

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College
Mount Gay, West Virginia

April 28-30, 2003

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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ASSURANCE SECTION

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ASSURANCE SECTION

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

This is the team report of a comprehensive evaluation visit for continued accreditation at the associate degree granting level. The visit also included a visit by the team chair to Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College (a site) as requested by Commission staff. The visit was conducted on April 24-30, 2003.

B. Institutional Context:

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College is a public, two-year institution located in the southern most region of West Virginia. The District Office of Southern is located on the Logan Campus in Mt. Gay, the Boone/Lincoln Campus is located at Danville, the Williamson Campus at Williamson, and the Wyoming/McDowell Campus is located at Pineville.

The institution serves Boone, Lincoln, McDowell, Mingo, Raleigh and Wyoming Counties in West Virginia and by Interstate Agreement it serves Martin and Pike Counties in Kentucky. In addition, on May 21, 2002, the Higher Learning Commission granted approval to Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College to include Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College as a new site and a new campus pursuant to the Commission Policy 1.C.2.C.

The approval was granted for a temporary period of not less than two years and not more than four years, while Eastern seeks separate and independent accreditation. The Boards of Governors of Southern and Eastern, respectively, as well as the Chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission endorsed the relationship between the two colleges and concurrent with the Commission's approval.

To implement the approved relationship, Southern and Eastern entered into an official memorandum of agreement found in the Addendum to the Southern Self-Study 2003.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit:

This was a comprehensive visit for continued accreditation that also included a visit by the team chair to a site--Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College as requested by Commission staff.

D. Site or Branch Campuses Visited:

All team members visited the Logan Campus. One team member visited the Boone/Lincoln Campus, another team member visited the Williamson

Campus, and another team member visited the Wyoming/McDowell Campus. The team chair visited the site--Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College.

E. Distance Education Reviewed:

State-of-the-art interactive classrooms have been installed at all four campuses of Southern and at numerous other sites in the service area. Further, Southern has downlink capability to receive courses delivered via the statewide satellite network, Sat Net. The Sat Net is the distance education consortium of the 16 state colleges and universities of West Virginia.

Southern also participates in the Higher Education Instructional Television Committee which is a consortium of all higher education institutions and the three public television stations in West Virginia. Currently funded by the state, the purpose of the consortium is to offer college credit telecourses via statewide public television.

Southern utilizes cable television to offer West Virginia HEITV courses, public service programming, locally produced videos, and educational programs. The main television studio broadcasts from the Williamson Campus.

The College also has a new 38 foot mobile unit named the "Mobile Education Evaluation and Training Unit" which provides convenient, state-of-the-art educational and employment instruction opportunities for the people of Southern West Virginia.

F. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:

In the course of conducting the on-site evaluation, the team met with:

1. The President
2. The Vice President
3. The Associate Vice President
4. The Human Resources Director
5. The Information Office Director
6. The Director of Resource Development
7. Classified staff
8. Community representatives
9. Faculty, including many Gen. Ed. faculty
10. Students at large; drop-in meeting
11. Academic Affairs Committee
12. Self-Study Steering Committee Chair
13. Self-Study Steering Committee
14. Board of Governors
15. Assessment Committee
16. Strategic Planning Committee
17. Faculty Senate
18. Faculty open meeting with team

19. Student Government Association and students at large open meeting over instructional television (all locations)
20. Staff Assembly meeting with team
21. Classified Staff Council
22. Round table meeting with Instructional Program Advisory Committees, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, and Division Chairpersons
23. Writing Rubric Committee members and chair
24. Many, many students

It should be noted that the team held open hours where anyone in the institution was welcome to speak to the team. The exit interview was conducted over television at all sites and all college employees were encouraged to attend.

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed:

1. Self-Study Report
2. Addendum to the Self-Study Report
3. Appendices to the Self-Study Report
4. Student Handbook
5. Strategic planning document
6. Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual
7. Audits
8. Faculty Handbook
9. Basic Institutional Data
10. College catalog
11. Minutes of major institutional committees including the Self-Study Committee
12. Reports referenced in the Self-Study or working committees
13. Technology Plan
14. Financial Statements
15. Third Party Comment
16. Marketing and Promotional Literature
17. News Articles
18. Faculty Assignments
19. Title IV Compliance and Recertification
20. Cooperative Agreements
21. Institutional Reports
22. Governance documents
23. Grant documentation
24. Board Governance Manual
25. Institutional Effectiveness Documentation
26. Program for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement and Improvement of Student Learning
27. Community and Technical College Performance Indicators
28. Physical Plant documentation
29. The college's web site
30. Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College and

Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College Partnership Agreement

31. Course syllabi
32. Position descriptions

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensive of the Self-Study Process:

The Self-Study Report was well organized, well written and included both internal and external constituencies in its development. The College tied together the identification and the prioritization of college strengths, challenges and opportunities within specific methodologies for addressing these.

The College utilized important information from the self-study in the furtherance of its operational and strategic goals and documented its progress in addressing these as a part of the continuous implementation of the self-study. Clearly, the institution is integrating the outcomes of the self-study into its ongoing processes of institutional improvement and advancement.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report:

The self-study was clearly written, understandable, and comprehensive in its review of the institution. Conclusions were reached and strengths and challenges identified were well documented based on data. The report was linked to the comprehensive array of documents available to the team in the team workroom and elsewhere in the institution. The report will be valuable to the institution in its continued strategic planning and development efforts and thus have considerable applicability beyond the current accreditation process.

C. Capacity to Address Previously Identified Challenges:

1. Institutional Capacity to Address and Resolve Previously Identified Challenges:

Based upon the institution's response to previously identified challenges, the team confirms the institution's capacity to identify, address and resolve issues.

