

# Rock Valley College

## 2024 HLC Assurance Argument

### Executive Summary

### Criterion 1

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

### Summary

The College's mission statement, "Rock Valley College empowers students and community through lifelong learning," encompasses the broad educational opportunities outlined by the State's mission for community colleges. Through the supporting evidence provided, the College has demonstrated that its mission is clearly and publicly articulated and that it guides the institution's operations. The statements below summarize the College's strengths, challenges, and actions as a result of the comprehensive review with respect to Criterion 1.

### Strengths

1. The College continues to have a well-published, clearly defined mission document that is consistent with the mission for community colleges as defined by the State.
2. The College mission document is operationalized and supported by additional public documents including, but not limited to the College Catalog; Student, Faculty, and Employee Handbooks; and strategic planning documents.
3. Credit and non-credit learning opportunities, as well as student support services, address and support the College's mission.

### Challenges

1. While the mission was reviewed and revised through a Mission Review Committee in 2015 and the Board approved such revision in 2016, the College lacked a formal procedure for the regular review and affirmation of its mission.
2. The College has procedures and potential to develop a more diverse workforce. While recent data indicates that hiring and retention practices have increased the diversity of faculty and staff to better represent the community served, the College continues to seek additional improvement upon existing hiring and retention practices to realize additional representation of the community served.

3. While the College continues to offer learning opportunities addressing diverse learning needs, the scope of the mission of a community college in concomitance with the educational and training needs of the community challenge the resources of the College.

### **Actions as a result of the comprehensive review**

- The College developed a process for review and affirmation of the mission.

## **Criterion 2**

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

### **Summary**

Through the evidence provided, RVC has demonstrated that it is an institution that acts with integrity and that its conduct is ethical and responsible. The statements below summarize the College's strengths, challenges, and actions as a result of its comprehensive review of Criterion 2.

### **Strengths**

1. Rock Valley College does a good job of promoting academic integrity. While there is work to be done, the college has responded admirably to the large increase in online classes and challenges posed by artificial intelligence by purchasing software to help protect academic integrity.
2. The College continues to provide strong oversight to guarantee ethical conduct of research via our Institutional Research Office.
3. The College has demonstrated a commitment to greater transparency by supporting an overhaul of both the college's webpage and the intranet used by employees.

### **Challenges**

1. While the college has worked to make various policies and procedures more transparent, it is sometimes difficult to find the information and it can be challenging to tell which policy is the most current.
2. While tuition and fees are listed on the website, it can be difficult to determine the actual cost of a class because fees can vary.
3. While leadership is working on improvements to communication and transparency in decision making, there is still work to do.

### **Actions as a result of this comprehensive review**

- Work to standardize procedures and find a way to centralize them in the Intranet. This is in progress.
- Develop a cost calculator that will allow students and others to determine the exact cost of a class before registering for it.

## Criterion 3

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

### Summary

Through the evidence provided, RVC has demonstrated that it is an institution that provides quality education across all locations and methods of delivery. The statements below summarize the College's strengths, challenges, and actions as a result of its comprehensive review of Criterion 3.

### Strengths

1. The College has increased professional development opportunities, including the development of the CITI group, the additional professional development fund, DEI badges, UDL cohorts, and online course training.
2. The College has embraced Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as part of the student learning process. This includes the creation of the DEI department, offering numerous co-curricular events and student clubs aimed at student inclusion, and an equity-centered approach to assessment. Additionally, the College has increased student learning support.
3. The College offers a variety of programs to meet the diverse needs of the community including workforce needs from local employers. The genesis of the ATC and its program offerings have helped meet employers' workforce needs. The vehicles of short-term training offerings, online and hybrid learning have helped us serve our community members optimally. We have also developed co-requisites in Math and English and transitional English courses in district high schools
4. STU 100 - Planning for Success emphasizes student engagement; personal and academic success strategies; strong connections among students, faculty, and staff; and academic advising with enhanced degree mapping activities.

