Green River Community College

Auburn, Washington

Year Seven Peer Evaluation

April 22-24, 2013

A confidential peer-evaluation report prepared for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Table of Contents

Evaluators 3

Introduction and Recent Accreditation History 4

Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report and Eligibility Requirements 5

Standard One—Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations 7

Standard Two—Resources and Capacity

Standard 2.A Governance 9
Standard 2.B Human Resources 11
Standard 2.C Education Resources 13
Standard 2.D Student Support Resources 18
Standard 2.E Library and Information Resources 22
Standard 2.F Financial Resources 24
Standard 2.G Physical and Technological Infrastructure 26

Standard Three—Institutional Planning

Standard 3.A Institutional Planning 28

Standard Four—Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement

Core Theme 1: College Transfer Education 32
Core Theme 2: Career and Technical Education 33
Core Theme 3: College Readiness Education 34
Core Theme 4: Continuing and Community Education 36

Standard Five—Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, Sustainability 38

Report on Credit Hour Policy 39

Commendations and Recommendations 41

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Introduction and Recent Accreditation History

Green River Community College is a two-year public college located between Seattle and Tacoma in Auburn, Washington. In 1963 the State Board of Education approved the establishment of Green River Community College. Since 1965, the College has been located on a 250-acre wooded hilltop campus. The College added a branch campus in downtown Kent (1986) and another one in Enumclaw (1996). In 2011-2012, the College served approximately 19,700 students, representing over 9,200 annualized full-time equivalent (FTE) students. Currently, over 34 percent of the student body is of color, and the two largest minority groups are Asian at 15 percent and Hispanic at 8 percent.

Recent accreditation history for GRCC:

2007 Focused visit, accreditation reaffirmed

2008 Regular interim report, accreditation reaffirmed based upon report

2011 Year One Evaluation, accreditation reaffirmed based upon Spring Year one report

2011 Year Three Report and visit rescinded, review of Standard Two moved to Spring 2013 Year Seven Visit

Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report and Eligibility Requirements

Prior to the campus visit, evaluators reviewed materials (Year Seven Report, appendices, catalog/addendum, and online supplementary materials). The site visit was conducted on April 22-24, 2013. Evaluators conducted interviews, reviewed evidence provided upon request by GRCC in the workroom and online. The login security and access to source materials electronically presented some challenges for the evaluation team. Finding materials required multiple requests for assistance. The college technical support person did a great job fielding requests and securing documents as needed. Unfortunately, the process of needing to ask for assistance required more time than would be expected on a regular site-visit.

GRCC Students, Staff and Faculty were candid in their responses and feedback to evaluators. Exceptional support was provided for evaluators in all areas (e.g., technology, scheduling, food, printing and directions to meeting locations). The only challenge was the evaluator's need to constantly login which created difficulties and took time away from the team's focus on the evaluation process.

The evaluation team's review of the Year Seven Report was positive. Overall the report was organized and well written. This is especially important due to the evolving nature of institutions participating in the condensed reporting cycle.

The organizational meeting and on-site evaluation visit occurred April 21-24, 2013. During the visit evaluators conducted interviews, reviewed evidence organized by the College, and toured the facilities. The College had the evidence documents accessible electronically in the team room. Accessing some records proved to be challenging and the login process was cumbersome. The faculty and staff were collegial and hospitable, and the support provided to the evaluators during the visit in terms of technology assistance, navigating the campus, food and other clerical needs was very good. The evaluation team found the Self-Evaluation Report to be very well organized, comprehensive and thorough.

Eligibility Requirements

Green River Community College appears to meet the Eligibility Requirements of the NWCCU. In 2015, GRCC will have five decades of operation. The College graduates a number of students with certificates and degrees each year. It is authorized to provide higher education by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The college has a published mission and has identified core themes appropriate to its role as a community college: "The mission of Green River Community College is: *Ensure student success through comprehensive educational programs and support services responsive to our diverse communities.*" The core themes identified in the self study were modified in 2012-13 from Transfer to College Transfer Education; Professional/Technical to Career and Technical Education; Basic Skills/Developmental to College Readiness Education; and Continuing Education to Continuing and Community Education. The identified Core Theme objectives include: Access, Equity, Student Success, Responsiveness, and Financial Stewardship. The governing board approved the mission and core themes. The institution has a five-member governing Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor of Washington, which employs the President and delegates responsibility to the President to conduct the business of the college in accordance with the policy guidance set by the Board. The college employs a central administrative staff hired by the

College President and a faculty of full-time and part-time membership. The educational programs meet rigorous national standards, and there is both general education and related instruction offered as appropriate to each degree or certificate. There is appropriate library, physical and technological infrastructure in place, and the college operates with academic freedom for employees and students. There are appropriate admissions processes in place to support students, and there is appropriate public information, including a published college catalog and college catalog addendum. The college has financial resources appropriate to a college of its size and complexity but doesn't currently undergo an external financial audit that was traditionally done by the state of Washington annually. The college discloses information as appropriate to the Commission and accepts the standards and policies of the Commission. There are published student learning outcomes for degrees and programs, and the College appears to have appropriate processes in place to assure institutional effectiveness. It appears to operate at an appropriate scale to its resources and purpose and is sustainable as a member of public higher education in Washington.

Standard One—Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Green River Community College (GRCC) engaged in a Strategic Planning effort this past year that overlapped with the self-evaluation process. The mission statement in the self study is well defined, is appropriate for an institution of higher education, and was approved by the Board and widely understood by the campus community (1.A.1). The mission was under review again this year and finalized in March 2013. GRCC's 2012-13 mission identifies four core themes:

- College Transfer Education
- Career and Technical Education
- College Readiness Education
- Continuing and Community Education

The recently replaced Green River Community College mission statement (adopted 2005, reaffirmed 2010) was:

> "Green River Community College improves the lives of people within our diverse communities by providing quality education and training programs."

For context purposes, during submission of the Self-study, GRCC was undergoing review of the College's strategic plan and monitoring reports. The college defined mission fulfillment as demonstrating an acceptable level of performance of its Core Themes, individually and collectively. A Strategic Planning and Assessment Team used a scorecard/monitoring reports to evaluate the performance of the College. The Monitoring Report Council determines if a Core Theme area meets, exceeds or doesn't meet set criteria and determines a point value to assign. This integrated strategic planning approach is consistent with accreditation standard 1.A, which calls for defining mission fulfillment "in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations" and articulating outcomes that "represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment" (1.A.2).

Standard 1.B defines a process for assessing mission fulfillment:

- establishing a set of objectives for each core theme, and for each objective
- defining "meaningful, assessable and verifiable" data indicators
- that together form the basis for evaluating the core theme objectives. In aggregate, meaningful assessment of the data indicators is used to establish the accomplishment of each core theme objective, and accomplishment of the core theme objectives establishes assessment of the core theme(s) and the mission overall. Standard 1.B calls for a direct relationship of the core themes with the mission statement, in that the core themes are to "individually manifest" and "collectively encompass" the mission. The College has worked the past year to align the mission and core themes with monitoring reports. This work was not completed at the time of the site visit. Monitoring reports for two of the four themes were provided. The other two core theme monitoring reports are under development. The evaluators find that defining the core themes in this new system will allow comparison in the future. The objectives defined for the core themes are not in alignment with and are not as robust as the outcomes and associated data for the student success. This new system of mission and core theme alignment with monitoring reports will in the future allow the college to fully meet the Standard 1.B.

Standard 1.B Core Themes

The recently identified and updated core themes were approved in March 2013. These updated core themes are similar to the former core themes and will continue to individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission. The institution is working to finalize monitoring reports for each of its core themes and to identify meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes (1.B.1 &1.B.2).

> **Concern:** The evaluation team notes that the college needs to ensure the alignment between the mission statement and the core themes – that the core themes "individually manifest" and "collectively encompass" the college mission statement (1.B.1), that the core theme objectives and verifiable indicators be sufficient to evaluate the accomplishment of core themes (1.B.2).

The evaluators suggest that GRCC fully "live into" the newly approved mission statement and definition of core themes to "individually manifest" and "collectively encompass" the mission and revisit the definition and assessment of indicator data to create an empirically supported threshold of mission fulfillment based on its four core themes.

Standard Two—Resources and Capacity

Standard 2.A Governance

The evaluators find that the composition and scope of work of the Board, President's Staff and clear roles and responsibilities in decision making provides for effective consideration of the views of students, faculty, staff on matters in which they have a "direct and reasonable interest." The institution monitors compliance with the standards for Accreditation. Qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, staff the institution. After a long-term President retired after 27 years the system for planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness are undergoing change. Faculty and staff forums and interviews presented feedback that the change has been difficult and meaningful and clear involvement in decision-making process is being requested (2.A.1, 2.A.3)

> **Recommendation:** The College administration should clarify and operationalize its system of governance with particular attention to communication regarding process and decision-making with all college constituencies (2.A.1).

The Governing Board meets the requirements of Standard 2.A.4. The roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood. The Board understands its role and acts accordingly in a modified Carver model (2.A.5, 2.A.10). The Board establishes and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.

The Board selects the CEO and has a regular system in place for evaluation and delegates responsibility accordingly (2.A.7). The President's performance evaluation is measured against board policies, on College Outcomes and Executive Limitations (2.A.7). The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner (2.A.8).

The evaluators find that the Board of Trustees is appropriately composed. The Board adheres to a modified version of Carver Policy Governance, a well-established and widely understood system of governance concerning, among other things, actions and authority of the Board, oversight of institutional policy, and delegation of authority to a chief executive officer. Policies and related procedures are readily available on the college website. The Board has a regular system for board evaluation (2.A.4, 2.A.5, 2.A.8). At the time of writing, the comprehensive self-evaluation reported that there is no regular review of policies and procedures (2.A.6).

> **Concern:** There is no indication the Board reviews regularly and revises institutional policies as necessary (2.A.6).

The college has an effective and appropriately staffed system of leadership, including chief executive officer, and administrators that work effectively across institutional functions and units. A sufficient number of qualified administrators provide leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives (2.A.9, 2.A.10, 2.A11).

The College has a clearly defined system for policy development. Academic policies are published in the GRCC College Catalog and posted on the GRCC website. Policies regarding

academic standards of progress, academic honesty, and classroom discipline are also addressed in the GRCC Student Handbook, which is updated annually and available in print and online (2.A.12).