2. **Inadequately Resolved Challenges:** Assessment discussed later in the document. The many changes in leadership and structures at the institution may have impeded progress in assessment. However, the team feels that the institution now seems ready to move forward to full implementation of its assessment program.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment:

Requirements Fulfilled

Comments: The team reviewed the single comment received. The comment was very complimentary and supportive of the institution.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information.

IV. AFFIRMATION OF THE GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Based on the self-study review and other documentation provided, the team confirms that the institution continues to meet each of the twenty-four General Institutional Requirements.

V. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

A. CRITERION ONE

The institution demonstrates that it has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion

1. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

As clearly presented in the Self-Study, pgs. 66-69, Southern has Vision and Mission statements that are supported by Institutional Commitments (Purpose Statements). These are all consistent and appropriate for an institution of higher education.

The Mission statement was revised by an inclusive process in 1998 and a systematic review of the Mission statement will be included in the Master Plan which has recently been developed by Southern.

All of these statements are appropriately presented in school publications and internal documents.

Team meetings with all constituent groups at all sites demonstrated that each of these groups understand and fully support the Vision and Mission of Southern.

Southern is committed to supporting freedom of inquiry for faculty and students as demonstrated by the adoption of a comprehensive statement of academic freedom. There is also a concurrent commitment to excellence in teaching and to the maintenance of high learning standards by which academic success is measured.

Decision-making processes and divisional and departmental goals are all derived from and are consistent with Southern's Mission and

Purposes. The team found evidence for this in interviews with employee and student groups and by analysis of printed and electronic documents that are available to internal and external constituency groups.

- 2. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention**
None noted.
- 3. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up**
None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

B. CRITERION TWO

The institution demonstrates that it has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion

- 1. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**
 - The College has an acceptable mission statement and faculty and staff are understanding of its design and intent. The Governing Board members affirm their agreement and are committed to fulfilling its purpose.
 - The Logan, Williamson, and Wyoming Campus buildings are in satisfactory condition. Compliance with ADA guidelines is satisfactory and routine maintenance throughout the college is acceptable.
 - Discussions with faculty, classified staff, and administration yield a comprehensive strategic planning process with ample opportunities for input from all college personnel. There is evidence of satisfaction of all staff with budget allocations and most college employees feel there is parity and equity toward all sites.
 - The board, administration, faculty and staff are keenly aware of the economic climate in West Virginia and they are addressing the decline in feeder high school graduation classes. The College has taken these and related factors into the planning process and is maintaining fiscal stability.

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention

- In regard to physical facilities, the Boone Campus is in need of additional facilities as evidence by present and projected enrollment. In addition, even though they are moveable, the tiered structures in several classrooms are not adequate for the intended purposes, nor are they conducive to teaching and learning.
- In general, there appear to be adequate human resources to accomplish the stated mission; however, there is considerable variance in the duties and responsibilities of campus administrators. Campus Managers are classified staff positions and are ranked by pay grade. Campus Managers are essentially facility oversight people with coordination of custodial activities, facility scheduling, and community liaison responsibilities. Campus Directors are non-classified positions (at-will employees who serve at the pleasure of the President) and are not ranked by pay grades. Campus Directors hire adjunct faculty, observe and evaluate part-time faculty in the classroom, and assist with the delivery of student support services. Several discussions with college personnel substantiate a lack of understanding and confusion with this structure.
- While there is substantive strategy in fiscal management, the Team is concerned with the reliance on grant funds as evidenced by the fact that 31 percent of the budget relies on "soft" funds.
- Human resource distribution at Southern is adequate; however, through conversations with students and staff generated a concern that the Williamson and Boone Campuses are under-served by job placement services.
- Southern uses the BANNER software system for data collection, analysis, and decision-making. Discussions with several personnel throughout the college revealed that there is evidence that optimum utilization of the capacity available from BANNER is not in place. The College should take full advantage of the integrative features of the system.

3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of Evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

C.**CRITERION THREE**

The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion**1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

- Changes in leadership and subsequent reorganization of units into academic divisions have created a coherent structure from which curriculum and courses can be delivered. This reorganization has allowed the college to eliminate courses with low enrollment, initiate new programs, and focus resources on viable programs. This major shift in culture was reflected in the Self-Study, Master Plan, and interviews with Academic Deans and faculty.
- The College continues to meet its mission as a comprehensive community college by offering a wide range of courses across four campuses. The Faces of the Future survey and interviews with students and faculty confirm this. Additionally, continuity is maintained because several division chairs and faculty indicated that they regularly travel to Wyoming, Williamson, and Boone campuses to deliver courses and to meet with faculty on these campuses.
- The College is aggressively addressing the challenges of a declining economy, population decline, and low (45%) "college-going" rates with several programs such as Out of School Youth, dual credit offerings, and tech prep. According to the Self-Study, in Fall 2001, the College served 403 students with its 35 dual credit courses. The Tech Prep program won several excellence awards in 2000. The President of the college personally visited a majority of area high schools to introduce Southern to students who typically do not consider college education.
- Southern has organized an appropriate range of courses responsive to community need. In addition, the College plays a significant role in community events such as Harmony Week, plays, and concerts. The Workforce Development Center, in partnership with local, regional and state agencies provides a service to the community in literacy, health education, computer, and job retraining. The computer-equipped mobile

lab, MEET-U, provides ABE/GED training for literacy needs in the community, as well as customized industry training off-site.

Interviews with faculty, administrators, community leaders, and board members verified the documentation in the Self-Study, catalogs, and Workforce Development reports.

