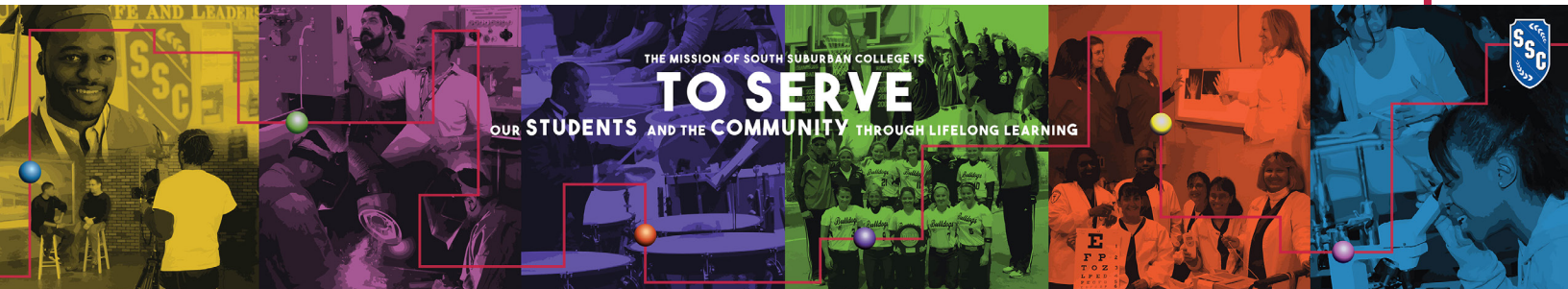


ASSURANCE ARGUMENT

HLC REACCREDITATION SITE VISIT

MARCH 25-26TH, 2019



SOUTH SUBURBAN COLLEGE

Assurance Argument

South Suburban College of Cook County - IL

3/5/2019

1 - Mission

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

1. A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

College Mission Statement

"The mission of South Suburban College is to Serve our Students and the Community through lifelong learning."

College Vision Statement

"South Suburban College is a welcoming, attractive, efficient, safe, transparent, and financially secure institution that fosters creative communication and synergy within the campus community and between that community and its partners.

Through innovative teaching, integration of technology, modeling sustainable practices that value the environment, cultivation of external partners and a culture of assessment, SSC will play a pivotal role in transforming the lives of its diverse student population."

Response to 1.A.1

Founded in 1927 as Thornton Junior College, South Suburban College (SSC) has an extensive [history](#) of serving the community and its students. Since its accreditation as Thornton Junior College in 1933, SSC has had a positive influence on its students and the community.

SSC's mission statement is meaningful, concise, and easily understood by faculty and staff, the community served, and our students.

The college periodically reviews the mission statement during strategic planning. The mission statement was most recently reviewed during the development of the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. After numerous discussions across the college and the community, the Board of Trustees approved the college's mission statement, vision statement, and core value statements on October 9, 2014, as part of its approval of the [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#).

Response to 1.A.2

The mission, vision, and institutional core values support SSC's commitment to serve our students, partners, and community. Our mission, vision, and core values also support SSC's commitment to provide all students with an excellent, accessible, and student-centered institution.

Eight institutional [core values](#) articulate how the mission is lived and realized. The core values are Service, Student-Centered Environment, Community, Collaboration, Accessibility, Respect, Excellence, and Sustainability. In support of the mission, vision, and core values statements, SSC articulated [dedication and goals statements](#) that focus on high quality education, training, and services that are accessible and affordable.

The college is located approximately 25 miles south of downtown Chicago, Illinois, and services an area of 94 square miles. The population served is estimated to be 377,622 and reside in [twenty-one Chicago suburbs](#). The college also serves students from northwest Indiana. All programs and services align with the college's mission to meet the needs of the constituents in our service area. The college also offers some programs and courses at the [Oak Forest Center](#) on the west side of the district.

SSC's academic programs, training, and services support our mission statement. The college offers [career education programs, certificates, transfer curricula](#), general education courses, and [developmental education](#). Complete information about these offerings can be found in the [college catalog](#).

The college offers contract training to meet the specific needs of business and industry partners.

High school students participate in [dual credit courses](#). The dual credit numbers for spring 2018 (1826), summer 2018 (65), and fall 2018 (1184) reflect our high school students' participation in dual credit. Working with our [high school partners](#), dual credit students benefit in multiple ways: reduction of college costs, reduction of time to college degree completion, enhancement of the curriculum for high school students, improvement of the transition between high school and college, and earning of college credit before graduation. The [Dual Credit Faculty Handbook](#) is available to partner high schools and career centers as a resource.

