

Southern State Community College - OH

HLC ID 1847

OPEN PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review

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Dr. Kevin S. Boys
President

Stephanie Brzuzy
HLC Liaison

Randall Fletcher
Review Team Chair

Kate Ferrel
Team Member

Brad Kendrex
Team Member

Carol Perry
Team Member

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Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

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

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

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

- Mid-Cycle Review

There are no forms assigned.

The Mid-Cycle Review of Southern State Community College // t a r t a t t e t

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

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

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

Met

Southern State Community College (SSCC) is committed to its mission to provide accessible, affordable, and high quality education to serve the demographic profile

by serving a vast geographic district populated by relatively few residents. Wise recognition of persistent enrollment challenges, institutional financial strain, and escalating construction costs influenced the college's decision to pivot resources away from additional brick and mortar expansion in Adams County and toward that of leveraged partnerships in early college programming at high schools and a career technical center, in addition to greater resource allocation toward building hybrid delivery capacity.

As evidenced in the 2018 Program Vitality process and ancillary documentation, the college recognizes the importance of a fiscally healthy academic portfolio. While the vitality framework includes five measurement areas: 1. Viability – Enrollment, Retention, Graduation Rates, Net Revenue Margin; 2. Academic Quality – Advisory Committee Engagement, Accreditation Status, Program Assessment; 3. Students – Demographic Profile, Student Satisfaction (where available); 4. Faculty – Credentialing, FT/PT Ratio (where relevant); and 5. Market – Labor Market Outlook, the resulting 4-quadrant matrix analysis rests heavily on enrollment and net revenue margins. This approach provides an easily digestible snapshot of program vitality. It is important to note the value of a measurement that also speaks to programming that may be high cost due to accreditor-mandated low student to faculty ratios, yet critical to the health and vitality of a region. Using the vitality framework, in summer 2019, the college began the heavy lift of closing ten technical programs, suspending or retooling nine others, placing four programs on watch, and realigning to fully support six others. In the most recent program vitality review process (2019), no new programs were identified for closure, however, there were some shifts in the watch and support categories.

Despite the strain on resources, the institution recognizes the importance of providing holistic student supports and as such has structurally aligned support services to provide extensive academic and student supports amidst hiring freezes. With few budget lines reflecting an increase, the 2020 Budget acknowledges the support needed to serve a largely financially-aid supported, first-generation student demographic with a 5.9% increase in Student Services and a commitment to holding even on Scholarship funding.

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

this is a wise investment in order to serve all populations. Additionally, the institution was recently awarded a planning grant through Ohio State University to serve students with intellectual disabilities. This transitions strategy acknowledges the need to serve this largely under this

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
 2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
 3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission
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No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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

Despite enrollment n

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

Met

All links and documents provided in argument point to an institutional commitment to open and accessible data and information for both consumers and staff. Notably, this reviewer was struck by the way the withdrawal procedure was written in a clear, big-picture way which balanced the gravity of a withdrawal in terms of enrollment status and financial aid impact while striking a student-centered, compassionate tone.

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

Met

Institutions of higher education, with core principles of freedom of inquiry and expression, and a general charge to equip learners with independent and critical thinking skills play a vital role in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. SSCC formalizes this role and this responsibility in the evidence w r h

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

Southern State Community College carries out its mission by committing itself to high standard of practice and decision making. These standards of effective operation are met and perpetuated through the Board of Trustees Policy Manual. Quality of the institution is accurately assessed and measured in the actions of the elected board members and how delegation occurs from with this governance structure from president to administration.

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

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

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
 2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
 3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual
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coordinate relationships with high school providers. No consortial agreements for academic programs were reported.

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Southern State requires faculty maintain posted office hours and to accommodate student inquiries electronically and before/after class as appropriate. Graduation surveys (2017, 2018) and CCSSE results both suggest student satisfaction with faculty availability.

Southern State maintains its stated commitment to recruiting, hiring, and evaluating employees consistently. Despite budget cuts, the college claims to maintain professional organization affiliations in order to access professional development content and to continue its employee tuition reimbursement program. The college has established a professional development relationship with the University of Dayton's Leadership Institute for access to new programming.

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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

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

Southern State cites academic clubs, honors societies, performing arts clubs, and a small number of varsity sports as co-curricular programming offerings. The college acknowledges that the view of co-curricular programs is evolving as a result of its participation in the HLC Assessment Academy, and expects to embrace a broader definition and offering in the future.

Southern State focuses its advertising on recognizing its diverse mission and seeking to offer students a good value, whatever their intent in coming to the college, deliberately maintaining low tuition rates in order to achieve that end. The college presents a sample of student success stories in an enrollment campaign to illustrate the quality and impact of the rural college for its students. Finally, the college published a 2016 study that outlines the economic contributions to the region, focusing on wages paid and taxes generated.

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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

The quality of the courses and programs are well-documented throughout the Program Review process at SSCC. Data gleaned from these reviews has proven very beneficial in developing a new and quite comprehensive assessment of student learning effort. This transformation in how learning is document and also used to enact curricular change has occurred in earnest since 2015 and efforts of the planning of this student achievement mechanism was evidenced in the 2017 Monitoring report. The college has successfully exited the planning phase of assessment and has entered into the closing the loop phase is such a way that assessment of learning is understood by both faculty and students alike and is nicely embedded in the fabric of the courses and programs of study.