The library maintains a collection development policy, which is used to guide resource selection. Information on copyright restrictions is available in the Faculty negotiated agreement and in the Student Handbook. Copyright notices are posted at library photocopiers and reserve procedures align with published information. Information about library resources and services, including lending policies, loan periods, fines and penalties, are published on the library's website and the Student and Faculty Handbooks. The collection development policy is not replicated in standard college publications but is available for review in the library. References to encouraging faculty involvement in maintaining the collection appear in the Faculty Handbook. (2.A.13)

The institution's Student Handbook, which is updated annually, clearly outlines policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities. The Handbook is published in the college catalog, is on the college website and is included in the Student Planner which is handed out at New Student Orientation. Copies of the Planner are also available at student services offices across campus. (2.A.15)

The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that include evaluation of student knowledge and skill levels. The evaluation is used to facilitate appropriate course assignments to help assure success at GRCC. Special admissions policies, selective academic programs and international students information are found on the website, in the course catalog, or may be requested from the departments. Student appeals, grievances and policies regarding continuation in, and termination from, programs are outlined in the Student Handbook and on the website. (2.A.16)

The Associated Student Body mission statement provides a rationale for co-curricular activities at GRCC. The institution maintains and publishes policies and procedures stating its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities. These policies and procedures, which comply with administrative rules and regulations required by the State of Washington, are found on the college website within Board and Administrative policies. (2.A.17)

Green River Community College (GRCC) is one of the 34 colleges governed by the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). GRCC is obligated to abide by the finance rules of the Washington system, the Office of Financial Management, and other government oversight agencies. However, the college operates independently under the guidance of its Board of Trustees. As an independent institution, GRCC is accountable and responsible for meeting NWCCU standards and eligibility requirements including financial oversight and the development of policies and procedures for financial operations. The GRCC Board of Trustees has adopted several policies that address oversight and management of financial resources; however, the approved policies have not fully addressed all areas of the Standard (2.A.30).

In its self-study response, GRCC referenced four board-approved policies, which outline the executive limitations associated with financial operations of the institution. Additionally, in the supplemental exhibits, the institution referenced Board policy BSR-1 – Order Delegation Authority. These board-approved policies address general provisions associated with presidential compensation, financial planning, including when board approval is required, monitoring of the institutional financial condition, large budget transfers, debt management, and asset protection.

These policies were initially adopted in 2004 and no evidence was provided that these policies have been reviewed or revised since that time.

During the interview with members of the Board of Trustees, it was mentioned that a policy had been recently approved addressing institutional reserves. At the time of the evaluation visit, this policy was not posted on the college's website or referenced in the self-study. The GRCC administration reviewed Board of Trustees minutes and verified that the Board approved the institutional reserve policy in 2011.

The published board-approved policies do not directly address financial activities associated with managing institutional investments, fundraising, cash management, and general transfers and borrowings between funds as outlined in the Standard (2.A.30). During the interviews with the VP of Business Affairs and Director of Business Services, it was noted that GRCC follows the state policy regarding institutional investments, but the institution has not adopted a formal policy in this area. Additionally, confirmed by the VP of Business Affairs, Director of Business Services, and the Controller, a formal policy regarding cash management has not been established at the institution at this time.

> **Concern:** The last financial audit for GRCC was approximately 4 years ago. The discontinuance of GRCC external financial audits performed by the State of Washington will need to be addressed in Standard (2.F.7) and GRCC will need to develop additional financial policies or revise the existing board approved policies to specifically comply with requirements on auditing, cash management, fundraising, and general transfers and borrowings between funds (2.A.30).

Standard 2.B Human Resources

The College provided a comprehensive organizational structure that reveals a well-organized structure and which demonstrates compliance with the requirement. In addition, the institution documented the number and qualifications of the individuals who comprise the GRCC leadership team. The documentation included biographical information for the President and all nine (9) direct reports who comprise the President's Staff listed on Table 2.2 of the Comprehensive Seven-Year Report. The College also provided biographical information for the Institutional Effectiveness Team (2) and the student affairs leadership team (20). These documents affirm individual qualifications via educational credentials earned, relevant experience, professional achievements, and information related to professional affiliations.

The College uses its website to post vacancies. These listings include position summary, responsibilities, minimum and preferred qualifications, and information on the application process. The website also includes an extensive list of job descriptions. The job description format is similar to the postings including position summary, responsibilities, minimum and preferred qualifications, and information on the application process (2.B.1).

The College provided a copy of the 2003 Administrative/ Exempt Handbook that includes some summary position descriptions. The aforementioned Handbook Section IV, *Administrative and Exempt Contracts/Job Descriptions,* requires job descriptions for each administrative/exempt employee.

The College Human Resources website lists openings, information on the application process, statement regarding diversity and equal opportunity commitment, and summary of nondiscrimination policy which includes a link to the full policy.

Although College leadership identified an operational process by which staffing needs are developed and with staffing priorities ultimately negotiated at the President's Staff level and funded, there was no evidence readily available to document the entire process. However, indications are the number and qualifications of personnel confirm institutional compliance.

The College provided Board Policy (BSR-3) to document the requirement for monitoring executive performance. In addition, the college provided samples of the evaluation instrument which documents self-evaluation, supervisory assessment, and an on-going system. The copy of the *State of Washington and Washington Federation of State Employees Higher Education Community College Coalition was* provided, documents the evaluation process for WFSE. These documents demonstrate compliance (2.B.2).

The College affirmed the use of an annual evaluation cycle for administrators and staff. Evaluations include self and supervisory assessment for the preceding twelve months, challenges and opportunities, and a summary. The documentation provided appropriately demonstrates compliance.

The College demonstrated compliance via the agreement outlined in the Administrative Exempt Staff Handbook 2003, Section IX, which summarizes the requirement for Professional Development as part of individual professional development planning. The requirement for a minimum of two professional development activities per year is presented, as are directions for accessing funding for professional development (2. B.3).

The College provided documentation to substantiate the requirement and provision for faculty professional development. Article VI, Leaves and Faculty Development, Section I, Faculty Development Program, of *the Agreement between the Board of Trustees Community College District No. 10 and The Green River United Faculty Coalition* outlines the process and the funding mechanism to be provided by the College.

The College website documents professional development opportunities available to all employees including classified and exempt staff. Opportunities are also available for full-time and adjunct faculty. The Institution provided a three-year calendar of events documenting professional development training and workshop opportunities for all employees.

The College further demonstrated compliance via copies of budgets substantiating its commitment to funding professional development faculty and staff, expenditures, and balances.

The College provided a copy of the *General Standards of Qualifications for Community and Technical College Personnel* document developed by the Washington State Legislature, WAC 131-16-080. This document outlines the qualifications for community college personnel. In addition, faculty names, credentials, and awarding institutions are listed on the hardcopy and online 2011-2013 College Catalog. The College also documented faculty qualifications via a list of full-time faculty and their respective degrees (2. B.4).

The College documented faculty job descriptions via Article V, *Terms of Employment*, of the Agreement between the Board of Trustees Community College District No. 10 and The Green River United Faculty Coalition.

The College appropriately documented the process for the hiring of faculty via Article III, *Selection of Faculty and Division Chairs*, of the Agreement between the Board of Trustees Community College District No. 10 and The Green River United Faculty Coalition.

Additional documentation addressed the tenure process which documents oversight, evaluation, and evidence of documented efforts to staff/faculty ranks with qualified individuals.

The College further documented compliance via a historical record of faculty staffing which demonstrates increases in the number of full-time and adjunct faculty and funding for additional full-time positions. Additional evidence included documentation of adjunct salary, placement, and credentials. Indications are the institution is in compliance.

The College documented faculty responsibilities and workload via the *Agreement between the Board of Trustees Community College District No. 10 and The Green River United Faculty Coalition* a copy of which was provided. In addition, the College provided examples to document tracking of full-time faculty teaching loads to determine classes over and above the required teaching load, similar information for Career and Technical full-time faculty, and similar information for tracking teaching loads for adjunct faculty. An example of an exception letter and contract were also provided. Documentation demonstrates compliance (2.B.5).

The College provided an overview of the faculty evaluation process that delineates timeline, cycle, criteria, and methods by which faculty is evaluated and by whom. All faculty members attending the forum indicated they were in the five-year evaluation cycle and the process was working as intended. The College provided samples of timelines and evaluation information that adequately addresses the standard (2.B.6).

Standard 2.C Education Resources

The self-evaluation states that there is a regular review process as well as a process for new degrees and certificates to ensure appropriate content and rigor, but does not specifically describe that process in 2.C.1. In general, the college catalog does not contain Intended Program Learning Outcomes and the program descriptions are very uneven and inconsistent. For example, Early Childhood Education and Diversity Studies has an extensive description and includes intended learning outcomes (though not labeled as such), while Broadcasting has no description of the program much less intended learning outcomes. However, all degree outcomes are consistently listed on the "About GRCC" webpage under Learning Outcomes Committee.

In order to validate the criteria outlined in Standard 2.C., the evaluation team reviewed materials provided in the self-study and exhibits, toured facilities on the GRCC campus, and met with groups of faculty, administrators, staff and students. The review of these programs is based on information from the following sources:

- Catalog descriptions
- Samples of course syllabi
- Institutional data on course development, assessment & program reviews
- Faculty credentials, as gleaned from online faculty biographies

- Physical facilities, classroom space, laboratory space, and educational equipment
- Comments from Division chairs
- Comments from a sample of full-time faculty
- Comments from a sample of students

The college has prepared a comprehensive system to assess the content and rigor of instructional programs. At the course level, individual instructors articulate clear outcomes, assess students' abilities, and improve the course based on interpretation of assessment data. However, there has not been documented evidence of improvement to courses based on the collection and analysis of course content learning outcomes (CCLO) assessment. Course Adoption Revision forms, required of every course, contain the CCLO and are submitted when a course is created or revised. The Faculty Curriculum Review Committee reviews those forms when new and every two years thereafter. This level of outcome assessment is then rolled into a program-level assessment, conducted every five years by the Program Assessment and Improvement process, in which the faculty can then improve the curriculum in that program. The broadest level of assessment is the College-Wide Learning Outcomes, which are assessed in all degrees and certificates of 45 credits or more and intended to assess the cumulative effect of programs on students' abilities to master certain skills. For instance, the college has made a concerted effort to assess writing by embedding a College-Wide Objective (CWO) of writing across the curriculum and engaging in a four-year cycle of evaluating the CWO. While the process used by the study group in 2010-11 to gather surveys and writing samples was thorough and the suggestions generated were substantive, this evaluator could not find evidence that programs or courses across campus had been revised to improve students' writing skills. (2.C.1)

It is commendable that the college has a robust set of learning outcomes at three levels: College-wide, program, and course (2.C.2).