In addition, SSC's [Adult Education Department](#) offers many opportunities for adults to build basic skills. The Adult Education Department celebrated its 47th graduating class on May 19, 2017. During these 47 years, SSC has graduated more than 5,000 students.

As listed in the [2018-2019 Catalog](#), SSC offers numerous programs for degrees and certificates of completion. SSC offers [AGS, AA, AS, AFA, AES, and AAS degrees](#). In addition, SSC also offers [advanced certificates and basic certificates](#).

SSC provides opportunities for our constituents to enjoy a variety of [music, art](#), and [theatrical events](#).

SSC's [enrollment data](#) is consistent with our [demographic profile for Community College District 510](#). The college serves a predominantly minority student population (76%), and, in recent years, the Hispanic/Latino student population has grown to approximately 20% of the total student population. This diversity of the SSC student body reflects the population of the district.

The South Suburban College [Financial Aid Office](#) (SSCFAO) processed over 9,000 applications for financial aid during fiscal year 2018. The SSCFAO awarded 2,523 students with Pell Grants totaling \$7,832,993. In fiscal year 2018, the SSCFAO awarded 863 students Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant Awards from the State of Illinois totaling \$1,090,392. The SSCFAO also helped over 200 veterans with federal and state veteran's assistance totaling over \$200,000. The office also provides guidance and [documents to assist students with financial aid](#).

The [South Suburban College Foundation](#) awarded academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,988,075.00 for the period of 1989 to 2018.

Additional detailed information about financial aid applications and SSC Foundation awards for the years of 2008-2017 is found in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports for [2008](#), [2009](#), [2010](#), [2011](#), [2012](#), [2013](#), [2014](#), [2015](#), [2016](#), [2017](#), and [2018](#).

In addition to the many federal and state financial aid opportunities available, the South Suburban College Foundation (SSCF) offers numerous [scholarships](#) to qualified applicants and is used for tuition, fees, books, and supplies.

Over past last ten years, the college has received over \$151,080,693 in [grant funding](#). In support of our mission, grant funds have been utilized to acquire instructional equipment and other learning resources that are relevant, current, and meet industry standards. The Allied Health, Nursing, and MIS/CIS programs have benefitted with equipment purchases from both the Perkins Grant and the Primarily Black Institution Grant.

One hundred and twenty two of our classrooms have presentation equipment to enhance the learning experience of our students.

The college opened up the following new labs: a Manufacturing Lab, Welding Lab, Speech Lab, [Reading Center](#), and [South Works Maker Lab](#). The college purchased new equipment for programs including Nursing, Allied Health, Legal Studies, Manufacturing, and Business, such as a 3D printer, new echocardiography machines, simulators, stenograph machines, law books for the law library, and new computers for business labs. Some of the grants have also provided career educational opportunities for our students in support of our mission. The college proactively seeks grant opportunities that will benefit our students, faculty, and business partners.

Response to 1.A.3

SSC's administration, faculty, and staff demonstrate daily how the institution supports the college's mission. The Board of Trustees supports the mission as it reviews and authorizes budget reports, facility modifications/upgrades, and personnel recommendations. This commitment is evidenced by the college's budgetary alignment with its mission. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the operation budget directly supports student learning with instructors' salaries, instructional equipment/supplies, and student support services. See the [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018](#) for more information. In particular, SSC has many full-time faculty dedicated to developmental education. A significant percentage of our student population in any given semester requires some developmental education in English, math, and reading. See [Developmental Students Data](#) and [Students Placing into Developmental Courses](#) for details. SSC is committed to meeting this need. While many institutions staff developmental courses largely with adjunct faculty, SSC believes that this critical component of education requires developmental specialists.

SSC's governance promotes effective leadership and supports collaboration that enables the organization to fulfill its mission. This is accomplished through the following principles:

- Constituents provide input by electing the members of the SSC Board of Trustees.
- The Board of Trustees provides resources and establish [policies](#) to carry out the mission.
- The President is [charged](#) with numerous duties and responsibilities that support a learning culture.
- Many [faculty committees](#) provide essential feedback.
- Numerous decision-making bodies are empowered to improve educational services.
- Numerous governing and [administrative structures](#) encourage collaboration and help us meet our goals. Diverse perspectives from all college constituents and the community at large are encouraged.

The college will provide additional detailed discussion of this subcomponent in Criterion 5.C.1.