- Interviews with the Vice President of Student Services and faculty indicated that reorganization/the creation of an Institutional Research Office has allowed Student Services to more effectively organize services at all campuses. The Vice President of Student Services is aware of challenges and has a planning strategy to continually assess and improve delivery of services at all four campuses, particularly with regard to the student services specialists at remote sites, who must deliver financial aid, registration, and counseling. Other positive moves include mandatory placement and exit testing, which contribute to student success through appropriate course placement. Student focus groups were involved in writing the Student Bill of Rights, demonstrating an effective indirect assessment technique.
- Student surveys and interviews confirmed that students are very satisfied with services and instruction at the College (financial aid, advising, accessibility of teachers, counseling, and library). The Faces of the Future Student Survey in 2001 and 2002 documents, as well as several meetings with students on all four campuses confirm that students are satisfied (89% with quality of instruction; 89% with facilities/equipment, and 71% with availability of courses).
- The Transitional Studies Division has been able to sustain the progress noted in the 2000 Focus Visit of becoming an effective component for developmental courses to support the academic divisions of the college. In 2000, student completion rates for basic courses ranged from 50 to 80 percent, and entrance/exit scores "increased from 56 to 78 percent" (Institutional Data Report and interviews with faculty).

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention

- Course syllabi are the published documents that communicate to students what is expected in a particular course. As such, these need to be user-friendly. Syllabi contain lengthy objectives--frequently 40 to 80 objectives (evidently required by the State for Perkins funding). Some of the faculty stated that they prefer the lengthy list of objectives because these help students know exactly what is covered in the courses, and the

list also contributes to the articulation agreements with four-year universities. Even so, faculty may want to study syllabi at similar institutions to identify a format that is more user-friendly to students. Syllabi should be more consistent in the level of specificity regarding expected student learning outcomes or competencies; in addition, the inclusion of relevant general education goals and assessment strategies particular to each course would increase clarity and student understanding of what the College expects of them and what they can expect in terms of feedback from the faculty.

Coherent General Education Delivery

- The February 1999 Report of a Visit indicates lack of a clear definition between general education and university parallel courses. The institution stated in the Self-Study that it chose "not to change the purposes of GE." For the transfer courses, faculty have identified a list of six goals, which are delivered in a common core of University parallel courses.

In the AAS degree there is not a common core of courses required by either the institution or the state; instead, general education is delivered and measured through competencies. Faculty have identified on matrices where program outcomes and general education outcomes are taught in specific courses. Identifying where a skill is taught does not ensure that the skill is learned, however, so the connection of these outcomes to assessment tools should be established.

Since General Education teachers do not meet as a unit but in their respective divisions, opportunities to collaborate on committees which address delivery and assessment of general education competencies are very important. The work of the Assessment and Writing Rubric Committees has improved the ability of the institution to focus on delivering and measuring general education outcomes. The writing samples project and the creation of common exams in chemistry and mathematics are positive steps, which can be used as models. However, due to the fragmented nature of general education delivery, Administration working with Division Chairs and faculty will need to be diligent about ensuring delivery and assessment of a coherent general education core.

3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up

Assessment

- A number of concerns identified in the 2000 Focus Visit have yet to be completely addressed: 1) reliance on standardized

tests such as CAAP, Workkeys and licensure/certification results; 2) the need for a coherent assessment plan with timeline and connections between outcomes, objectives, goals, and assessment tools, 3) broader implementation across all campuses and involvement of students, 4) unified and coordinated assessment of general education in all programs. (Division faculty have identified program and general education outcomes; however, the connections of these to the assessment tools which measure these outcomes is unclear) and 5) effective use of data to improve student learning with clear, "user-friendly" data reports.

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of Evidence demonstrated: Commission follow-up recommended. Progress Report on assessment of student learning outcomes, May 1, 2006.

D. CRITERION FOUR

The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion

1. Evidence that demonstrates that the criterion is met

- Southern is using its resources efficiently. The chief financial officer effectively manages fiscal resources, in spite of uncertain funding from the State. Grants have been used to fund strategic institutional priorities. The facilities are in excellent condition, providing a friendly environment conducive to teaching and learning. Master planning is resulting in needed additions to existing facilities. Southern administrators, faculty, and classified staff are qualified, and looking to the future. The leadership of the current president has been instrumental in positioning Southern to be a critical resource to the communities of Southern West Virginia.
- The governance structure implemented and adapted since the last comprehensive visit is effective. Presidential leadership is strong; faculty and staff have regular opportunities for input in decision making and planning; the climate is very positive; and open communication enhances the College's ability to respond effectively to present and unforeseen challenges.
- Although Southern has made progress in assessment of student academic achievement since 1997, data can be more clearly tied to planning documents.

- The planning process used by the College is coherent and dynamic. While emerging State requirements often require staff to retrofit their planning to State mandates, Southern's strategic plan has retained its responsiveness to institutionally identified local needs.
 - The College is to be commended for the partnerships that exist and are currently in development. For example, the Boone Campus is co-located in a facility with the area vocational center and the new Lincoln County High School will include space for a Southern Center.
2. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention**
None noted
3. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up**
None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of Evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

E. CRITERION FIVE

The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion

1. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**
- Southern's catalogue, student handbook (which is included in the catalogue), policy manuals, and all reviewed publications are up-to-date, consistent, straightforward and accurate. They effectively communicate the college's mission, purposes and program offerings. They meet the Higher Learning Commission's standards and expectations regarding institutional publications.
 - The institutions website: <http://www.southern.wvnet.edu> is fairly comprehensive, well constructed and readily navigable. One exception is the lack of a link to the Student Handbook.
 - Southern has a large number of partnership agreements and these include appropriate review processes that ensure the integrity of the relationships.