In the last Transfer Core Theme Monitoring Report presented to the Board in 2011, the data used to assess the core indicators do not fully address the questions asked in the core indicators, and therefore, make assessing student achievement in transfer programs difficult. For instance, in core indicator 2, "transfer students are prepared for transfer to four-year colleges or universities," the college uses the number of degrees conferred, not the measure of preparedness. In the assessment of student achievement in Career and Technical Education, however, the college used multiple data points within the state system, the Student Achievement Initiative momentum points, which helped to provide some of the evidence needed to award credit. Currently, the objectives measured in the Year Seven report do not match those measured in the Core Theme Monitoring Reports. Since the preparation of the Seven Year Report, the college has taken concrete and intentional steps to collect appropriate data and to institute systems to document student achievement of course learning outcomes. More evidence is needed to show the improvements made from assessing learning outcomes and measuring student achievement when awarding credit. Degree and certificate requirements are published in the catalog and are consistent with the WA state guidelines and aligned with other WA community colleges. (2.C.3)

The system of course review and approval overseen by the Instructional Council ensures that courses are designed coherently and they maintain appropriate breadth and depth. The Program Assessment and Improvement (PA&I) process offers a rigorous review of programs every five years to address design, breadth, depth, sequencing, and student learning. In keeping with its mission of responsiveness, Green River now delivers classes at a variety of days and times and in

different modalities. The online tools for admissions, graduation requirements, and program planning are accessible and clear. (2.C.4)

Faculty at Green River design, assess, implement, and revise the curriculum. Clearly stated in the faculty agreement, faculty continually review and improve all elements of instruction and participate fully in review committees that set policies, approve and assess classes, like the Instructional Council and the Faculty Curriculum Review Committee. On hiring committees for new faculty, teaching faculty are the majority of members and follow a clearly defined process as outlined in the faculty contract. Faculty has primary authority on vital committees that foster and assess student achievement of specific course, program, and college-wide learning outcomes. (2.C.5)

Information literacy is woven throughout instruction: through embedding it in college-wide learning outcomes, collaborations between instructors and librarians in course design and research projects, the alignment of the information literacy plan with Core Theme planning, the requirement on Course Adoption Revision forms, and the easy access students have to library information and research guides online. Many faculty members include information literacy in their rubrics, especially in transfer programs. (2.C.6)

Beginning on page 27 of the college catalog, the college effectively communicates the conditions necessary to earn credit for prior experience or learning. This includes and prescribes involvement of sufficiently qualified faculty. While not stated in the catalog, the website and the self-evaluation both state that a maximum of 25% of the degree requirement can be satisfied through prior learning credits (2.C.7).

The college has an established practice for awarding transfer credit which stipulates the necessary criteria for successful transfer of credit. In many cases, transfer is from institutions within the Washington system, where standardized course numbering has been established, or where reciprocity and/or articulation agreements have been formalized. The college has a standard two- to four-week process of evaluating transcripts of incoming transfer students. Where the Office of the Registrar cannot determine the comparability of courses for transferability, office staff consults with either faculty in the department or the instructional dean in that area. The college has a Transfer Credit policy located on the public website under Student Affairs Policies (2.C.8).

Adhering to the guidelines of the Inter-College Relations Commission, Green River offers the requirements for transfer degrees in Washington State. Accordingly, requirements for transfer degree and applied or certificate programs include a core of general education classes that integrates communication, computation, and human relations skills. (2.C.9)

For the general education components of the transfer associate degree programs, GRCC combines college-wide learning outcomes and course content learning outcomes as supporting components of those degrees. These are communicated in the college catalog and the college intranet (2.C.10).

In Career and Technical Education programs, qualified faculty work with advisory committees from local business and industry to develop and review program curricula, work with the Department of Institutional Effectiveness or state and industry accrediting agencies to assess programs, and include most related instruction within individual courses or programs that have

been identified and approved by the Related Instruction Committee, a subcommittee of the Instructional Council. (2.C.11)

GRCC's self-study describes how the institution adheres to the NWCCU "2C" standards which pertain directly to continuing education and non-credit programs. The evaluators met with the GRCC registrar in order to verify the self-study's statements.

GRCC offers a variety of courses ranging from non-credit lifelong learning "hobby" courses to highly specialized professional development courses custom-designed for regional businesses and industries. This is completely aligned with the GRCC Mission Statement: "Green River Community College improves the lives of people within our diverse communities…" (2.C.16)

GRCC ensures that its continuing education courses are taught by qualified adjunct faculty who are supervised by full-time college personnel. If courses are offered for college credit, they are approved by the Faculty Curriculum Review Committee (2.C.17). When college credit is awarded, it is done so within the parameters of the national standards for awarding CEUs (2.C.18).

For Continuing Education and non-credit courses, CEU, clock-hour records, course outlines and outcomes for all courses are maintained in the Continuing Education office. Pertinent student records are also directly uploaded to the GRCC web-based student record storage system, and are kept in accordance with the College's record retention policy (2.C.19).

Three NWCCU team members examined the education resources of the college's eleven academic divisions to review for core theme alignment and meeting accreditation standards. Below is a summary of findings:

Fine Arts, Social Science, Business, Health Sciences & Education
Academic programs in Fine Arts, Social Science, Business and Health Sciences & Education demonstrate commitment to provide appropriate content with sufficient rigor. Each communicates within the self-evaluation both a recognition that faculty must remain current in their field along with actions to ensure this. Likewise, each program recognizes the importance of current issues and advancements within the respective disciplines of study.

Students, when interviewed, are quite satisfied with their educational experience at GRCC. Availability of courses when the students need them is satisfactory although there was comment concerning cases of scheduling of co-requisite courses in such a way that they could not be scheduled. Students felt that they had sufficient opportunity to evaluate instructional performance, although the perception is that student feedback is only taken upon an instructor's first term of teaching for GRCC. Students are very satisfied with the classroom and lab facilities at GRCC.

Math Division
The evaluator met with five Mathematics faculty members, including the Math Division Chair. A sample of course syllabi was reviewed, along with the Math Division's Program Assessment and Improvement (PA&I) documents. Catalog descriptions and course syllabi indicate that the courses offered in GRCC's Math Division are generally transferrable to all Washington state universities and colleges, and cover topics appropriate to specific levels of mathematics proficiency. Courses ranging from developmental math through calculus and statistics are widely

available and conveniently scheduled at the main campus and, to a more limited extent, at the branch campuses. The evening Math program extends through the first year of calculus, making it easier for non-traditional students to complete their key prerequisite courses in mathematics. To promote student success, The Math Division has recently implemented a placement system to help students enroll in the course that is most appropriate to their current math skills. For students who might need additional preparation in basic math skills, GRCC offers the option of spreading beginning and intermediate algebra over a three-quarter sequence instead of the traditional two quarters. The division also offers several self-paced, online and hybrid courses using the "flipped classroom" model of instruction. All math courses incorporate the Quantitative & Symbolic Reasoning (QSR) GRCC college-wide learning outcome into the course curricula, and the outcomes were published in all of the course syllabi that were examined by the NWCCU evaluator. The Math Division is now in year one of the fourth cycle of reviewing the QSR learning outcome. Information from the QSR and PA&I reviews is used to improve course content, course scheduling, and instructional methods. Additional assessment data are being collected, and will be analyzed within the next year. The Math Division is looking forward to re-locating to the newly remodeled Cedar Building in the fall of 2013.

Science Division

Three Science faculty members, including the division chair, were interviewed by the NWCCU evaluator. Catalog descriptions and course syllabi indicate that GRCC's science courses consist of standard curricula typically included in lower-division general education and transfer courses. A wide variety of science courses meets the specific needs of science and technology majors, as well as students in GRCC's practical nursing, occupational therapy assistant and physical therapy assistant programs. All faculty have appropriate credentials for teaching at the community college level. Full-time faculty are collegial and are supportive of the adjunct faculty in their division. They reported that GRCC's adjuncts are all offered shared office and storage space on campus, a rarity among regional community colleges. Senior faculty members are active in mentoring and evaluating new tenure-track faculty as well as adjunct faculty. Science faculty who were interviewed indicated that their division is diligent in maintaining high academic standards through regular program assessment and improvement plans. All of the course syllabi that were reviewed included one to five of the GRCC college-wide learning outcomes, and these outcomes are reviewed on a cyclical basis by the institution. The PA&I procedure provides data that is used to improve instruction. The Marv Nelson Science Learning Center is a spacious and well-designed state-of-the-art facility, with well-equipped classrooms and laboratories. The faculty expressed an urgent need for an additional laboratory technician to support the chemistry, physics and earth sciences labs. Another concern focused on the need for better coordination with the Kent campus' science course offerings.

Technology Division

The Technology Division offers courses in aviation, computer information technology, computer science, design technology, electronics, engineering, geographic information systems and natural resources. The NWCCU evaluator interviewed three faculty members, including the Division Chair. Faculty reported that their programs all have healthy and growing enrollments. Faculty stated that the institution provides excellent classroom space and instructional equipment for each program. Budgeting and faculty hiring are based on program assessment data, which include PA&I reports and recommendations from the program advisory committees. Advisory committees meet several times each year and provide helpful guidance for curriculum and instructional equipment revisions. A sample of Aviation, Engineering and IT course syllabi indicate that GRCC college-wide learning outcomes are incorporated in the curriculum.

Trades
The NWCCU evaluator interviewed two faculty members. Auto Body, Automotive, Carpentry, Manufacturing and Welding programs are offered through the Trades Division. The Trades Division is proud of its dedicated, long-term faculty and up-to-date (and in most cases, nationally certified) curriculum. Many courses are offered during the evenings and weekends, to accommodate high demand from students. Faculty reported that they work closely with regional industries in curriculum development. Program advisory boards provide helpful information on curriculum development. Some of the Trades programs are entrepreneurial, meaning that they provide paid services to the community (auto repair, carpentry, etc.). In some cases, this works well, and in other cases, it causes financial hardship for programs which do not have a high cash flow. The faculty stated that they need better support from the GRCC Foundation.

Transitional Studies and Wellness Division (TS&W)
This division is responsible for Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED, ESOL, high school completion and Health & Physical Education programs, and accounts for about 12 percent of GRCC's annual FTE. Four full-time instructors and their dean were interviewed by a member of the NWCCU team. The faculty members were obviously committed to student success. TS&W faculty members are evaluated using standard GRCC procedures. They offer courses in a variety of formats to accommodate students' learning styles, including online, hybrid, independent study, module-based courses, peer tutoring, and learning communities. The division strives to form a seamless pathway from Adult Basic Education into the traditional transfer-type college courses. The College Readiness Educational Council meets about three times per year, and will be looking at the results of the Basic Skills assessment indicators in May 2013. The TS&W Division uses assessment data to improve the efficiency of their educational programs. Each of the course syllabi that were reviewed by the NWCCU evaluator showed that the basic skills and PE courses include the "Responsibility" GRCC college-wide learning objective. Other syllabi included critical thinking, quantitative & symbolic reasoning and/or written communications learning objectives. A recent success has been the iGrad Youth Reengagement program on the Kent campus, in partnership with the Kent Public School District. In addition to the developmental studies courses, the Division offers a wide variety of Physical Education courses, staffed by 9 full-time and 55 adjunct faculty. The faculty recommended that GRCC provide training in grant writing, so that faculty would be able to acquire more funding for the basic skills programs.