Sources

- Adult Education
- Associate Degrees Certificates Transfer Curricula - Viewbook
- Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual
- Certificates
- College Profile and Institutional Snapshot
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2008
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2009
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2011
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2012
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2017
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018
- Core Values - Strategic Plan
- Developmental Courses - Catalog 2018-2019
- Developmental Students Data
- Documents to Assist Students with Financial Aid
- Dual Credit Courses
- Dual Credit Faculty Handbook
- Dual Credit High School Partners
- Duties and Responsibilities of the College President
- Faculty Committees - SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Financial Aid Office
- Master Academic Plans and General Education Requirements
- Mission Dedication Goals Vision Values - Web
- Music and Art Events
- Oak Forest Center - Web
- Organizational Charts 2008-2019
- Plays
- Reading Center
- Residency Information and Communities Served
- Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards Totals 2009-2018
- Scholarship Book 2018
- South Suburban College Foundation Annual Report Summer 2018
- South Suburban College History 1927-2017
- SouthWorks MakerLab - Web
- SSC Catalog 2018-2019
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Student Demographics and District 510 Economic Indicators
- Students Placing into Developmental Courses

1. B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

Response to 1.B.1

SSC clearly articulates its mission through multiple public documents and venues.

To ensure that the institutional mission remains visible, current, valid, comprehensive, clear, and reviewed by those affected, the following actions are in place:

1. SSC's mission statement is communicated to the students and community through the [catalog](#), [strategic plan](#), [letterhead](#), and on the [website](#). The catalog is updated annually and the website is reviewed regularly to verify that information is accurate and current and to confirm that the mission is clear. The mission statement is also included in the college's orientation materials such as the OCS 121 course and the [student handbook](#). Additionally, courses utilize a [standardized syllabus template](#), and many faculty include the mission statement in their syllabi. The mission statement is displayed prominently on bulletin boards in hallways and classrooms. The mission statement is also displayed on banners, bookmarks, coffee coasters, desk pads, and other items throughout the campus. Many campus personnel have taglines with the college mission on their emails.
2. The Board of Trustees, as part of the strategic planning process, periodically reviews the mission statement, vision, and core values. The Board of Trustees approved the mission as part of the approval of the most recent [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#).
3. By [faculty contract](#), SSC has [ten standing academic committees, six standing college committees, as-needed ad-hoc committees, and new faculty search committees](#). These committees composed of faculty, staff, administrators, and at times, students, help ensure that SSC programs function with input from all

involved and stay true to the institutional mission statement, vision, core values, and institutional goals.

4. [Section 3.1 of the support staff contract](#) specifies that the college's mission takes priority over other contract issues.
5. In our advisory council meetings, leaders of our academic programs meet with community and professional constituents at least once a year. During these meetings, program instructors, program coordinators, departmental deans, and departmental chairs examine critiques and recommendations from the community/profession that the institution serves. SSC program personnel then evaluate these critiques and recommendations and implement those with merit.

Moreover, the [policy manual](#) of the Board of Trustees states the board's [philosophy and objectives](#), which are in accordance with and support the SSC mission statement, vision, core values, and institutional goals.

Our [Human Resources Department](#) ensures that every employee supports the college's mission. The mission of the college is discussed during interviews and candidates are screened for alignment with our mission. Additional information is provided during the [New Employee Orientation](#).

SSC clearly articulates its mission through multiple public documents and institutional forms.

Response to 1.B.2 and 1.B.3

SSC's [Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Institutional Goals](#) are current and demonstrate a commitment to our students, employers, and communities. The college is committed to serving its mission through lifelong learning, career and technical education, general education of our students, support of cultural and social activities, and its ongoing commitment and support of regional economic development in the area. SSC utilizes its [eight core values](#) as a foundation for all planning and activities in support of the college mission and vision.

The [strategic plan](#) and the [college budget](#) guide the operations of the college. These documents take into account the college's mission and vision. All requests brought to the Board of Trustees for approval require that a Board Action Request Form (BAR) be submitted. The request must identify on the BAR that the request directly aligns with our strategic plan and budget before consideration by the board. Deliberate alignment of the strategies and objectives in the strategic plan and budget documents helps to ensure that the college mission and vision are always supported.

The college's [strategic plan](#) underscores the institution's mission and demonstrates SSC's commitment to education. The strategic directions and goals outlined in the strategic plan identify the institution's emphasis on support services and collaborative programs to a diverse student population. They also affirm the commitment of the institution to improve the educational success of our students that will lead to economic

improvement and a higher quality of life. Students develop both interpersonal skills and the technical skills demanded by local industries as articulated to program coordinators and deans via various vehicles such as advisory board meetings, responses to surveys, and data collection.

