice. But the new practices are also tied even more closely to mission and core themes, requiring that budget recommendations are contextualized, first, in terms of sustainability and, second, in their impact on core theme attainment. [See sample.](#)

#### Current budget and enrollment challenges

Over the course of this accreditation cycle, not only has leadership at the college changed, but so too have enrollment trends. Like many of our peer institutions in Washington state and nationally, we have begun experiencing enrollment declines. These declines were occurring prior to the pandemic. We know the shift to remote teaching and services, coupled with local school closures and unprecedented rates of unemployment, will have an impact on our enrollment going forward, but it's hard to predict exactly how. Traditionally, high rates of unemployment have led to increased enrollment in the community college system. However, because of the pandemic,

we are still engaged in remote teaching and learning as are many of our area school districts. We aren't sure how these new factors will influence students' ability and desire to attend college.

State Board for Community and Technical College enrollment monitoring reports show these declines over the past two years:

- [State supported FTE enrollments](#): down from 5,575 in 2018-19 to 5,180 in 2019-20
- [Running Start FTE enrollments](#): down from 1,338 in 2018-2019 to 1,259 in 2019-20
- [International FTE enrollments](#): down from 474 in 2018-2019 to 365 in 2019-20

Because of these declines in enrollment, Highline is faced with the challenge of reducing expenditures for the 2020-21 academic year by \$3,209,869. In addition, the college is faced with a likely 15% reduction in our base allocation from the state, which represents an additional reduction of \$4,814,540. Plans for this reduction are due to SBCTC by October 2020, even though the actual reduction will not be finalized until the Washington State Legislature comes back into session in January 2021.

The planned reductions are guided by Highline's [budget planning principles](#), adopted by Executive Cabinet in April 2020, that put mission fulfillment at the forefront. Highline's Budget Advisory Committee subsequently adopted [budget reduction principles](#), approved by Executive Cabinet in August 2020, that similarly foreground Highline's commitment to closing equity gaps and increasing student completions.

#### Response to enrollment challenges

The decline in enrollment has prompted action, particularly in the past two years. For example, when a decrease in the number of students expected to reenroll for fall 2019 was noted, a cross-divisional team began a calling campaign. Over 1300 calls were made; many students expressed appreciation for the contact. Recognizing the need for a more systematic approach to enrollment, in summer 2020, President Mosby tasked a cross-divisional team of deans and directors with drafting a new [strategic enrollment management plan](#) focused on recruitment, onboarding, retention, and completion. Following the student life cycle is requiring more deliberate collaboration across divisions. For example, previously, recruitment for credit programs has been done by Institutional Advancement, as well as by faculty leads for professional-technical and B.A.S. programs. Staff in other programs, including high school completion, did recruitment as well. The draft strategic enrollment management plan presumes a high level of cross divisional collaboration, following the student life cycle model. That same emphasis on cross-divisional collaboration that supports students' progress through the institution is embedded in Highline's new four phase model for advising and also in the college's plan for implementing Guided Pathways.

**5.B.2** *The institution documents and evaluates regularly its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to ensure their adequacy, alignment, and effectiveness. It uses the results of its evaluation to make changes, as necessary, for improvement.*

### Evaluation of planning and assessment practices

At the institution level, Executive Cabinet retains direct ownership over the college's core themes, objectives, metrics, and the evaluation processes that go with them. No other body can alter these institutional touchstones.

On one level, Executive Cabinet relies on the Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC). As an inter-divisional standing committee, the ASC is charged with oversight of the *Mission Fulfillment Report's* annual preparation cycle, initial interpretation of each edition's data, and any recommendations for change. Through this relationship, ASC has established a lengthy track-record of consolidating user suggestions and, where merited, formalizing them as requests to Executive Cabinet. Though the core theme structure has remained stable overall, the ASC's reviews have triggered many refinements, ranging from resetting targets, editing objectives, and substituting data sources to recommending new calculations for mission fulfillment. Evidence of typical example(s) is available [here](#).

At another level, Executive Cabinet has recently formally evaluated its planning and assessment practices using the [NWCCU Rubric 3.A.1-3.A.5](#). Informally, Executive Cabinet members have been doing this for the past two and a half years in their own divisions and as a group, as a natural result of the change in leadership. Each division has taken stock of areas of strengths and challenges and found opportunities to seek input from more constituent in order to expand constituent awareness of and involvement in planning and resource allocation. The ultimate goal of these planning and assessment practices is to increase equity and completion rates, making the most efficient use of scarce resources. This work has been amplified with the onset of COVID-19, with our continued priority being providing high quality learning opportunities and support services for students, resulting in the closure of equity gaps and increases in student degree and certificate completion.