GRCC has crafted specific college-wide learning outcomes that are communicated in the college catalog and the college website. Each of the four outcomes is supported with a number of competencies. The college provides a comprehensive set of program-level learning outcomes for its two-year degree programs on the college website. Finally, each course has course content learning outcomes listed in the course adoption revision forms. These are found on the college's intranet. Each course has adopted at least one college-wide learning outcome. These are consistently included in the course syllabi.

Standard 2.D Student Support Services

The institution provides onsite and online learning opportunities. The Self-Evaluation Report presents an extensive and descriptive list of services which support students in these learning environments. Support services are available and accessible to students in either environment. The usual array of student support services are made available to students. While TRiO provides

services to a select cohort, other support services are available to the general student population most notably advising, child care, counseling, financial aid, and veteran's services. Supplemental Instruction and tutoring services support students in the learning environment. The website, the Catalog, and the Student Handbook provide descriptive information and steps for accessing services (2. D.1).

The institution provided CCSSE results (2008 and 2011), which demonstrate comparable student engagement in comparison to peer institutions. In most cases the institution compares well with high performing colleges. The "Support for Learners" category lagged behind both peer and high performing colleges. The Math Learning Center, the Public Speaking Center, and the Writing Center are additional examples of services provided by the College to support students in the learning environment. The documentation provided affirms institutional compliance.

The College described different facets of the services provided to ensure a safe and secure environment. The Safety Plan, posted on the website, provides data, policies and procedures, information, and description of available services. The website includes a link to the federal crime statistics report. Security services are provided through contract with an outside firm. A copy of the contract for security services provided by Pierce County Security, Inc. documents the arrangement for services from July 2012 to June 2013. This document affirms the provision of security services and hence compliance (2.D.2).

The information provided by the College via the admissions website documents the institution consistently adheres to its mission and core themes. The website provides information regarding outreach, the application process, and a link to the online application. All students including international and high school students who have been engaged in college learning experiences have access to the needed admissions information.

The College also provided information that describes the implementation of its "open door" policy. Recruitment statistics document prospective student participation.

The College website provides information regarding the student Orientation, Advising, Registration (SOAR) system. All relevant information is provided. The system provides information regarding services available which support student educational goals, an explanation to help students understand COMPASS assessment scores, and information regarding programs of study, the registration process, and help with educational planning. Students have the option of online or in-person sessions.

The online and print versions of the Catalog provide information regarding graduation requirements. The Catalog also provides descriptive information, credit requirements, and lists courses required for particular degrees.

The online and print versions of the Catalog provide information regarding Transfer Policies and address student rights and responsibilities in this regard. The College also provided a link to the SBCTC Policy Manual. The Policy Manual requires community colleges to ensure its certificates and degrees follow one of the two statewide transfer agreements, the Direct Transfer Agreement or the Associate in Science-Transfer Agreement, or one of the Major Related Programs pathways or represent a local agreement between the college and at least one baccalaureate institution.

The institution provides information regarding transfer on credits into the college via its website. The transcript evaluation process is addressed. In addition, the website includes a listing of

Transfer Equivalency Guides and links to area universities. The institution ensures students are provided the information needed and hence is in compliance (2.D.3).

The College outlined its process for ensuring students are able to complete their programs of study. Although a listing of program changes was provided, a letter from the VP of Instruction documents the institution has maintained all its programs throughout the last accreditation cycle and during the more recent time under the new accreditation cycle. Since the institution has not closed a single program, there has been no need to implement a teach-out process (2.D.4).

The College provides an online and print version of the catalog, which includes all of the information required for adequately addressing this standard (2.D.5).

College publications including the online and print version of the catalog adequately address this standard (2. D.6). Items provided to substantiate compliance with the standard include:

a) A listing of Programs of study
b) Website that includes specific program information with details about the program, possible employment fields, prerequisites, transfer possibilities, employment outlook, and salary potential.
c) Website that includes information regarding licensure requirements and any special program accreditation.
d) The format of the information provided is easily updated.

The College provided information to document its retention policy and practice follows the Washington Community and Technical College System policy. Compliance is demonstrated by a copy of the letter from the Washington Community and Technical College System authorizing destruction of certain records for a specific period. In addition, the College provided documentation, which confirms destruction of records as authorized (2.D.7).

College publications, catalog, Student Handbook, schedules, and website provide information regarding availability of financial aid, types of aid, and the process for obtaining aid. The college offers federal and state aid in addition to numerous scholarships. All scholarship information is posted on the college website and addressed in the publications. The College provided general information and documented an increase in the number of students receiving aid between 2009-2012 (2.D.8).

The College provided information documenting the sources and types of financial aid for 2009-2012 and documents the percent of funds from each source and the amounts of funds disbursed.

Although some students expressed concern about the lack of information regarding financial aid availability, confusing awards information, and the inability to charge their books against their expected financial aid awards, students were well informed about loan availability, loan counseling requirements, and pay back obligations. The information effectively documents compliance.

The College provided information with regard to requirements for student participation in loan counseling prior to disbursement and the required exit counseling provided. In addition, the Financial Aid website provides extensive information regarding the types of loans, borrowing amount limits, the application process, student rights and responsibilities, and loan repayment information. Students are also provided information on deferment.

Students who were interviewed during the site visit were well informed about loan availability, loan counseling requirements, and pay back obligations.

The College provided a brief summary of its default rate for 2008, 2009, 2010 to document monitoring practice. The college also provided copies of loan exit counseling notice and agenda information to demonstrate compliance (2.D.9).

The College website documents the institution's compliance with design and maintenance of its academic advisement program. The *"Career and Advising Center at Green River Community College offers comprehensive career and education planning resources for current and prospective students, alumni and community members..."* Educational planning to inform, support, and encourage students is provided. Other services provided include career planning, career exploration, and job search. The individuals who work in the advising center hold earned master's degrees. The shared advising model places faculty in the student's field of study in an advising role as well which ensures students are advised by individuals who are knowledgeable about the fields of study.

The advising process is appropriately explained and the sequential steps indicate it is an available and supported process.

The College provided copies of advising evaluation instruments but no evidence of completed evaluations or summaries. Summary data provided was a copy of the SOAR Survey results for 2011-2012. Other documentation developed in response to evaluator request listed other surveys used throughout in an effort to evaluate. Although indications are the institution attempts to evaluate these services, evaluations seem to be limited in scope, depth, and consistency. The institution did not provide documentation to demonstrate a consistent and effective evaluation process which "closes the loop" using results to inform subsequent planning (2.D.10).

The College highlighted several excellent examples of co-curricular activities in its report. The website firmly establishes these activities to be consistent with the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services: *"We are committed to supporting our student's development: intellectually, physically and emotionally. We understand that student success is not solely defined by grades, which is why Campus Life serves as the center for a variety of student-focused programs and services which support the academic and non-academic development…"*

Co-curricular offerings address institutional core values: access, equity, and success. Students are provided opportunities for engagement in activities which support personal development. Availability of activities and increased participation indicates effective programming and appropriate oversight. The College organizational chart and in particular the Student Affairs chart clearly outlines the reporting structure for co-curricular activities which ensures accountability (2.D.11).

The institution provided information related to its five auxiliary functions. The functions support students in the learning environment and contribute to intellectual climate of the campus community (2.D.12).

The College organizational chart, and in particular the Student Affairs chart, clearly outlines the reporting structure for auxiliary services which ensures accountability. Although input is documented via the Food Services Committee agendas, there is no clear indication of student input.

The institution provided information regarding its intercollegiate sports. The described function is to provide a positive influence in developing the student's mind, body, and character. Participation requires full-time status, satisfactory academic programs toward educational goal completion, and compliance with eligibility guidelines of the governing league. Student athletes are subject to the same admissions, academic, degree, and financial aid requirements as the general student population.

Financial aid provided to athletes includes scholarships, tuition waivers, and athletic work-study employment. The institution provides financial assistance reports to the State of Washington and the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges.

The organizational chart documents appropriate oversight and hence provides for accountability. The institution provided appropriate information to document oversight of financial aid awarded to athletes, their completion rates as compared to non-athletes, and their graduation rate. Indications are intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs are appropriately structured, supervised, and effective which place the institution in compliance (2. D.13).

The College reported identity verification relies on the student identification number issued at the time of admission and the personal identification number issued upon completion of the SOAR session. Access to online services requires the use of both numbers. The institution uses a password protected course management system. Picture identification is required for in person assistance.

The institution provided a copy of the ANGEL-73 Student Quick Start Guide to document identification procedures used for online services. The Guide verifies the requirement of username and password for access to course materials.

There are no charges associated with the identity verification process. Students are appropriately informed of any and all charges via an itemized student statement provided at the beginning of the quarter. The verification process documented indicates institutional compliance (2.D.14).

Standard 2.E Library and Information Services

GRCC benefits from a strong library team. The team is experienced, energetic and very active throughout campus and the community. Five members of the library staff sit on eighteen committees. They have many partnerships that connect them with the campus and beyond and raise the awareness of the library and its services.

The college has been able to support the library collections with an adequate budget even during this time of budget cuts. The intention of the institution is clearly shown by this support and GRCC should be commended. A portion of the money comes from the student's payment of the technology fees. The Technology Fee Committee decides how those fee dollars are distributed and the e-books have been supported with that fee. The Foundation also contributes to the budget and that should be recognized as well.

The two library policies have been recently updated. Internal policies are continuously updated through the use of a wiki and the library should be complimented on this dedication to collaborative upkeep of that information.

The Evaluation Committee found the GRCC library supportive of the college's mission and core themes. The GRCC library provides diverse collections and multiple access pathways to support students in gathering, interpreting, and evaluating information. The library looks to the Association for College and Research Libraries for recommendations on its physical monograph collection size. At the time of the report the collection size was 57,500 and was 41,400 for the e-book collection and usage statistics show continued growth over the years in both physical collection and the e-book collection.