Our academic programs prepare students for career entry, university transfer (such as the [Dual Degree Program with Governors State University](#)), [developmental education](#), and workforce skill development.

As noted in the mission statement, our focus is on “lifelong learning.” The college is committed to workforce development and provides quality employer-driven curricula and programs to students and employees. The [Business and Career Institute](#), [Career Development and Job Placement Center](#), [Non-Traditional Workforce for Women and Men Panel](#), and [Workforce Training](#) are among the services and programs demonstrating our commitment to workforce development.

SSC is also sensitive to its region's economy. The college is committed to providing affordable college education. The college and Board of Trustees have maintained a low tuition rate, raising tuition and fees only if based on adequate vetting and data analysis.

Since its last accreditation, South Suburban College has expanded its facilities to provide the highest quality education while staying within our budget constraints. Facility improvements include updating technological equipment in classrooms, and aesthetic and educational design modifications in classrooms, meeting rooms, and restrooms. The college has built and/or upgraded laboratory classrooms for the healthcare, sciences, information technology, court reporting, and manufacturing areas. Improvements for safety and athletic performance to the Athletic Center have also benefited our student athletes and competing teams. Detailed information is found in the [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2008](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2009](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2011](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2012](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2017](#), and [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018](#).

The Library's [online catalog and research databases](#) have been expanded to provide additional support for student success.

Sources

- 2018-2019 Operating and Non-Operating Budgets
- Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual
- Board Philosophy and Objectives
- Board Powers - SSCSSA Agreement 2017-2020

- Business and Career Institute - Web
- Career Development and Job Placement Center
- College Letterhead
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2008
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2009
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2011
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2012
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2017
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018
- Core Values - Strategic Plan
- Developmental Courses - Catalog 2018-2019
- Dual Degree Program Governors State University
- Faculty Committees - SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Human Resources - Web
- Job Training
- Library Catalog and Databases - Web
- Mission and Vision - Strategic Plan
- Mission Dedication Goals History - Catalog
- Mission Dedication Goals Vision Values - Web
- Mission Goals Vision Values - Student Handbook 2018-2019
- Mission Statement - Web
- New Employee Orientation
- Non-Traditional Workforce for Women and Men
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Standard Syllabus Template
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019

1. C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

Response to 1.C.1, 1.C.2, and 1.C.3

SSC understands the relationship between its mission and our diverse society.

The college recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituents, and the greater society it serves. SSC's [mission, vision, core values, and goals](#) articulate the college's commitment to diversity. The college embraces nondiscrimination in all areas of employment and educational relations. Board policies [101.01, 101.02, and 408.02](#) state that equal opportunity and fair treatment is guaranteed to all students and potential students regardless of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or veteran status. The college provides an [Affirmative Action Student Grievance Procedure](#). The college also has a [Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy for Students and Staff](#).

SSC's [Human Resources Department](#) ensures equal opportunity employment for all employees and applicants. All eligible employees may participate in the many benefit programs and services offered by the college, as related to their respective employee group.

To serve a diverse student population, the college recognizes its [employee composition](#) must be representative of the background of its students. Human Resources consistently encourages diversity and inclusion of all employees and applicants in terms and condition of employment.

South Suburban College [practices nondiscrimination](#) in all areas of employment and educational relations. [Human Resources information and employment opportunities](#) are available on the college website.

South Suburban College protects all individuals from retaliation arising from discrimination investigations, complaints, or findings associated with a discrimination investigation or lawsuit. All employees must abide by all board policies.

As stated in [policy 101.01](#), the college board is committed to a comprehensive educational program, offering educational opportunities for the diverse interests and abilities of its student body.

The [student codes of conduct](#) address the college's responsibility to the students and the community. The student codes of conduct ensure an atmosphere conducive to optimum educational experiences for all members of the college community. The college [faculty](#), [adjunct](#), and [support](#) contracts also address behavior important to the learning environment and society. All students are assured [due process](#) if they are accused of violating student codes of conduct.

SSC offers extensive [developmental instruction](#) in reading, English, and math to students requiring these skills to succeed in college programs, to complete a High School Equivalency or General Educational Development program, and to expand adult education.

SSC's [Adult Education Program](#) includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), High School Equivalency (HSE) for ESL, English as a Second Language (ESL), adult volunteer literacy, and U.S. Constitution preparation.