- Hiring practices are appropriate and an affirmative action plan is in place which is overseen by the affirmative action officer. A minority community member spoke highly of Southern's involvement in, and commitment to, minority issues and community education regarding these issues.
 - Fiscal and contractual oversight procedures are in place and are described in the Finance Department Procedures Manual and the Higher Education Purchasing Procedure Manual.
 - Interviews and documentation substantiate that students and employees are well informed of issues and policies that affect them. They are aware that appropriate grievance procedures are in place and feel that they are treated in a manner that demonstrates institutional integrity.
2. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention**
None noted
 3. **Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up**
None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

VI. ACCREDITATION RELATIONSHIP

A. CONTINUED ACCREDITATION

Next Comprehensive Visit: 2012-13

Rationale for Recommendation:

This institution has a clear sense of mission with strong community support and strong partnerships with business and industry as denoted by responsiveness to all stakeholders' needs including students, business and industry, and community.

All constituent groups praised the current environment of cooperation and camaraderie created by the president and her administrative team. The responsiveness of the college to community needs through openness, collaboration, and partnerships with education, health care, and industries such as mining is exemplary.

The flow of communication is effective at all levels and the governing board has a clear understanding of its role in policy and procedures and aggressively supports the college's role in the community which it serves. This is clearly an institution on the move!

B. DEFINERS OF RELATIONSHIP

1. **Degree Level:** RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
2. **Ownership:** RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
3. **Stipulations:** RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
4. **New Degree Sites:** RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
5. **Other:**

C. COMMISSION FOLLOW-UP

Progress Report Required:

By May 1, 2006, a progress report filed on assessment.

A number of concerns identified in the 2000 Focus Visit have yet to be completely addressed: 1) reliance on standardized tests such as CAAP, Workkeys and licensure/certification results; 2) the need for a coherent assessment plan with timeline and connections between outcomes, objectives, goals, and assessment tools; 3) broader implementation across all campuses and involvement of students; 4) unified and coordinated assessment of general education in all programs. (Division faculty have identified program and general education outcomes; however, the connections of these to the assessment tools which measure these outcomes is unclear) and 5) effective use of data to improve student learning with clear, "user-friendly" data reports.

Expectations:

1. Establish connections between the community college indicators, program and general education outcomes, goal statements and objectives in division plans, the syllabi competencies, the matrices, and assessment tools.
2. Write a clear plan with a timetable for assessment activities, including when various tools are to be used and analyzed, then prioritize and select appropriate and manageable samples representative of the entire institution.

3. Coordinate the results of various assessment activities--assessment committee recommendations, writing rubric committee discussions and grading sessions, and faculty data days to ensure that faculty and administrators effectively use the data to make budgetary and planning decisions.
4. Continue to rely on faculty leaders to proclaim the benefits of assessment as part of an ongoing process for ensuring quality learning.
5. As more faculty-designed program data becomes available, demonstrate the use of data to improve student learning.
6. Continue to be vigilant about ensuring coherency of general education curriculum across all programs.

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR OTHER EXPLANATORY INFORMATION

None

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ADVANCEMENT SECTION

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ADVANCEMENT SECTION

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

Southern has focused intensely on responding to recommendations of the Higher Learning Commission during the past 5 years, and has exerted significant energy responding to identified concerns. This commitment and activity has contributed to great improvements across the institution—including dramatic positive changes in institutional culture and values. However, the College now needs to move on. Southern is poised for implementation in assessment, planning, and serving as a critical resource for the development of Southern West Virginia; leaders need to focus their energy now on moving forward.

Since the 1997 NCA team visit, truly dramatic change has occurred. Faculty and classified staff voiced satisfaction at their involvement in institutional governance. An environment in which all staff feel free to voice their opinions, where their input is regularly solicited and used, and in which they feel valued is clearly evident. The College staff at all levels are committed to helping achieve the mission and vision of the college.

At every site, team members observed the commitment of the staff to the College as well as to the particular community served by that site. In a district that is very large with attendance sites remote from each other because of the topography, Southern is doing an excellent job of using technology to ensure communication and access. In addition, relationships with the business and education communities at each site were praised by the various constituencies

During the visit, the team considered all of the College, including all its sites in light of the General Institutional Requirements and the Criteria for Accreditation. The team found an institution working effectively to provide high quality services to the communities of Southern West Virginia. In addition, the team found an institution that has positioned itself well—in terms of leadership and planning—to become an even greater resource.

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College is a public, two-year institution situated in the southern most region of West Virginia. The College traces its roots to 1963 when it began as two branch campuses (Logan and Williamson) under the fiscal, administrative, and academic control of Marshall University. By an act of the state legislature, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College was established as a state-supported, comprehensive community college, effective July 1, 1971.

Along with traditional college offerings in career/technical and transfer associate degree and certificate programs, Southern is increasing services in the areas of non-credit workforce development, customized training, continuing education, and

community interest programming. Through its open-door admissions policy Southern continues to serve its constituents with a variety of quality educational programs and services at reasonable costs.

Since the college's last comprehensive visit in 1997 by an NCA accreditation team, several significant improvements have occurred. Most significant is the positive resolution of the concern expressed by the 1997 team. The concern was that "the relationships between faculty and administration and, to some extent, between staff and administration, are extremely poor and threaten the effectiveness of the institution. Important initiatives are not being adequately addressed while energy is dissipated in pervasive conflict over almost every task or issue."

The most significant single action which brought about the complete positive resolution of this concern and positively impacts the working relationships of the institution was the change in presidential leadership which occurred in 1999. When asked about the change in atmosphere within the College, the most common answer given by faculty, staff, administrators, board members and community members was the naming of the new president.

The degree of cooperation and trust between the administration, faculty, staff, and board has significantly improved. This is an institution which "has it all together" and is "on the move."