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

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

Met

Clearly stated institutional learning outcomes exist and offer foundation for assessment of student learning at Southern State. The blending of both Ohio's Principles of General Education learning outcomes and the establishment of core learning outcomes from the HLC Assessment Academy is how Southern State arrived at institutional goals for assessment of learning and introduced to the campus community in August of 2019. The measurement of these institutional learning outcomes (Clear and Concise Communication; Critical Thinking; Culture and Context and Professionalism) using value rubrics will begin in fall 2020.

Technical programs at SSCC identify and align student learning outcomes to their program assessment plans that are reviewed on an annual basis by faculty, program coordinators and academic administration to determine achievement and need for curricular change. Master syllabi include course-level learning outcomes and are monitored by the SSCC Curriculum Committee.

Annual assessment reports are generated by academic programs to demonstrate and provide clear and consumable evidence of student learning outcomes for Southern State Community College. From the November 2017 Monitoring Report, the participation rate of academic program in assessment planning has increased over 35% to 66%. Further consistency in reporting of learning outcomes is needed by SSCC in order to attain comprehensive feedback to students, curricular change and aligned reporting with budget planning and overall institutional effectiveness.

SSCC has begun to align co-curricular assessment with its formal assessment of learning achievement process and annual planning activities and since the 2017 Monitoring Report has created a recognizable and accepted definition for co-curricular assessment. Reporting of learning outcomes is contained within the Campus Completion Plan and occurs on a bi-annual basis both to the state of Ohio and to the constituents groups making up SSCC. Moving from an indirect model of assessment, such as using survey data to glean satisfaction measures to support the effectiveness of support areas of instruction and academic affairs, more direct measures are being established within

the student support areas of advising, counseling to determine the impact these services have on learning using many of the same value rubrics employed in the direct instruction areas of the college.

Data collected from the assessment mechanism at SSCC is being used to improve learning within the academic programs and courses of the college. Such data has been used to make changes in programs such as nursing by creating remediation units, test testing sessions to improve end of program achievement rates to written communication outcomes in English courses using a department-wide 4-point grading rubric to objectively measure student achievement across all ENG courses.

Through in-service training and department-level workshops, the faculty have ample and available resources to engage in best practice type of assessment for both program atogran

college, relying instead on experienced leaders in student records and other areas to compile and report data.

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

The college has successfully implemented a new assessment of student learning system that encompasses both courses, programs and co-curricular functions of the academy and the institution. The use of data to impact change in learning and the design of courses and program now serves as the backbone of the entire assessment system. Faculty have a clear understanding of how to not only collect meaningful outcomes data but are now versed in how to use that data to affect change in their classrooms. Embracing state models for general education has also helped to establish institutional level outcomes across all courses which has helped to establish a more consistent approach to assessing general education via a standard value rubric methodology.

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

The institution's resource base supports its cur

and administrators that are hired. Annual evaluations are conducted for non-teaching staff and faculty evaluations are conducted as outlined In Article IX of the SSEA/SSCC Collective Bargaining Agreement.

SSCC currently maintains four campuses. Although approved to open a fifth campus, SSCC reevaluated the financial situation and has put this on hold. The focus on financial health has caused SSCC review how programs can be offered more efficiently and costly which has helped improved its financial situation.

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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

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

The primary artifacts used to determine whether the Southern State Community College (Southern State) Board of Trustees (Board) meets their obligation for oversight are the Chapter 3358: Ohio Revised Code and the Board of Trustees Policy Manual. These two documents lay out the roles and responsibilities of a trustee as well as the level of training required to be a member of the Board of Trustees. Information of regular agenda items including the President's Report and Financial Report were found in the evidence files. Also, samples of annual policy reviews and annual retreats are evidence of the Board meeting its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

As evidenced in the artifacts, Article 15.03 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Southern State Educational Association (SSEA) and Southern State formally outlines faculty participation in governance. Student involvement is solicited through organizations, conversations, surveys and open invitations to Board meetings.

Committees and work teams provide the most influence in establishing policies and processes. Southern State strives to have equal representation of all constituencies in these groups. An example provided was the membership of the Curriculum Committee and Program Review Committee which, although largely faculty, have included the Registrar and Student Services representatives when extended expertise was needed.

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

As a result of declining enrollment, restrictions on tuition adjustments, and state resource reallocations, SSCC's CFI ratio for two years was "in the zone." The Institutional Effectiveness Plan that was developed with financial health as a priority has improved the financial situation of the institution but work needs to continue. The resource allocation that was part of the assurance argument showed that allocations are made in alignment with the college's mission and other state community colleges.

SSCC's budgeting process begins with the input from the direct reports of the Vice Presidents after reviewing program assessment plans and reports. An example of how this is implemented is the recognition of the need for students to have simulated R_a

These achievements will also need to be well documented in the next comprehensive review.

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Despite enrollment decline and financial uncertainty, Southern State Community College has remained true to its mission and its distinguishable educational role and function. Erecting new scaffolds of support and solvency through prudent budgetary practice will allow SSCC to continue to fulfill its mission for the immediate and long term future in the communities that it serves.

Additionally, the college has remained committed to developing creative yet plausible methods and approaches to increase enrollment by offering more online courses, tailoring programs to industry demand and shuttering programs that are no longer relevant to the current demographic and workforce. Continued planning efforts will be needed by Southern State Community College not only in terms of financial forecasting but also in mission and educational offerings to the public it serves. Strategic planning is warranted to identify priorities both internally and externally for the college and its future.

Finally, the college has successfully exited the planning phase of assessment and has entered into the closing the loop phase is such a way that assessment of learning is understood by both faculty and students alike and is nicely embedded in the fabric of the courses and programs of study.

Met

No Sanction

Not Applicable to This Review