The [Highway Construction Careers Training Program \(HCCTP\)](#) is a pre-apprenticeship program that prepares students for admission into an apprenticeship with any of the construction trades. The program helps women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals gain acceptance into the construction trades.

The [Human Success Project](#) offers adults classes that transfer back to their high school to satisfy the graduation requirements.

Our [Counseling Center](#) provides study plan development, orientation to college life, workshops, and career, educational, academic, and personal counseling. The [Academic Assistance Center](#) provides free tutoring for all students, including first-generation students, returning adults, special needs students, displaced workers, adult/community education, and minorities.

South Suburban College provides reasonable accommodations for students and employees' needs based on federal and state statutes.

The [Office of Services for Students with Disabilities](#) supports students with permanent or temporary disabilities, such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, and orthopedic needs. Specialized equipment and other services are provided to assist students in achieving their goals.

The college also recognizes our academically accomplished students. The college has an [Honors Program](#). The college is home to the Psi Pi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), a national honors society of two-year colleges.

In its commitment to student achievement, the [South Suburban College Foundation](#) offers numerous scholarships to increase and recognize the diversity of the students and the community.

Additionally, SSC provides activities and events that highlight the diversity of the student population. [Black History Month activities](#), [Hispanic Heritage Month events](#), [Women's History Month programs](#), [Black Male Success Initiative Sessions](#), and the annual [Women's Conference & Expo](#) are events proudly sponsored by the college.

The college also offers other programs that recognize our diverse student body. These programs include: [Veterans' Services](#), [College for Kids](#), [Continuing Education Classes for Seniors](#), Student Organization for Latino Engagement & Success (SOLES), the [Latino Help Center](#), [Latino Outreach Scholarships](#), the [International/Intercultural Studies Program](#), and involvement with [One Million Degrees \(OMD\)](#).

The college offers a comprehensive [athletics program](#) open to all full-time, academically eligible students. The sports teams are men's basketball, women's basketball, men's soccer, women's soccer, baseball, women's softball, and women's volleyball.

Sources

- Academic Assistance Center
- Adult Education
- Affirmative Action Student Grievance Procedure - Web
- Athletics Program - Web
- Black Male Success Initiative Events
- Board Philosophy and Objectives
- Board Policies 101.01 101.02 408.02
- Chicago Women Conference and Expo Event Information
- College for Kids
- Continuing Education Classes for Seniors
- Counseling Center - Web
- Developmental Courses - Catalog 2018-2019
- Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy for Students and Staff - Web
- Due Process for the Student Code of Conduct - Catalog
- Employee and Student Race and Gender Demographic Data
- Highway Construction Careers Training Program - Web
- Honors Program - Web
- Human Resources - Web
- Human Success Project - Web
- International and Intercultural Studies Program
- Latino Center for Services and Information - Web
- Latino Outreach Scholarship - Web
- Mission Dedication Goals Vision Values - Web
- Nondiscrimination Practices

- One Million Degrees
- Services for Students with Disabilities - Web
- South Suburban College Foundation - Web
- SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- SSCSSA Agreement 2017-2020
- Student Codes of Conduct - Catalog
- Student Development Events
- Veterans Services - Web

1. D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

Response to 1.D.1, 1.D.2, and 1.D.3

South Suburban College was founded in 1927. Since its inception, the college has provided high quality education to thousands of students. As stated in its mission, "to Serve our Students and the Community through lifelong learning," SSC meets its obligation by serving its external constituencies and community in many ways.

As stated in our ["Community" core value](#), SSC strives to "value our partners in business, industry, government, school districts, and fellow educators."

SSC is committed to the public good. South Suburban College is a not-for-profit member of the [Illinois Community College Board \(ICCB\) system](#). The ICCB system covers the entire state with 48 colleges and 1 multi-community college center in 39 college districts. These community colleges serve nearly one million Illinois residents each year in credit and non-credit courses. See our [self-study for the ICCB](#) for additional information.

SSC has cooperative agreements with [neighboring community colleges](#) for students to enroll in career programs not offered at the college at the in-district tuition rate.

The college collaborates with its [high school districts](#) to provide programs that support the transition to college, such as dual credit and increased career opportunities.

South Suburban College remains committed to offering a [variety of credit and non-credit academic programs](#) despite continual reduced state funding.