**5.B.3** *The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it uses those findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, core themes, core theme objectives, goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement.*

### Environmental awareness

As a community-serving institution, Highline College is well aware of the external environment's impact not only on the campus's day-to-day functions but also on its future. Though the college's outward-facing conversations are ongoing and widespread, its understanding of beyond-the-campus forces comes largely from three sources:

- **Community engagement:** In keeping with Core Theme 3's community focus, Highline College's faculty and staff are encouraged to connect actively with local nonprofit organizations, government agencies, advocacy groups, and community oversight boards. Through these activities, the college maintains currency with key community changes, including economic-development initiatives, demographic shifts, and land-use planning.

- *Local data:* In addition to interpersonal connections, Highline draws on local data to shape strategic decisions. Common sources include Washington system data, staff analyses of U.S. Census data, and regional studies from organizations like EMSI.
- *State and national networks:* The college is also an active participant in a wide range of higher education communities, including Achieving the Dream, the statewide Guided Pathways initiative, the Accelerated Learning Project (ALP), (de)Composing English 101, and others. Recognizing the value of these collegial networks, Highline has maintained professional-development allocations for individuals and groups to travel in even the most constrained budgets.

The collective application of these external sources can be seen in Highline’s plans. In determining whether to embrace a new initiative, the college generally asks two questions: First, does it benefit the community? Second, will it be sustainable, either through bringing new resources or reducing costs? A number of Highline’s largest-scale and longest-term commitments are products of that dual-criteria evaluation. For example, the Guided Pathways initiative will increase retention not only of students but also of resources now lost to attrition. Much the same could be said of Highline’s expansion of non-academic supports, which have helped offset the socioeconomic inequities in student attainment and, at the same time, have attracted new donors and grants to advance that work.

#### Environmental opportunities

Said differently, Highline College incorporates sustainability into its continuous improvement systems. A careful and ongoing examination of the environment, however, also surfaces occasional opportunities. Appropriately, the campus remains open to new possibilities and, where they strengthen sustainability, pursues them. A couple of examples stand out:

- *Transit expansion:* By 2025, the regional transit authority will open a light rail station and bus hub across Pacific Highway from the campus, bringing significant redevelopment and new commuter populations to within a block of the college entrance. To highlight campus visibility, the college has partnered with both transit and city officials to redesign the street access to campus, incorporating the Campus View building into a College Way entrance boulevard, directly across — and visible — from the station.
- *Off-campus location(s):* Transit improvements, while welcome, cannot fully alleviate metro-Seattle’s traffic woes. As the region becomes more expensive and difficult to commute across, it’s important to distribute educational resources across the suburbs. Highline’s initiatives to expand programming in White Center and Federal Way address those challenges, improving access to the farthest north and south corners of the district.

In both cases, these new ventures will provide access to new student populations, helping to grow and sustain the college’s enrollment base. In both cases, the costs have been borne almost entirely by cooperating cities, special legislative allocations, and agency project set-asides.

### Revisions to mission, core themes, core theme objectives, program goals, and indicators of achievement

While Highline has remained steadfast in its pursuit of mission fulfillment as described by our core themes and core theme objectives, changes in our internal and external environments are likely to precipitate revisions.

Highline's commitment to implementing Guided Pathways reforms is based on its commitment to closing equity gaps, increasing completions, and ensuring that all students graduate with the skills and abilities they need to navigate these unprecedented times. We understand that we need to review our practices across the student life cycle to identify and eliminate barriers that we have (inadvertently) created. We are committed to becoming a student-ready college, rather than expecting students to be ready to navigate our systems. Our review of planning processes has revealed areas where we need to develop. As noted earlier in this chapter, we have begun the process of developing a strategic enrollment plan requiring cross-divisional collaboration and communication. The institutional effectiveness reporting process for departments across the college is another step toward strengthening broad based participation in planning, assessing, and improving programs and services. We need to continue this process, strengthening the use of evidence to inform assessment, planning, and improvement across the campus.

As noted in Chapter 4, building on deep experience assessing the achievement of student learning outcomes at the course level, we have begun a new process for systematically assessing student achievement of learning outcomes at the program/discipline level. Following the lead of NILOA and AAC&U, we have also begun a new process for assessing student achievement of our core competencies, which aligns the assessment of student work done in courses to nationally validated rubrics describing our core competencies. We need to continue, and bring this work to fruition, which supports our goal of ensuring that all our students graduate with knowledge and skills necessary for better jobs, further education, and increased opportunities.