The collections in the library are listed in section IV in the Collection Development Policy. Of special note is a fairly new collection created to support underprepared students. The Essential College Skills houses books, study guides, instructional DVDs, and computer software for ABE students and students wishing to improve their reading, writing, mathematics, and study skills. It also includes test preparation practice manuals for GED, COMPASS, SAT, and ACT. The Essential College Skills Collection should also be highlighted. Although not new, the library collaborated with the ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) to completely restructure the collection in 2010. It should be noted that it is not in the traditional Dewey Decimal system but rather in a system more likely to be understood by that population of students. From spring 2010, before the change, to spring 2011, there was a 26 percent increase in circulation. Compliment: Collaboration with the ESOL to restructure the Basic Skills Collections showed excellent teamwork and resulted in a significant increase in circulation.

The library's web page clearly states the services for eLearners as well as for users of the Kent, Enumclaw & ASBAC remote sites. The library's new website as well as its presence in The Canvas learning management system shows how it has expanded its exposure and is providing additional services to the campus. The web site contains many support services for those seeking assistance; examples include subject and course guides, library instruction and other support services that benefit all students. Librarians are also available all day and night to students through a cooperative online chat service (2.E.1).

Planning for library and information resources is guided by data as well as informed by interaction with students, faculty and others in the campus community. The Faculty Curriculum Review Committee is a key component in the library's planning process and it is noted that one of the faculty librarians sits on that committee. That is critical because that committee is where the CAR (Course Adoption Revision) is handled and on the first page of that form a question is included related to whether this course requires a purchase of library and media resources. Also, just as important, the CAR shows the librarians the areas where Information Literacy instruction is incorporated.

Librarians look to other sources of information for library needs for those courses already approved. Each division has a librarian as a liaison who attends their meetings. Other ways to obtain input are through the online form and through informal surveys, questionnaires, and conversations.

As mentioned above, usage statistics show growth in both physical collection and the e-book collection. Those same statistics inform the decisions about additions and withdrawal of collections in the library collection (2.E.2).

Faculty librarians ensure that information literacy skills and outcomes are woven into the curriculum across campus. As mentioned above, the Faculty Curriculum Review Committee is

an integral piece to that process. Librarians not only provide Information literacy instruction but also consult with teaching faculty when designing research assignments and assessment rubrics.

Librarians talk about two components of Information Literacy (IL). The first are those research assignments which are typically thought of as IL and the second is a focus on life skills. This approach really makes IL valuable to students at all levels. The instruction covers both specific project strategies and instruction about available tools. The Information Literacy Plan speaks to enabling all students at GRCC to be able to find, access, analyze, and use information appropriately both for academic success and lifelong learning.

Projects done to enhance information literacy instruction include multiple state-wide grants, campus learning communities and embedded librarians.

The GRCC library incorporates data in making decisions about collections and services. As mentioned above, systematic review of the physical collection using both circulation and in-house usage statistics provides insight in the planning with the collections. There are also periodic reviews of the collection.

User surveys have also been used to assess the adequacy of library collections, services and facilities. The last survey took place in spring 2012 with results receiving feedback regarding the reference desk although the results weren't as comprehensive they were still helpful. Informal feedback is also solicited at the circulation and reference desk as well as from faculty divisions. To further this type of effort, the library should conduct more frequent evidence-based assessments to better determine the critical needs and better demonstrate how well the library supports the mission and core themes (2.E.3).

Standard 2.F

Similar to other community colleges across the nation, Green River Community College has experienced reductions in its overall state support. Approximately 57% of GRCC's general fund is provided by legislative appropriation. Over the last several years, in an effort to mitigate the impact of declining appropriations, GRCC has relied on alternative one-time revenue sources to supplement its general operating budget, primarily generated by its International and Running Start Programs. In 2011, GRCC established an institutional reserve policy requiring an annual savings target of 10 percent to be built into the operating budget to help the institution create sufficient cash reserves for long-term commitments; address possible unforeseen expenditures, including equipment replacement; and offset the loss of state revenues.

GRCC administration engages in financial planning on an annual basis and works closely with its Board of Trustees to ensure short-term solvency for the institution, while planning for long-term obligations and future liabilities. GRCC appears financially stable as demonstrated with through its "Year-end report," annual budget reports, and IPEDS financial information (2.F.1).

GRCC employs reasonable budgeting strategies for resource planning and development of its annual operating budget. The GRCC resource planning and development strategy includes the application of realistic enrollment projections and use of conservative projections for grants, donations and other non-tuition revenue sources (2.F.2).

GRCC adheres to a standard approach for financial planning and development of its annual operating budget. The overall approach is fairly consistent from year-to-year and representative

of the overarching institutional policies regarding financial planning, though the approach has not been formalized in policy (2.F.3).

With respect to appropriate opportunities by constituencies to participate in the resource planning process (2.F.3), there appears to be a clear connection between the institutional staff and the Board of Trustees with respect to development of the budget. Though, the Business Office publishes an annual timeline identifying major dates and meetings for the budget process and posts this information on its website for the college at-large, it seems that actual involvement of faculty and staff at the department level in the budget process is not clearly defined and varies by division/department. Student involvement in this process is limited to the student life and tech fee budgets.

GRCC's current accounting system is based on generally accepted accounting principles and provides access to timely and accurate financial information. GRCC representatives shared that the current accounting system uses an older programming code that does not allow for updates to occur easily. In an effort to update the accounting system, the state of Washington will be implementing PeopleSoft over the next two years. GRCC will be in the first wave of institutions for the implementation and anticipates being live May 2015.

In the information provided in the self-study and further validated during the course of interviews with institutional representatives, it does not appear that GRCC has established a comprehensive and systematic approach to monitoring its internal controls associated with its financial operations. It appears that the college has limited measures in place to assist with internal controls, but does not do so in a comprehensive manner. The college's efforts include dividing job responsibilities between multiple personnel, review of financial payments by the internal auditor, and cash counting reviews (2.F.4). GRCC did not provide evidence that regular internal audits happen annually to assess and evaluate existing policies and practices.

> **Concern:** The last financial audit for GRCC was approximately 4 years ago. The discontinuance of GRCC external financial audits performed by the State of Washington will need to be addressed in Standard 2.F.7. GRCC will need to develop a more comprehensive system of internal controls to assess and evaluate its financial operations (2.F.4).

GRCC engages in a comprehensive financial and budget planning process that examines general operating budgets, capital budgets, and acquisition of equipment on an annual basis (2.F.5). As part of its annual financial planning and budget development process, GRCC continues to refine its practices in an effort to better align its budget process with its institutional strategic planning process. The VP of Business Affairs and Director of Business Services expressed that concerted efforts are being made in this area to create additional transparency through the use of new budget request forms that identify which core theme, core value, institutional strategic goal and/or objective that the request supports.

GRCC participates in ongoing, long-range facility master planning. The institution not only publishes the process guidelines but maintains a website exhibiting the institution's most recent facility master plan. The master planning process is designed to reflect the institutional facility needs as informed by the overarching college mission and strategic planning process. The facility master plan is updated every two years.

As new projects are approved, GRCC has developed and implemented a college-wide capital development program that involves faculty, staff and administration from the very beginning of

each project. GRCC's process is designed to incorporate the feedback of all constituents and identify the requirements of the impacted programs for the new space and to estimate the "total cost of ownership" of the proposed project; including technology infrastructure and instructional equipment. This comprehensive planning process has allowed GRCC to effectively plan for adequate support for capital development projects and has not created an unreasonable drain on resources that could be used to support other educational services.

GRCC has not formally defined the financial relationship between its general operations and auxiliary enterprises, but has a long-standing guiding practice in place (2.F.6). Generally, GRCC does not use the general operation fund to support auxiliary enterprises. Conversely, GRCC has utilized funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.

The state of Washington has indicated that it will no longer perform institutional financial audits for community colleges, including GRCC, due to overall budget constraints that exist within the state. As a result of this action, the last external financial audit that the college participated in was for the 2007-2009 biennium. It has been approximately four years since the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) conducted its last official financial audit of GRCC (2.F.7).

In the GRCC self-study and supplemental exhibits, it is evident that the college continues to provide institutional level financial reports on an annual basis. Copies of these reports are provided to the Board of Trustees and larger campus community as part of the "Year-end Report" and budget process. However, these financial reports are not validated or reviewed by an external party as is required by standard (2.F.7). Institutional representatives interviewed did not indicate that any long-term plan of action was being developed to ensure compliance with this standard. The general response shared by several institutional representatives was that GRCC will continue to operate as usual, without an external financial audit, and hope that the State of Washington reverses its position on institutional audits.

> **Recommendation:** The evaluation team recommends that the college undergo an external financial audit for each year of operation (Standard 2.F.7).

The Green River Community College Foundation, founded in 1975, conducts fundraising activities on behalf of GRCC. The college has established a formal agreement outlining the financial relationship between the college and the foundation (2.F.8). There are four GRCC staff members that sit on the foundation board and provide operational support to help ensure that fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements.

Standard 2.G

GRCC has actively engaged in an extensive and successful capital project replacement and renovation program over the last ten years. The College has received funding for and completed eight facilities projects resulting in a total of 333,858 new/revitalized square feet of building space to support both career and technical and general education programs (2.G.1).

> **Commendation:** The evaluation team commends the college on the condition of its physical facilities located on its main campus and the comprehensive way GRCC has created secure, healthful learning and working environments to support the institution's mission, programs and services.

GRCC has been classified as a “small quantity dangerous waste generator” and is required to follow reporting standards as defined by the Washington Sate Department of Ecology. However, GRCC currently does not have a formal policy addressing the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials on campus posted or published on its website in either Board policies or College policies (2.G.2).

In an effort to strengthen this operation, GRCC has recently (February 2013) centralized oversight and management of the safe use, storage and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials under the direction of the Facilities Director and VP of Business Affairs. An accident prevention program has also been developed and implemented as part of the training associated with the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. A new college-wide Environmental Health & Safety committee is responsible for coordinating safety and health issues at the college, including the safe handling of hazardous materials and hazardous waste reduction efforts.

GRCC participates in ongoing, long-range facility master planning. The institution not only publishes the process guidelines but maintains a website exhibiting the institutions most recent facility master plan. The master planning process is designed to reflect the institutional facility needs as informed by the overarching college mission and strategic planning process. The facility master plan is updated every two years (2.G.3).

GRCC has provided adequate funding resources to ensure that equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality to support the institutional mission, core theme objectives, and its programs and services (2.G.4).

GRCC has developed appropriate and adequate technology systems and IT infrastructure to support management and operations functions, academic programs, and support services for all four locations. The college has emphasized innovation as a core value and this has manifested in the financial support for technology infrastructure and equipment across campuses (2.G.5).