The institution now enjoys a strong and positive reputation. The visiting team was impressed by the strength of the college's Board of Governors, community member testimonials in support of the College, representatives of advisory committees clearly demonstrating the ongoing dialogue with college faculty and staff, and the positive feedback of students and the many other constituents of the institution.

The College has truly benefited by a new presidential style of leadership which has fostered a much more participative environment. This leadership is totally supported by a committed and visionary Board that recognizes their governance role!

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

Consistency of Academic Standards and Campus Management

As a result of meetings and several discussions with faculty and staff the team identified an inconsistent organizational structure among the four campuses at Southern. The Logan and Williamson Campuses are managed by Campus Managers while the Boone and Wyoming Campuses are administered by Campus Directors.

A thorough review of the descriptions for each position resulted in identifying a significant difference in responsibilities as they relate to academics, student services, and facilities oversight.

The Campus Managers are relegated to community involvement and physical plant which includes fund raising, room coordination, security, grounds, and receivables. These staff have no involvement with academics, student services or auxiliary services. Some of those interviewed indicated the reason for this structure was the fact that the assignment of division chairs to the Logan and Williamson Campuses eliminated any need for supervision of Academic and Student Services by the Campus Manager. Others interviewed were unsure as to the difference in responsibilities and span of control. Yet other interviewees suggested that confusion and inconsistency resulted from the lack of similarities in responsibilities and authority.

The Campus Directors, again, according to the job descriptions, are responsible for all campus operations including facilities, fiscal affairs, bookstore services, and are to work closely with Vice-Presidents/Deans of Academic Programs for delivery of instruction and student advising. Additionally, the Campus Directors selects and evaluates adjunct faculty, coordinate with other offices the hiring and scheduling of adjunct faculty, resolves student complaints and assists academic vice president with supervision of full time faculty assigned to each campus. Lastly, the Campus Director provides and assists with delivery of student services, recruiting, continuing education, and employee training and development. The Campus Director also serves on the Academic Affairs Council, which keeps them in regular communication with the academic leadership.

There are two (2) pay grades difference in these positions. The Managers are required to have a Bachelors Degree while the Directors must have a Masters Degree in business, education, public administration, or related field. Both positions report to the Vice-President for Finance.

The visiting team concluded Southern should closely evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of its multi-site management structure. A system whereby responsibilities, authority, and backgrounds are consistent would ensure an understanding of the purpose and comprehensiveness of these positions, as well as ensuring equity in oversight of academic affairs on all campuses by fully qualified academic administrators.

Workforce Development

While a number of community members praised Southern's services to local business and industry, team members are concerned with the lack of comprehensiveness of services throughout the entire seven counties. In addition, the team found little substantive information and data identifying the productivity of the Workforce Development Division.

One team member discovered that some community members were unaware the Small Business Development Center was available to serve their area.

The team concluded that the Workforce Development Division is somewhat narrow in its approach as to whom and when they should be of service. Seemingly the

Logan area is the greater benefactor of Workforce Development efforts as evidenced by the location of the SBDC, and offices of workforce partners in a vacated department store in downtown Logan. In addition, the College is considering relocating, the entire Workforce Development Division relocating to this facility, which could be disruptive to effective communications throughout the College.

The team suggests that Southern conduct an in-depth assessment of all activities of the Workforce Development Division and develop a systematic strategy that encompasses the entire service area to include definitive procedures that enhances and assures attention to all segments of the population for training and skills development.

BANNER: Utilization and Capacity

Southern West Virginia is commended on its plan to use the BANNER Software System to support and enhance the functions of the Finance Department. Online purchasing and transfer of funds will increase efficiency and decrease the time for the approval process to take place. The team notes that the BANNER Software System is not being used to an optimum capacity. The implementation of shadow programs ("hundreds" was the term used by one administrator) could result in conflicting data for decision making and the dissemination of inaccurate information, consequently, impeding progress as the institution strives for enrollment growth and fiscal stability.

As a component of consultative assistance, the team advises the following:

- A full assessment of college needs for data and information be conducted immediately
- A comprehensive list, by department, be developed ensuring data requested is relevant and valuable for planning and budgeting.
- Employee training be implemented throughout the institution to foster an understanding of the capability and capacity of the BANNER Software System, and how to optimize its integrative features.

General Education: Coherent Core Across the Curricula

The February 1999 Focus Visit report indicates the lack of clear definition between general education and University Parallel courses. The team likewise found difficulty in discerning coherence with the general education component. The institution has elected to "not change the purposes of general education" (as stated in the Self-Study). Instead, a list of competencies delivered in a core of University Parallel courses has been established. For example, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Math Divisions have identified six goals for general education. As a result of several meetings and discussion, faculty somewhat subscribe to this process as evidenced by the matrices used in the AAS; however, there is confusion in the assessment process, the teaching and the outcomes.

The team urges all faculty and academic administration to be diligent in their quest to ensure clarity, consistency, and relevancy in the delivery of general education across the curricula. A possible strategy might include clarification of general education, the purposes and importance of these courses, and how the effective integration of general education across the curricula will strengthen learning outcomes.

Assessment

As noted in the 2000 Focus Visit Report, the creation of an office and position of Associate VP of Institutional Assessment and Planning supported by an administrative assistant is an important move. In addition, an Assessment Committee, which regularly meets to discuss strategies, and a Writing Rubric Committee bode well for sustaining assessment efforts. Led by the Writing Rubric Committee, several faculty are taking responsibility for checking student writing in their programs. Importantly, the structures and the "will" to use results to improve learning and teaching are in place and are increasingly developing across the college.