Changes in our external environment will lead to revisions in core theme objectives and indicators of achievement in our next cycle. For example, because the age of our students has fallen significantly over the course of this accreditation, from 31 to 23, we intend to compare the demographics of our degree seeking students with those of our local school districts. As we've begun these conversations, we have identified a significant under-representation of Hispanic/Latinx students on campus. Both [Federal Way Public School](#) and [Highline Public Schools](#) report that over 30% of their students are Hispanic/Latinx. Thus we know that Hispanic/Latinx student access to Highline is an issue we need to address and hold ourselves accountable.

We realize that financial support for our students is an ongoing issue, and Highline has engaged in a number of initiatives aimed at increasing support for our students. Through Achieving the Dream, Highline received a Working Student Success Network (WSSN) grant in 2015, which allowed Highline to expand existing services using the WSSN three pillars: financial assets and finance building, employment and career



advancement, and income and work supports, each including both high- and low-touch services. In 2016, we allocated a new space for this program, moving Workforce Education Services (WES) to co-locate it in a shared space with the Transition Center and the Welcome Back Center (all designed to help students increase their income and join the workforce) and community partners, where students can come to get benefits to help them stay in school. In 2018-19 the Highline College Foundation, Workforce Education Services, Women's Programs, the Transition Center, the professional-technical side of Academic Affairs, Financial Aid, and the Support Center all accessed grant monies and local funding sources for [Emergency Funding](#) for students in their own areas from various grants in different divisions on campus. In 2019, the Support Center created a streamlined process for students to request emergency funds via one online format, no matter which office on campus they visit. In 2020, Highline created a director position for the Student Success Program and with community partners created today's one-stop [Support Center](#). Nonetheless, we aren't tracking information about the number of students applying for FAFSA or WAFSA, or the number of students receiving financial supports in our *MFR*. We plan to do so going forward.

Finally, through our work with Guided Pathways, including discussions with our coach from Achieving the Dream about the Community College Research Center's [brief](#) on the predictive value of early momentum metrics, we realize that we need to include more leading indicators in our *MFR*. While we intend to track completions, we also need measures that help us see whether programs and services are helping close equity gaps. For example, an early exploration of our own early momentum metrics revealed equity gaps in the ratio of credits attempted and credits earned in students' first quarter. This kind of information, if widely known, will help focus our efforts on interventions that can make a difference almost immediately.

Other examples are likely to be added to this list as we engage in a comprehensive planning effort next year. Highline is anything but complacent, isolated, or self-conserving. It does, however, take care to ensure that its efforts improve service to the community, respond to changes in that community, and in doing so, strengthen the college's long-term resilience in meeting its mission.

## CONCLUSION

Highline's *Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report* attempts to illustrate the thoughtful path that leads us to realize our mission. The trustees, executive leaders, faculty, and staff of Highline College feel confident in the institution's ability to fulfill our mission. Through this report we have elucidated our resources and capacity, our institutional planning processes, and our conception of mission fulfillment. For those of us at the college, it gives us a measurable view of the ongoing work we do, the progress we have made, and our goals for the future.

As we complete our seven year evaluation cycle under the 2010 standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, we are also looking forward to our next self-evaluation with our new executive leadership team comfortably in place.

We believe that our core themes are meaningful, measurable, and reflective of our values. They provide guidance and clarity for our mission fulfillment. Derived from strong data sets, our benchmarks are reasonable in light of past achievement but also have aspirational dimensions. The metrics and indicators allow us to measure our achievements and deficits meaningfully.

The college's institution-wide assessment processes are comprehensive and representative, with all four of the college's major divisions participating in planning, monitoring, and reporting on mission fulfillment goals. Equally important, the campus community is comfortable with — and committed to — a continual process of improvement for institutional assessment itself. Further, Highline's progress is encouraging. Its core theme measures are largely meeting established benchmarks, and plans are taking shape for addressing the strategic plan's stretch goals in the coming years. The work presented in this report is emblematic of the campus community — inclusive, community-oriented, data driven, student-centered, and striving for excellence. As a standing committee that reports to Executive Cabinet and the accreditation liaison officer, the Accreditation Steering Committee will remain active to keep the college monitoring and reporting progress toward mission fulfillment.

Going forward, the campus community will become an even more active partner in the processes of planning and executing the activities that drive successful mission fulfillment. We are confident that revisiting our core themes in an inclusive way will allow us to maintain our robust, energetic campus culture as we work together to deliver high-quality educational services equitably to our diverse student body, helping our students reach their completion goals.

The college community looks forward to the feedback from this visit to inform its work toward measuring and achieving mission fulfillment. In preparation for that feedback, the college has completed a set of [self-assessment rubrics](#).

[Appendices](#)