GRCC’s IT department works closely with the Teaching and Learning Center to offer appropriate training and support for faculty, staff, and administrators in the effective use of technology. This training is based on both observed needs and requests made by all constituents of the college. Additionally, all new employees participate in an IT orientation training to acquaint them with technology on campus (2.G.6). The IT department has also created a centralized information technology helpdesk that is tasked with supporting employees of the college. Faculty, staff, and students expressed that IT support generally meets their respective needs in a timely fashion.

GRCC has created several committees that provide formal opportunities for technology planning and stakeholder feedback regarding technology on campus, including Instructional Technology, Student Technology Fee, and Administrative Systems committees. IT works closely with the IC committee on campus to provide faculty a voice in the IT planning process. Furthermore, GRCC has embedded IT representation into its capital development process to ensure that when new buildings are developed, IT infrastructure needs are discussed and vetted with the constituencies who will be located in the new facility (2.G.7).

Standard Three—Institutional Planning

The first of Green River Community College's four core themes, *College Transfer Education* is consistent with the college's mission statement and strategic plan. This core theme guides the planning for programs and academic standards necessary to accomplish this component of the college mission. (3.B.1) The college ensures this through the use of a comprehensive set of four supporting objectives: Access, Success, Responsiveness, and Collaboration. To measure progress within the core theme, contributing ultimately to mission fulfillment, the college has developed eighteen indicators. Compared to the GRCC Year One report, the college has radically increased its supporting objectives and indicators for this core theme. Where the Year One Report Evaluation Panel commended the college for its "less is more" approach, the college has worked itself away from that methodology. This provides a more detailed and multifaceted analysis of the core theme accomplishment, but also multiplies the complexity of that analysis. This is in fact stated within the self-evaluation (P. 96) and the Year One Report objective and indicators, along with each one's performance assessment are provided in the Comprehensive Year Seven Self-Evaluation (P. 97). The reason for the increased numbers and complexity of core theme indicators becomes clear when the college strategic plan is considered. The college decided that the mission fulfillment assessment and the strategic plan should be combined. This has been done quite effectively, providing depth to both efforts.

The college is to be commended for its initiative in effectively incorporating the college's core values, core themes, and core objectives into over-arching strategies. By doing so, the college has a single, comprehensive institutional planning document. The college has purposefully created a seven-year strategic plan that correlates with the seven-year cycle of accreditation.

The evaluation team is concerned, however, with the timing of the changes to the college's planning processes. The college has shifted its planning design at a time and in a manner that mission fulfillment as outlined in the Year One report is minimized. This diffuses the cycle of assessment, confuses the meaning of mission fulfillment, and diminishes the work done on the prior model. The GRCC faculty expressed frustration that changes such as this meant increased workload to accommodate the assessment requirements, and implied that good work already done was of little importance. The college is urged to make it a priority to follow through on the recently approved strategic plan so as to not obfuscate its assessment efforts through the seven-year accreditation cycle.

GRCC employs an Instructional Plan as well as Instructional Department/Division Plans to support mission fulfillment in each of the instructional areas identified by core theme. A corollary Student Affairs Plan and Student Affairs Division Plans exist to support the core themes. A feature of each plan is an evaluation component that specifies a five-year evaluation cycle for assessment and improvement (3.B.2).

The college's "Program Assessment and Improvement" (PA&I) evaluation process evaluates each program with a five-year cycle where program objectives, curriculum, intended student outcomes, and resources are reviewed. For the assessment of learning outcomes, there is an established system that is overseen by the Learning Outcomes Committee. Faculty members within each program are responsible for accomplishing program-level assessment. This activity is documented as appropriate either within the college-wide outcomes process, or in the PA&I process. The Program Assessment and Improvement process is overseen by the Vice President of Instruction who monitors and assures outcomes are clear for all programs, student data is

collected from courses across each program of study, and that improvements are made to better achieve competency.

The PA&I process includes a section on learning outcomes (Section E) where college-wide learning outcomes assessment within the program is addressed, along with program-level learning outcomes. There are sound educational initiatives in some departmental PA&I reports that lead to statements of effectiveness and improvement. While the learning outcomes are well-stated, and there is a good structure for enunciating assessment activities, the assessment processes lack measurement of student performance on specific learning outcomes. The program-level outcomes are simply listed with neither a place in the report for stating student accomplishment of those outcomes, nor analyses of learning performance data accompanied by suggested improvements. In addition to the PA&I process, the college's college-wide assessment process for college-wide outcomes includes a centralized process documented on the college website. This is a three-year (transitioning to a four-year) cycle of assessment administered via a Learning Outcomes Committee. The assessment process includes a year one assessment report, a one-year period of responding with necessary change, and a third-year assessment of change impacts. The methodology for college-wide outcomes assessment has been to survey faculty and students to ascertain use and importance of the college-wide outcomes, along with general statements of how this inclusion has enhanced the education process. Direct assessment of student performance, including rubrics-based scoring and analysis followed by aggregated success data is non-existent.

In keeping with the revised mission statement of providing "comprehensive educational programs," Career and Technical Education has engaged its diverse constituents in planning and developing its goals. The reaffirmation of the Core Theme of Career and Technical Education by the Strategic Planning and Assessment Team generated action plans that the Career and Technical Education Council, one of the Core Theme Monitoring Report Councils, will implement and assess under the oversight of the Continuous Improvement Committee. This Council's membership includes program deans and faculty, interdepartmental faculty, and representatives from supporting departments like Student Affairs, Finance, and community relations.

Another important element of Career and Technical Education planning is the use of advisory committees from local business and industry. The membership is a balance of employers and employees, and their role is to advise the administration and Board of Trustees, assist faculty in creating quality programs, monitoring trends in industry and employment, and provide feedback on program outcomes. A General Advisory Committee with representatives from many of the program advisory committees meets biannually to assist with the oversight of Career and Technical Education.

Data are drawn from many sources to inform Career and Technical Education planning: for instance, program and industry accreditation processes, grant evaluations, regional workforce development agency reports, local secondary school systems, partnered transfer institutions, and state licensing agencies.

The Core Theme Monitoring Report from the Career and Technical Education Council typically provides evidence to the Board that appropriate data are used as indicators to evaluate core theme performance and assess the college's fulfillment of core theme objectives. While the 2011 Core Theme Monitoring Report reveals that Career and Technical Education student enrollment exceeded those of other Core Themes, and that the college ranks second in the state for degrees

and certificates awarded, the objectives measured in the Year Seven report do not match those measured in the Core Theme Monitoring Reports. In the Year Seven Report, the analysis of data around the objectives of persistence, graduation, and estimated employment, indicates an aggregate score meeting or exceeding expectations. The Year Seven Report and discussion with the Career and Technical Education faculty and deans indicate that more can be done to align indicators and assessments in order to inform more accurately the planning of programs in instruction, support services, and resources in Career and Technical Education.

The College re-affirmed the *Continuing and Community Education* as one of the Core Themes and hence is one of the key aspects of its institutional mission (3.B.1).

The College described its process for transitioning to the new accreditation requirements, its rationale for establishing the Monitoring Report Councils as the vehicle for assessing mission fulfillment for the Core Themes, and the process for identifying its Core Themes. In addition, the Institution's *Strategic Planning and Assessment Team* website documents the steps taken to review the mission, Core Themes, core values, core objectives, and core indicators.
The institution reported the assigned Monitoring Report Council evaluates performance within assigned Core Theme as per the indicators of achievement. The institution also provided a schedule for presentation of Monitoring Reports to the Board of Trustees wherein information regarding institutional Core Theme performance is presented. The archived Monitoring Reports on the *Continuous Improvement Committee* webpage document presentations to the Board of Trustees and hence accountability.

In terms of the Continuing and Community Education Core Theme, the process identified indicators of achievement as follows (1) meeting community needs with a focus on the number and percent of instructional classes offered which meet or exceed enrollment targets defined as 70 to 80 percent of capacity, (2) enrollment which is the number and percent of the College's total enrollment operationally defined as the Continuing and Community FTE and percentage of the college total FTE for the last three academic years, and (3) repeat students understood as the number and percent of repeat students in continuing and community education within a three-year period operationally defined as the starting cohort of students in a given academic year.

The college provided evidence of data collection, which is useful in evaluating accomplishment of core theme objectives. Student surveys, found on the Continuing Education website, and Monitoring Report website, document the collection and use of data in evaluation of accomplishment. Annual planning forms provide for data collection and for use of collected data for future programming.

Standard Four—Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement

Standard 4.A

Green River Community College identified four core themes during the self-evaluation process for the new NWCCU accreditation standards. The four core themes are College Transfer Education, Career and Technical Education, College Readiness Education, and Continuing and Community Education. The core themes reflect the institutional intentionality as reflected in the mission statement, which is a very general statement not specifically enunciating the core themes. Each core theme has been crafted to focus on the college's "instructional areas while other functions of the college support these Core Themes." (Self-Evaluation, P. 94) Following review by the college's Monitoring Report Council, the Board of Trustees receives reports of mission fulfillment along with, and as a part of the strategic planning and reporting.

Standard 4.A Assessment

Since the submission and subsequent evaluation of its Year One report, Green River has revised its assessment of core themes. The revision relies more on a three-year trend analysis from a rolling baseline year and less on local, state, and national comparatives. The reasoning behind this change includes a more comprehensive study of its students than could be included in comparatives, leading to continuous improvement based on analysis of college-wide student success data. The report assures however, that comparison to local, state and national norms will continue to reflect in the assessment of the core themes, including the College Transfer Education core theme.

For instructional programs, Green River has developed an assessment system that identifies levels of learning outcomes: from course learning outcomes to program outcomes into college-wide outcomes, but has yet to develop a system to collect, analyze, and implement improvements based on the assessment of those outcomes. The Instructional Council and the Faculty Curriculum Review Committee oversee the link between the Course Adoption Review Forms, syllabi, and the Program Assessment and Improvement process. While Career and Technical Education programs are often competency-based and assessed through industry or state mandated standardized tests, the instructional programs still need to collect, analyze, evaluate, and respond to data collected from assessment of course, program, and college-wide learning outcomes.

The last Monitoring Report delivered to the Board on the Professional/Technical Education, 2011-2012, summarized the preparation, analysis, and evaluation of clear objectives and indicators of student achievement. The indicators were academic progress, preparedness for employment, employment after enrollment, wage earnings, and alumni satisfaction. According to those indicators, the Career and Technical Education Core Theme met or exceeded expectations. In the Year Seven Report, the indicators were persistence, graduation, and estimated employment. The indicators and data collected will have to be aligned in order for the Core Theme to have meaningful role in strategic, budgetary, and instructional planning and assessment.