To achieve full implementation of a coherent assessment program, Southern must address these challenges/concerns:

Coherent Plan Showing Connections Between Goals and Assessment Tools

An effective assessment program has clear connections between various elements. Faculty need to define connections between several separate elements--community college indicators, program goals and outcomes, program matrices, and the assessment tools --and incorporate these into a coherent program connected to budget and planning. The College Web site publishes a Community College Indicators statement from AAHE. Some of the indicators such as the licensure pass rates match indicators the College has; others listed (such as student goal attainment and demonstration of leadership skills) do not yet have measures and data. Also, the division matrices state which courses address particular program and GE outcomes, but the connection between these matrices and the tools for measuring them are unclear. A published plan, guidebook, and templates for data analysis might be effective tools for helping faculty use their assessment data.

Reliance on Standardized Measures

Southern uses a variety of measures, primarily CAAP, WorkKeys, licensure/certification results, and a writing project sampled across the curriculum to measure student learning. As the November 2000 Report of a Focused Visit pointed out, "most of the assessment tools used by the College indicate a preference for standardized tests." While progress has been made, more balance between standardized instruments and faculty-designed measures should be sought. The Associate VP of Institutional Assessment has a good understanding of assessment and indicated that he hopes to encourage more faculty-designed assessment projects (which were identified in plans). The College may also want to investigate the appropriateness of using entry-level industry tests to prove associate

of applied science degree level mastery of skills.

Several potentially effective strategies are being tried across campus. As is common in many colleges, the Allied Health Division has been regularly collecting and using the results of their licensures to make changes (Radiology, for instance added a math course after analyzing licensure scores). The Natural Sciences and Math Division has implemented a common chemistry exam and common math final, which should improve consistency among full and part-time instructors, as well as check the outcome goals of "math and scientific inquiry skills" in general education. Other divisions such as Business and Public Administration and Technology and Engineering have excellent ideas for projects (internship results, program exams, pre and post-tests, etc.) but have yet to implement these.

Assessment and Writing Rubric Committee leaders can be resources to help to strengthen assessment practices across all campuses and produce full implementation of an assessment program focused on improving learning. The report of institutional practices, Student Learning: A Central Focus for Institutions of Higher Education, published by Alverno College Institute is an additional resource.

Writing Rubric Can Be Effective Practice With Adjustments

The College is to be commended for experimenting with writing across the curriculum. The chair of the Writing Rubric Committee has been trained in rubrics at the state level and brings an expertise to the process. Committee members have been trained on the use of the rubric. However, some aspects of the writing samples project may need adjusting. For instance, the Writing Rubric Committee collects composition research projects for all part-time faculty. Using results to evaluate instructional performance can discourage faculty from using assessment strategies. A more productive approach would be to include in evaluation of all faculty, the degree to which they use multiple measures of assessment and how effectively these enhance student learning. Other evaluation tools for identifying weak part-time faculty would be more appropriate.

Additionally, the Writing Rubric Committee collects a range of papers voluntarily submitted by faculty across several disciplines. Samples range from essay questions to full-scale research papers. Standardizing the types of samples and ensuring that representative samples are collected from all divisions might produce more meaningful and valid results. Although faculty rating the projects did not feel the task was overwhelming, the committee may want to look at practices in other colleges. Similar assessment programs at other colleges may be models: Johnson County Community College in Kansas City, Kansas and Truman State in Missouri are two institutions where faculty groups score writing samples. Lansing Community College in Lansing, Michigan also conducts a full-scale portfolio project in its Liberal Studies Division.

Broader Implementation Across All Programs and Campuses

While the college has made progress in implementing an assessment program, the many changes in administration and structures may be contributing to the challenge

of moving forward. Discussions with the College president, Associate VP of Institutional Assessment, faculty, the Assessment Committee, and Writing Rubric Committee indicate that faculty members who serve on key committees seem to understand the role of program assessment. However, not all of this activity has completely “filtered down” to faculty in all divisions, and not all are effectively using data to make changes. Interviews with faculty on the three “distant” sites revealed an uneven level of knowledge and use of assessment tools for improving student learning. Additionally, although NCHEMS consultants praised the college for their data days, most faculty interviewed did not know what data days were. Those in the large group meeting were aware of Data days and thought that it is useful. It was clear to the team members that they did not really know how to use the data presented to make program and curriculum changes.

Interviews with several student groups indicate that the notion of assessment has not filtered down to students. Students do not know what assessment is, and a few do not understand the purpose of WorkKeys and why these tests are “so easy.” The College might consider involving students in the Assessment Committee, creating an assessment day, and examining some ways to have students conduct self-assessments such as the reflective letter, which is used in portfolios and student projects.

Demonstrate Use of Institutional Data Analysis to Improve Learning

The idea of a designated “data day” is an excellent method of coordinating data analysis. However, since many faculty indicated confusion about the days, a review of professional development assessment activities might help. In addition, the forms/templates and charts for reporting the data are difficult to read and interpret. And some are even misleading or show discrepancies (For instance, the charts in the Institutional Effectiveness Report show 100 percent licensure pass rates for four years of an Allied Health program, while the Assessment Program reports show 89, 100, 100, and 82 percent pass rates). Standardizing and coordinating the reporting should improve clarity and usefulness.

Assessment in General Education

For university parallel courses, the writing, math, and critical thinking sections of CAAP, as well as samples of student papers/writing with a locally-developed rubric measure some of the general education outcomes for student learning. However, it is unclear how the stated goals of “informational access/literacy and cultural, artistic and global perspective” are being measured. In the AAS programs, WorkKeys appear to be the primary measure of student competence. The connections between WorkKeys outcomes and the general education outcomes on the matrices are unclear (WorkKeys measure math and reading, which represent only two of the general education outcomes on the matrices).