### Challenges

1. While measures are currently being taken to improve this process, the college struggles to identify the optimal way to communicate across departments and to students.
2. Faculty demographics do not match the student population. The College is aware of this and is making efforts to address it. They are exploring a Diverse Faculty Fellows Program.
3. While the College has streamlined the process to review dual credit syllabi and instructor qualifications, there needs to be improvement in dual-credit oversight and inclusion into assessment efforts. Dual Credit Ad Hoc Committee was formed to help ensure there is a collaboration between faculty and management to get all the essential work done for dual credit including assessment efforts. Classroom Observations have been completed for almost all dual credit instructors---something that has never been done before.

## **Actions as a result of this comprehensive review**

- Institutional Student Learning Outcomes were reviewed and revised.
- Disaggregation of data is becoming more prevalent.
- Transitioned to Case Management Model in Advising.
- Steps are being taken to diversify employees.
- Assessment committees continue to work toward a more pervasive culture of assessment.
- Dual Credit Ad Hoc Committee was formed to work alongside administration to get all the essentials completed for Dual Credit/Early College.

## **Criterion 4**

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.

### **Summary**

Through the evidence provided, RVC has demonstrated its responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services. The evidence also indicates that the College has in place and promotes continuous improvement processes that evaluate its effectiveness for teaching, support, and student learning. The statements below summarize the College's strengths, challenges, and actions as a result of its comprehensive review of Criterion 4.

### **Strengths**

1. The College has woven the practice of analyzing disaggregated data with the process of program review.
2. The Academic Plan includes evaluating the effectiveness of programs and courses. This is through the process of course and program evaluation.
3. Processes have been established to evaluate the effectiveness of dual credit/dual enrollment.
4. The College has well-defined processes and timelines for course and program/discipline student learning outcomes assessment.
5. The College recently redesigned its institutional student learning outcomes.

### **Challenges**

1. While faculty and staff participation in assessment has improved, more engagement is needed to ensure student outcomes are met.
2. More disaggregated data is needed to analyze intersectionality.
3. More understanding is needed of the importance of aligning all levels of assessment, including course, program and institutional.
4. Equity gaps exist for measures of student success (i.e., persistence, retention, and graduation rates).

## **Actions as a result of this comprehensive review**

- Develop a process to ensure annual analysis of course completion data. The College is implementing the Caring Campus initiative, which will bring more attention to this data.
- The College is implementing the Black Male Completion Initiative to address retention and completion gaps.
- Increase advising outreach to all Black/African American and Hispanic students.

## **Criterion 5**

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

### **Summary**

Through the evidence provided, RVC has demonstrated that its 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 college engages in strategic planning that guides, as well as supports, budgetary and financial decisions that address the mission. The statements below summarize the College's strengths, challenges, and actions as a result of its comprehensive review of Criterion 5.

### **Strengths**

1. The annual State of the College report, financial projections, key performance indicator reports, and strategic plan scorecard metrics provide data that enable leaders to make informed decisions.
2. There are several joint committees between faculty and administration that work together to set academic requirements (e.g., Curriculum Committee, Academic Council, and Contract Review Committee).
3. The Facilities Master Plan includes spaces that will support current and future academic programs.
4. Budget managers can monitor their budgets in real time with Self Service.

### **Challenges**

1. The College lacked a centralized location for standard operating procedures and processes.
2. The college lacked a strong data governance structure.
3. Post-covid retirements left vacancies, some of which have been difficult to fill.

4. Covid distracted resources away from strategic priorities.
5. Siloed planning sometimes results in duplication of efforts that impact budget, time, and efficiency.

### **Action as a result of this comprehensive review**

- The College created a centralized location and standardized process for documenting standard operating procedures.
- The College engaged with Ellucian for a data governance consultation resulting in several recommendations for improvement. The College has begun to implement these recommendations.
- Implementation of Informer 5 has resulted in the creation of datasets.
- RVC recently implemented several salary increases based on a comprehensive market compensation study conducted by a third-party consultant.