Standard 4.B Improvement

The Year Seven Report chronicles the changes in leadership and organization at Green River and the many examples within this core theme development, analysis, and assessment that have

impacted strategic planning, decision-making, instruction, and resource allocation. The Year Seven Report offers numerous examples of positive change in the way that Core Themes were aligned, correlated across the campus, and articulated. Specifically, the Career and Technical division developed competency-based, modularized programs, for example in Business Education and Carpentry Technology, to respond to changing needs of students. Career and Technical education should be commended for responding to the fluctuations in employment trends in the last few years and adapting instructional programs in at least three ways: 1) many programs are competency-based which allows multiple subjects, like Brakes, Electrical, and Paint within the automotive program, to share the same facility at the same time, accommodate different learning styles of students, develop cohorts, and fast-track students for employment; 2) many programs are entrepreneurial providing live work for students in the trades, offering them education and practical application at once; and 3) many programs offer open enrollment throughout the year in order to accommodate changes in students' employment. The Career and Technical Education programs illustrate the core objectives of access, success, responsiveness, and collaboration.

In the near future, other improvements may include the Institutional Effectiveness Department developing a dashboard and scorecard system for the Career and Technical Education indicators that will engage more stakeholders in assessment and aid the Career and Technical Education Monitoring Report Council in its analysis of the Core Theme indicators. With a more robust system and broader representation on the council, the Career and Technical Education area will be able to assess its accomplishments more holistically. And with the strategic planning process becoming more closely aligned with budgeting, resources will be dedicated more directly to Core Theme objectives.

As the process of continuous improvement aligns and integrates the Core Themes across campus, Green River will aid the Career and Technical Education Core Theme by providing oversight through the Continuous Improvement Committee; realigning the Monitoring Reports and corresponding Councils; improving data collection, analysis, and support through the Department of Institutional Effectiveness; and redesigning the Program, Assessment, and Improvement processes to include cohort-based student success indicators and holistic evaluation of indicators.

Core Theme: College Transfer

The College Transfer Education Core Theme is assessed through the college monitoring report process. However, the 2011-2012 Monitoring Report for Transfer Education is fundamentally flawed. It supports a set of indicators that do not conform with the transfer indicators in the college self-evaluation. Each taken by itself (the Monitoring Reports and the Self Evaluation), would be generally sufficient in showing progress on the core theme objective. Taken together, they confuse the assessment and call into question the validity of the indicators. The evaluation committee is concerned that the pace of change undertaken by the college has to varying degrees, steamrolled and derailed the intent of the Commission for serious internal evaluation by the college to assess mission fulfillment.

The college uses a Program Assessment and Improvement (PA&I) process to assess multiple aspects of its academic programs. Each program is on a five-year evaluation cycle with programs being placed on a schedule such that a percentage of programs are evaluated every year. The College Transfer Education Monitoring Report Council tracks the progress of core indicator accomplishment and also assesses the assessment processes. The indicators in the comprehensive

self-evaluation have not yet been assessed because it is a newly-revised set of indicators. There is however, a set of assessed indicators listed in the self-evaluation from the original Year One Report. This assessment shows that all indicators for the former objective: *College transfer students will meet the requirements for transfer to successfully pursue a baccalaureate degree* were either met or exceeded.

Coupled with the PA&I assessment process, GRCC has crafted specific college-wide learning outcomes. The results of the college-wide learning outcomes assessment are indirect, employing surveys of faculty and students to determine the importance of these outcomes in learning and to gauge inclusion in the curriculum. Because of this structure, the results are not authentic assessment of learning and therefore cannot be used to guide specific changes in, and improve the curriculum. (4.A.3, 4.A.6)

4. A.1- The institution documented an institutional structure aligned to ensure systematic accomplishment of core theme objectives. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Continuous Improvement Committee, the Monitoring Report Councils, and consistent reporting to the Board of Trustees confirm systematic data collection, analysis, and a reporting structure to ensure appropriate data utilization. Indications are the institution has developed an effective model for data collection.

The institution documented a potentially effective evaluation system for programs and services. The annual planning forms document the relationship of college goals, Core Themes, resource allocation, and planning. This system confirms systematic data collection and analysis and a reporting structure to ensure appropriate data utilization. The College provided committee and Board of Trustee minutes to document. Documentation supports faculty leadership in educational program assessment and reviews. However, indications are data analysis and hence evaluation is sporadic lacking consistent use of results (4. A. 2). The process outlined via the Comprehensive Assessment Plan could develop into a fully integrated system for evaluating student achievement (4.A.3). However, indications are the process has not yet fully developed.

The Institution's committee structure provides a comprehensive alignment and improvement process for instructional and support services. The *Continuous Improvement Committee* is charged with aligning accreditation, strategic planning, and communication processes. Meeting agendas and minutes document ongoing efforts, which are subsequently incorporated into the Monitoring Reports presented to the Board of Trustees. While the process holds great potential for accomplishing its purpose, the evaluator did not find evidence of consistent and effective evaluation activity.

In addition, Annual Planning Forms document division initiatives with implementation strategies, expected outcomes, responsible office, target dates, resources, and results (4. A.5). Indications are the Annual Planning Forms serve the administrative and student services areas well but are not comprehensive with regard to assessment requirements lacking meaningful measures of target accomplishment and a mechanism for use of results in subsequent planning.

Core Theme: Career and Technical Education

Since an environmental scan in 2012 that led to revising its strategic plan, Green River has implemented a comprehensive and responsive means of refining the Career and Technical Education Core Theme. The college solicited a broad base of input, realigned the strategic plan with core theme development and adapted a planning, assessment, and improvement framework

from their core objectives and indicators. Consolidating the analysis of data into the new Department of Institutional Effectiveness and providing periodic Monitoring Reports to the Board create a clear process for review and implementation of Core Theme planning and assessment. The Continuous Improvement Committee is the representative body of the college-wide community responsible for overseeing the strategic plan's implementation and periodic Core Theme Monitoring Reports informing the Board.

Career and Technical Education has met with particular success in the last five years: increasing its enrollment at a greater rate than that of other Core Theme areas in the college, and achieving the second highest number of degrees and certificates awarded in the state. The Year Seven Report stated that the indicators will change with the revised strategic plan to provide more holistic measures of student accomplishment. A current analysis of the data, supporting documents, and interviews with key personnel indicate that Career and Technical Education at Green River is ambitious, responsive, and relevant.

The Career and Technical Education Core Theme's primary objective (that Career and Technical Students will master the skills sought by employers to be successful in the workplace) has four core objectives, assessed using 2-3 core indicators:

- **Access**—to remove barriers to enrollment in career and technical programs and provide relevant training opportunities.
- **Success**—increase support for student progress and completion of their goals while at college, achievement of nationally recognized credentials (where available), and placement in family wage-earning employment after college.
- **Responsiveness**—increase pace of response to current and emerging employment needs of business and industry and student interests.
- **Collaboration**—increase partnerships with K-12 schools, business and industry, community and college alumni to improve awareness of programs and funding.

Core Theme: College Readiness

The GRCC College Readiness Core Theme consists of four objectives: Access, Success, Responsiveness and Collaboration. Sets of four to six indicators have been designed as metrics for each objective. Because the GRCC Strategic Plan was revised during the 2012-2013 academic year, data has not yet been analyzed to quantify success on the new College Readiness Core Themes. However, the self-study included a table which summarizes the success of the program for the 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012 academic years. It appears that the data collected from the previous set of indicators was used to make substantive improvements in the ABE, GED, ESOL and pre-college completion programs. Although this is a work in progress, the NWCCU evaluators feel that it has great potential to provide useful information for GRCC.

The evaluator recognizes that GRCC has had a lapse in addressing ***Standard 4.A.1*** (ongoing systematic collection of data), due to the recent revision of its Strategic Plan. Relating to ***Standard 4.A.2,*** GRCC demonstrates effective methods of evaluation of its programs and services that are delivered on its main and branch campuses. All courses are evaluated consistently. From the evaluators' interviews with a representative sample of the GRCC Basic Skills faculty, It was evident that faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.
Standard 4.A.3: GRCC appears to have a well-designed plan to assess student achievement. Course and program learning outcomes are published for the programs affiliated with the

College Readiness Core Theme. The evaluators reviewed a sample of course syllabi, and found clearly identifiable learning outcomes.
The evaluation team felt that GRCC is working to holistically evaluate the alignment, correlation, and integration of its programs and services with respect to the accomplishment of the College Readiness Core Theme (4.A.4, 4.A.5, and 4.A.6.).

Standard 4.B Improvements to the College, Based on the Success Core Objective
GRCC's analysis of its Core Theme data from the previous three years revealed that ABE/ESOL, GED, and pre-college completion programs were meeting the expected goals for percentages of students who met state standards, earned their GED, or achieved college-level English or math skills. The evaluators found evidence that GRCC's planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of the college's physical and academic resources. Placement testing has recently been revised, based on data collected from assessment procedures, and students are now being more accurately tested and placed in appropriate courses. The sequencing of math and reading/writing/English course has also been streamlined, based on assessment data.

As stated in the ER 13 Library and Information Resources section of this report, the GRCC Library has acquired new resources to support underprepared students. The Essential College Skills collection houses books, study guides, instructional DVDs, and computer software for ABE students and students wishing to improve their reading, writing, mathematics, and study skills. It also includes test preparation practice manuals for GED, COMPASS, SAT, and ACT. The library collaborated with the ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) to completely restructure the collection in 2010. (3.B.2 & 4.B.1)

Standard 4.B.2. requires the institution to use "the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-supported planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements." As previously stated in this report, the evaluators feel that GRCC has not yet come full-circle in the assessment of its programs. We encourage the College to continue to pursue that goal.

Because the Institutional Effectiveness office has now hired two additional staff members, and the new Strategic Plan is in place, the NWCCU evaluation team feels assured that the College does have a detailed plan for continuous improvement. We believe that meaningful analysis of data will become more useful to the College within the next one to two years. We suggest that GRCC continue to develop efficient methods of collecting and analyzing data that can be used to successfully place students in the appropriate courses, to refine the courses that are offered, to offer sufficient sections of high-demand courses, and to direct funds toward services and facilities that will provide optimal benefits to the general student population.

Summary
GRCC is addressing its College Readiness Core Theme by fostering a learner-centered environment for its diverse community, offering basic skills courses, and also providing the opportunity for students to enroll in programs which lead to certificates or degrees. Physical facilities are well-maintained, welcoming and accessible, providing ample places for students to feel comfortable while on campus. During the evaluators' visit to campus, GRCC's commons areas, labs, lobbies of classroom buildings, and indoor study areas were filled with students who were studying and socializing. Faculty and staff are collegial, well-qualified for their jobs, and committed to student success. The evaluators are confident that the faculty and academic administrators' enthusiasm for student success and their awareness of the importance of assessment will ensure a successful future for GRCC. A key to that success will be the use of

data to make informed decisions for the betterment of the institution and the Auburn area community.