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

Southern’s responsiveness to its community is exemplary. The College sponsors and/or partners with several agencies and community groups to offer an Out-of-

School Youth program; a Tech Prep program (which has received several excellence awards); programs in cooperation with the State such as Rapid Response Work4WV; "early intervention assistance to dislocated workers; " and apprenticeships in childcare development specialist and fire fighter apprentice. Southern also sponsors an Americorps outreach program, AppelREAD, which serves at-risk children and families in six Southern West Virginia counties. The program helps children "gain literacy skills they need to succeed in life." Since 1997, 18 Americorps coaches were placed in four counties, and 556 children have been served. Community leaders, Advisory member groups, and the Board all echoed support for this strong relationship.

ADDENDUM

EASTERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE:

A Site of

SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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I. The Eastern Site and Partnership

A. Overview

On May 21, 2002, the Higher Learning Commission (Commission) granted approval to Southern West Virginia community and Technical College (Southern) to include Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College (Eastern) as a new site and a new campus pursuant to the Commission's Policy I.C.2.c. The approval was granted for a temporary period of not less than two years and not more than four years, while Eastern seeks separate and independent accreditation. The Boards of Governors of Southern and Eastern respectively, as well as the Chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC), endorsed the relationship between the two colleges and concurred with the Commission's approval.

To implement the approved relationship, Southern and Eastern entered into an official memorandum of agreement. Signed by the presidents and the Board chairmen of both institutions, as well as the Chancellor, the multi-year agreement was made effective June 24, 2002. Subsequently, the Colleges executed a contract for services in fiscal year 2003, detailing the services and payment to be provided under the agreement.

In the Fall Semester 2002, a total of 355 headcount students, equating to 164.3 full-time enrollment (FTE), were reported to the HEPC as being enrolled in credit courses. These students were reported by Southern, for state reporting purposes, as students enrolled through Southern at the Eastern site. For historical purposes, these students will be tracked as students of Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College. Southern provided oversight, support, assistance, and training for Eastern personnel in curriculum, student records and registration, financial aid, library services, bookstore, and technology. Eastern paid Southern 50 percent of the contracted assessment for the first half of the fiscal year.

B. Eastern: The College

Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College was created by legislative enactment on March 21, 1999. According to statute, the College was chartered as a co-educational, public, state-supported, comprehensive community and technical college, operating under the aegis of the HEPC. The statutory district for which the College is responsible encompasses Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton, and Tucker Counties.

A board of governors was appointed to oversee the College's development and to employ a president. Dr. Linda S. Dunn was appointed as Eastern's first full-time chief administrative officer, effective January 3, 2000. In March 2000, the Eastern Board ratified the statutory mandate for a critical two-fold

emphasis on workforce education to meet the needs of employers and access to increase the college participation rate of all residents of the District, especially the historically underserved populations. Concurrently, the Board authorized the College to seek independent accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

In accordance with the statutory charter, the College has authority to grant associate degrees and certificates of proficiency. The College also is empowered by statute to initiate and sustain academic programs. Three degrees are registered on the HEPC state inventory of programs: the associate in arts, the associate in science, and the associate in applied science.

The Eastern Board adopted a mission statement for the College, which was subsequently approved by HEPC. The curriculum is organized in five areas: workforce education; career-technical education; developmental education; community and continuing education; and baccalaureate transfer education. According to the enacting legislation, the College was chartered to deliver instruction and services with innovation and to serve as a delivery platform for brokering into the District instruction of all degree levels and purposes.

In order to serve its sprawling 3200 square mile District, the College, in partnership with the six-county school systems, has established and operates a distance learning network. Eight electronic classrooms equipped to deliver both interactive video and Internet based courses are deployed across the District. These classrooms are in addition to two located in the College's main facility, which is headquartered in Moorefield (five-hours from Logan, West Virginia).

Separate compacts and master plans were approved for Eastern by the HEPC in fiscal years 2001, 2002 and 2003. Extensive partnerships for curriculum development were authorized with K-12 schools and other educational providers across the State. Agreements to broker or deliver courses electronically were approved with providers in West Virginia, Virginia and Kentucky.

With an annual operating budget of just over \$2 Million, Eastern initiated services to its District in Academic Year 2001-2002. During this first year, the College served 1,558 individual citizens or 2.75% of the District's population. Most residents (1212) were enrolled in non-credit activities, principally workforce training; 346 individuals enrolled in credit courses on annual basis. External audits for fiscal year 2001 and 2002 both resulted in unqualified opinions with no material comments.

C. Eastern: The Site

Eastern's creation as a free-standing or separate community and technical college provided no linkage to any other public institution and therefore, no linkage to or history of regional accreditation. Subsequently, the State's higher education governing board for the community colleges and regional baccalaureate colleges (the State College System Board of Directors 1999) determined that Eastern should enter into an affiliation or relationship with an accredited institution until it qualified for separate, independent accreditation.

In June 1999, the Board of Directors initiated an official partner/sponsor relationship between Eastern and West Virginia Northern Community College (Northern) to ensure that students enrolled at or through Eastern would be: (1) enrolled in courses and programs that were transferable to other institutions; and (2) eligible to receive federal and state financial aid. Thus, the Northern partnership was taken at the request and direction of the state governing board as a matter of public policy which was directed at the best interests of students.

In November 2001, Northern determined that it would be unable to continue the partner/sponsor relationship beyond fiscal year 2002. With the support of the Chancellor and the new state coordinating board (HEPC), Southern was asked in March 2002, to serve as the official partner/sponsor of Eastern while Eastern continued to seek affiliation and accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission. Subsequently, Southern requested that the Commission approve an extension of its accreditation to Eastern as a new site and a new campus for a temporary period not to exceed four years.

In an April 19, 2002, letter of request to the Commission, Southern stipulated that Eastern would be a "new site that houses a full range of instruction as well as administrative and support services" as required in Commission Policy I.C.2.c. However, it was pointed out by Southern that:

"Eastern is by statute a separate institution from Southern and 'functions independent of operational control' of Southern. Through legislation, Eastern has been authorized to seek independent accreditation and is in the process of completing the Preliminary Information Form. As an approved campus of Southern, Eastern, under the Commission's Policy I.C.4, would continue to be included in the accreditation of Southern until it achieves separate accreditation."

Southern further advised the Commission that "Southern would base its accredited programs and courses at Eastern in an approved partnership, enrolling students and accounting for them as registered with a campus pursuing separate accreditation."

D. The Partnership

On May 21, 2002, Dr. Karen Kietzman, Commission Associate Director, notified Southern of the Commission's approval to extend accreditation to the Eastern site. The approval was granted for a temporary period of not less than two years and not more than four years. It was predicated upon Eastern seeking separate and independent accreditation during the same period.

On June 24, 2002, the presidents and the Board Chairmen of Southern and Eastern signed a memorandum of agreement to implement the relationship approved by the Commission. The Chancellor also signed the multi-year agreement, pledging support to the two colleges. Subsequently, the Colleges executed a contract for services in fiscal year 2003, detailing the specific services to be provided and the amounts to be paid.

Under the terms of the contract and agreement, 355 students were enrolled in Southern courses and programs at the Eastern site. Southern provided oversight, support, assistance and training for Eastern personnel in curriculum, student records and registration, financial aid, library services, bookstore and technology. Students were reported separately to the HEPC as students enrolled at the Eastern site.

II. Institutional Mission

On June 24, 2002, the presidents and the chairmen of the boards of governors of Southern and Eastern entered into a memorandum of agreement implementing the Higher Learning Commission's authorization to recognize Eastern as a site of Southern. **Both boards and administrations recognized the degree programs to be offered at Eastern as being relevant to Southern's mission and purposes.** Under the approved memorandum of agreement and contract, the programs based at Eastern are limited to those already approved in the Southern catalog for 2002-2003. In addition, the Individualized Career Studies program as listed on the HEPC degree inventory for Eastern was adopted by Southern for inclusion in the Eastern "campus" catalog.

III. Authorization

Under the Memorandum of Agreement, **Eastern was approved by Board of Governors of Southern as a location for the delivery of degree programs.** In addition, the Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission signed the agreement extending the state authorization for Southern to base programs and courses at Eastern. Further, the President of Southern officially supported the agreement.

IV. Instructional Program/Assessment of Student Learning

As outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement and the Contract for Services, the **assessment program operative at Southern is required of all programs and services implemented at Eastern.** The same learning outcomes for programs are stated in the Eastern campus catalog. Faculty at the Eastern site utilizes the same learning outcomes for courses, assessment processes, and syllabi.

V. Resources

The headquarters facility at the Eastern site consists of 18,000 square feet of space in a building constructed in 2001 and eight distance learning classrooms newly equipped in 2001- 2003. **Eastern assures the continuing use of adequate physical facilities and learning resources for academic programs at Eastern, including classrooms, office space, and access to needed computer facilities.**

Eastern shares library databases and services under contract with Southern. Laboratory space for programs at Eastern is developed with other local partners such as the vocational centers. As an example, Eastern has equipped two labs for industrial maintenance classes at the local technical centers.

VI. Admissions and Records

Currently official transcripts and records of student enrollment at Eastern are maintained in the student information system located at Southern. Similarly the financial aid records for Eastern students are in the same system with Southern officials. **Students have access to their records through interaction with staff at Eastern.** Because Eastern is seeking independent accreditation, Southern is assisting in maintaining the integrity of the Eastern cohort records for transition at the time of independent accreditation.

VII. Students

Students enrolled at Eastern have access to academic advising and other essential student services from the full-time academic and learner support services professionals based at Eastern. Those professionals include a counselor, assessment of prior learning manager, director of financial aid, academic program director for general education, academic program director for instructional partnerships, academic program director for career and technical education, dean for learner support services, and dean for academic services. In additions, tutors and mentor faculty are employed to directly assist students with special services.

VIII. Control and Administration

Under the terms of the contract between Eastern and Southern, individuals at the respective colleges have been **assigned accountability for the implementation and attainment of the establishment outcomes of the partnership.** Together these inter-institutional teams have developed processes and procedures that fulfill Southern requirements and make sufficient adaptations in recognition of Eastern's

mandate to achieve independent accreditation. In addition, the faculty and staff at Eastern are responsible for the educational quality of their respective roles in instruction and academic programs offered at Eastern. They are held accountable by the Dean of Academic Services at Eastern who coordinates and reports results to the Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Southern.

WORKSHEET FOR STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION: SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
P.O. Box 2900; Dempsey Branch Rd.
Mount Gay, WV 25637-2900

TYPE OF REVIEW: Continued Accreditation

DATE OF THIS REVIEW: April 28, 2003 — April 30, 2003

COMMISSION ACTION:

STATUS: *Accredited (1971- .)*

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

HIGHEST DEGREE
AWARDED:

Associate's.

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

MOST RECENT
ACTION:

May 21, 2002.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

STIPULATIONS ON

AFFILIATION STATUS: *None.*

Institution *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

NEW DEGREE
SITES:*Prior Commission approval required.*Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDINGTeam *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

PROGRESS REPORTS
REQUIRED:*None.*Team *Recommended Wording:* 5/1/06; A report on assessment.

MONITORING REPORTS
REQUIRED:*None.*Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

CONTINGENCY REPORTS
REQUIRED:*None.*Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

OTHER VISITS
REQUIRED:*None.*Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

LAST COMPREHENSIVE
EVALUATION:

1996-97.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

NEXT COMPREHENSIVE
EVALUATION:

2002-03.

Team *Recommended Wording:* 2012-13.