Core Theme: Continuing and Community Education

In terms of Continuing and Community Education Core Theme, the process identified indicators of achievement as follows; (1) meeting community needs with a focus on the number and percent of instructional classes offered which meet or exceed enrollment targets defined as 70 to 80 percent of capacity, (2) enrollment which is the number and percent of the College's total enrollment operationally defined as the Continuing and Community FTE and percentage of the college total FTE for the last three academic years, and (3) repeat students understood as the number and percent of repeat students in continuing and community education within a three-year period operationally defined as the starting cohort of students in a given academic year.

The 2010-2011 Monitoring Report linked off the Monitoring Reports webpage summarizes data for a five year period (2006-2011) as per the indicators of achievement of the respective Core Theme objectives. The section on challenges and opportunities informs planning for subsequent years (3.B.2).

The Institution utilizes environmental scans and advisory groups to determine program offerings and frequency (3. B.3). Indications are planning within the community and continuing education core theme is consistent with the institution's comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services. In addition, copies of annual planning forms document a process which ties implementation strategies to Core Theme, College Goals, and the Strategic Plan although the process has not yet developed as consistently or functions as a cohesive whole.

Standard 4.B

Through the Monitoring Reports provided to the President and Board of Trustees, communicates progress on mission fulfillment through the assessment of objective indicator accomplishment has been established. The system however, is not aligned and does not support the assessed indicators in the self-evaluation. The college recognizes this and while the structure is good, improvements to alignment are necessary. As a result, the college formed a Continuous Improvement Committee, realigned the Monitoring Reports and requisite councils, assigned the Department of Institutional Effectiveness to provide key services and support, and is quickly moving forward in redesigning processes to include cohort-based indicators and a more holistic evaluation process to better aid the monitoring process. This will not only better support assessment of mission fulfillment, but will drive anticipated efforts such as the Achieving the Dream Initiative.

The evaluation committee is concerned that evidence does not indicate that learning outcomes assessment involves systematic implementation of direct assessment of student accomplishment including means of analysis to guide improvement.

> Recommendation: The evaluation committee recommends that the college move aggressively to implement an effective and comprehensive system of direct and authentic assessment that appraises student accomplishment of identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes, from which are derived meaningful results that provide clear direction for curricular and instructional improvement. (4.A.3, 4.A.6, 4.B.1, 4.B.2)

4. B.1- The College documented the process for identifying Core Themes, Core Theme Objectives, and the indicators of achievement for each. The Institution also aligned Core Themes, Institutional Goals, and Core Values. Additionally, the institution demonstrated the improvement process via meeting agenda items, minutes, and Monitoring Reports presented to the Board, etc. While some of the Annual Planning Forms appropriately link planning to budget requests, this depth of planning is minimally evident.

4. B.2- The institution provided a copy of the Comprehensive Assessment Plan which addresses Course-level, Program-Level, and College-Wide Assessment. The assessment plan documents faculty leadership and provides for improvements to enhance student learning achievements. The College also provided a copy of the Program Assessment and Improvement (PA&I) process which has been in operation for several years. This process includes a section which focuses on assessment of student learning via department developed and implemented projects which assess achievement of program level, degree/ certificate level, or campus wide outcome. While the structure appears to be in place for linking assessment of student learning to academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements, the evidence indicates the structure has not been fully utilized to effectively assess student learning. However, Monitoring Reports provide a vehicle for sharing available information to decision-makers on a consistent basis.

Chapter Five: Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation and Sustainability

The college's commitment to mission fulfillment is clearly defined. The College has been developing a new institutional effectiveness model, which articulates the college mission and ties it to the core themes and Board of Trustees monitoring reports. The Board plans to review the monitoring reports annually, prior to the President's evaluation and Board annual retreat. Although not yet demonstrated, GRCC has laid out a plan to tie the department, program and college-level efforts to the planning process. A participative process that assesses data from monitoring, analyses accomplishment of objectives, and adjusts decisions accordingly will regularly assess the monitoring reports and objectives. (5.A.1)

Although in the process of changing to the new GRCC 2013-2020 Strategic Plan the college communicates assessment results on its Institutional Effectiveness website and on various college web pages to ensure assessment conclusions are broadly discussed and available to all constituents. The college strategic master planning process was completed after the self-study was sent. The new plan, approved by the Board in March 2013, is for 2013-2020. The written plan will be to review annual monitoring reports to provide a basis for self-reflection and evaluation at all levels of the college. The prior objectives for the institution were primarily related to student success, but they do not encompass the new Core Theme Objectives of Access, Responsiveness, Collaboration, and Diversity and Equity. Despite not currently being fully aligned the college was able to demonstrate numerous examples of how data from outcomes measures impacted institutional policies and practices to better meet college goals.

Standard 5.B Adaptation and Sustainability

Adequacy and Documentation of Resources, Capacity, and Effectiveness of Operations

Because the new Institutional Strategic Plan calls for broader and more comprehensive indicators, the underlying scoring methods will be adapted. Using 2012-2013 as the transition year, the new Institutional Strategic Plan will set the new strategic planning cycle in motion. This cycle corresponds with the seven-year accreditation cycle. It will have yearly operational reviews corresponding with operational plans, and have a midterm major strategic planning review between years three and four. Therefore, Green River will have a systematic evaluation of resources, capacity, adequacy and effectiveness with respect to accomplishment of its Core Theme Objectives and, ultimately, the College Mission. Identified key work to be accomplished in the next year will be the revision of the Program Assessment and Improvement process to align more seamlessly with the new strategic planning effort. Special attention will also be made to align the annual planning process with respect to budget and resources and Core Theme alignment (5.B.1 and 5.B.2.).

Standard 5.B.3 Monitoring of External Environment

Since the full-scale environmental scan, which was conducted through spring 2012 and finalized in August 2012, the College has continuously updated and appended the document. This process will continue under the auspices of the Department of Institutional Effectiveness and will be factored into the continuous improvement process with respect to the Institutional Strategic Plan. It will help dictate course corrections and adjustments during the new seven- year cycle, as well as possible major adjustments in Mission, Core Themes, Core Objectives and Core Indicators.

This is clearly a transition period for the College with a relatively new president, Trustees, executive leadership team and accreditation cycle. It is also a period of diminished funding and increased competition for scarce resources. During the past year, Green River has responded to these challenges by conducting a comprehensive environmental scan at the national, state and local levels. It has also invested in a large-scale and inclusive strategic planning process that includes all areas of the college and reaches far into the community. The stage is set for alignment and goal achievement.

The GRCC Mission Statement was recently reviewed during this academic year following a broad external and opportunity for internal input. During the past year, GRCC has continued to develop the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) model to link planning actions and activities. The IE model was developed internally and utilizes a "Monitoring Reports" approach. Assessment of Mission Fulfillment is a summative assessment of college performance based upon objectives and indicators identified for each Core Theme.

Evaluators acknowledge this is the second opportunity GRCC has had to implement an Institutional Effectiveness model to determine Mission success. Interviews with a the campus community (i.e., students, staff and faculty) revealed some awareness of the IE work, but little understanding of how the process would impact the College's daily work, strategic planning or budget allocation. It is clear to the Evaluation team that GRCC is focused on the spirit of continuous improvement. Therefore, evaluators understand that future actions taken by GRCC to improve the effectiveness of the recourses in meeting the core theme will be an evolving and iterative process.

GRCC is currently finalizing Monitoring Reports to determine Mission Fulfillment as a means for an evidence-based judgment about mission fulfillment. GRCC identified the success in each Core Theme as a target score. In the context of shortened timelines due to this new phase, evaluators agreed a full cycle of review would improve the ability for GRCC to sharpen the assessment and reporting process.

Standard 5.B Adaption and Sustainability

Green River Community College utilizes numerous resources to monitor its internal and external environments and demonstrates an ability to adapt as necessarily its mission core themes, programs, and services to accommodate changing and emerging needs, trends and influences. The suspension and addition of programs includes an internal and external component. GRCC identified the state budget challenges as one factor directly impacting the College's ability to provide services to those most needing additional support.

Report on Credit Hour Policy

Due to the lateness of the announced requirement to address the policy on credit hour, GRCC did not specifically address this in the comprehensive self-evaluation. However, the college has an Instruction policy that, once adopted, will be a part of the GRCC Administrative Policies Manual. This policy conforms to the standards set forth by the Washington State Board of Community & Technical Colleges. In this policy, the college defines total contact hours, credit values and credit equivalents. The college also includes in this policy, the definition of full-time students, part-time students, and students taking overload. For this last category, the policy sets criteria necessary for students to enroll in overload. College course adoption and revision forms

include course outcomes and necessary contact hours along with the nature of those hours (e.g. lecture, lab, etc.). From this documentation is derived the credit hours for the course. The number of credit hours then, is consistent across all sections of the course being offered.

Summary

The Evaluation Team for the Year Seven report commends Green River Community College administration, faculty, staff, and students for their courage and commitment to the pilot process. The Evaluators were impressed with the speed at which special data and report requests were provided. Students, staff and faculty reported in individual interviews and forum meetings a deep regard for the student success and strong support for GRCC within the region.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

1. The evaluation team commends the college trustees, faculty, staff, and administration, for their dedication to student success and their passion for teaching and learning.

2. The evaluation team commends the college on the condition of its physical facilities located on its main campus and the comprehensive way GRCC has created secure, healthful learning and working environments to support the institution's mission, programs and services.

Recommendations:

1. The evaluation team recommends that the college ensure the alignment between the mission statement and the core themes – that the core themes "individually manifest" and "collectively encompass" the college mission statement (1.B.1), that the core theme objectives and verifiable indicators be sufficient to evaluate the accomplishment of core themes (1.B.2), and that the evaluation of programs and services be holistically informed by indicator data for each core theme objective (3.B.3, 4.A.4).

2. The evaluation team recommends that the college clarify and operationalize its system of governance with particular attention to communication regarding process and decision-making with all college constituencies (2.A.1).

3. The evaluation team recommends the Board reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies (2.A.7).

4. The evaluation team recommends that the college undergo an external financial audit for each year of operation (2.F.7).

5. The evaluation team recommends that the college move aggressively to implement an effective and comprehensive system of direct and authentic assessment that appraises student accomplishment of existing course, program, and college-wide learning outcomes from which are derived meaningful results that provide clear direction for curricular and instructional improvement. (4.A.3, 4.A.6, 4.B.1, 4.B.2)