The college offers six associate degrees: [A.A., A.S., A.F.A. \(with a concentration in Art or Music\), A.E.S., A.G.S., and A.A.S.](#) The college offers [28 Associate in Applied](#)

[Science \(A.A.S.\) degrees and a number of stackable certifications](#) for seamless matriculation.

Educational programs and activities take clear priority in SSC's resource allocation and budgeting. The budget is annually developed around the [Strategic Plan](#) and [Master Facility Plan](#). For example, in the [2018-2019 college budget](#) the percentage of operating funds allocated to instruction, academic support, and student services was approximately 66% of the total operating budget.

South Suburban College is committed to keeping tuition rates low relative to other institutions. Our [tuition rates](#) demonstrate that high quality academic programs is our primary focus and is not motivated by financial returns.

In addition, the college has received multiple grant awards that assist in the initiation and subsidization of programming for our students, employees, local teachers, and community members. These grant awards have funded a variety of initiatives including [equipment and technological acquisitions for career programs](#). See [Perkins final reports](#) for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017 for examples. The college redesigned several classrooms to provide a more engaging learning environment. In the Student Services area, the college updated the [student orientation program](#) to an online format to better assist our students in orientation. The college also implemented a new state-of-the-art advising program. Finally, the college opened a new [reading center](#) and created [maker](#) and manufacturing labs. Details about the impact of the Primarily Black Institution (PBI) grant can be found in the [PBI annual performance report](#). Overall, these improvements benefit the students and our community partners.

SSC also provides a wide selection of [adult and continuing education classes](#). In addition, the [Business and Career Institute](#) provides training and services to the community at large, local business, and industry. Some of the programs and services offered are [ACT WorkKeys Solution Provider, Consumer Wellness Advocate \(CWA\) Certification Training, Economic & Workforce Development, Highway Construction Careers Training Program, Computer Training and Applications, Lean Training, Licensure & Certification Testing Center, and Professional Development/Soft Skills](#).

SSC fulfills its [mission](#) by engaging with our external constituencies and communities, thus meeting the needs of our community partners.

External constituencies are routinely engaged with the college faculty and staff through formal advisory boards and panels, the campus master facilities planning activities, strategic planning, and community engagement by members of the governing board, executive leadership team, and faculty. See the [Strategic Planning Retreat Report](#) and [Facilities Master Plan 2017 Focus Group Meeting Notes](#). Additional information is provided in Criterion 5.

SSC is a partner with High School District 205 with their Outlook Academy. Outlook Academy is a program that focuses on helping individuals in the community ages 17-22

who did not earn a high school diploma in the traditional four-year setting. SSC provides space for classrooms, offices, and computer and science labs to the district at no charge. In addition, SSC provides support services, counseling, and registration services for the Outlook students at no charge to the district.

Similarly, SSC has also collaborated with High School District 228 with their Delta Academy and Christian Unity Academy in providing space and services free of charge. The college also collaborates with the [South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium \(SMHEC\)](#).

SSC hosts and supports its community schools, organizations, and governmental units with numerous academic, civic, political, and community events and activities.

SSC hosts [community job fairs](#), [STEM Days](#), [symposiums](#), [manufacturing events](#), and [Robotics Olympics](#).

In addition, various [artists](#) display their art at our exhibits.

In 2016, approximately 250 middle school and high school students visited South Suburban College for a [STEM \(Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics\) Day](#) that included a live link with astronauts. The highlight of this event was a NASA Educational Downlink, moderated by astronomers from Adler Planetarium in Chicago, where students met and spoke to U.S. Astronaut Commander Tim Kopra and Flight Engineer Jeff Williams live from the International Space Station.

SSC also works closely with community, governmental, and legal leaders to support its students as they engage in service learning and law related or social justice activities.

[Student Life](#) enhances the quality of student life through the coordination of social, cultural, and entertainment events and activities. Activities include films, concerts, dances, performing artists, plays, guest speakers, field trips, workshops, and leadership-training seminars. Student Life also serves as the central resource for [student clubs and organizations](#).

The SSC [Student Leadership Program](#) helps students prepare for life after SSC by becoming a student leader, peer mentor, ambassador, or student trustee. The college provides numerous service projects and training opportunities to help students realize their educational and career goals. Students also have an opportunity to be part of the [Student Government Association Senate](#).

Annually, the college hosts a high school mock trial competition organized by the South Suburban Bar Association and Sixth Municipal Circuit Court of Cook County.

In addition, the college also hosts the First District Appellate Court of Illinois for [oral appellate arguments](#) as part of annual [Law Day events](#).

In addition, [voter registration](#) is periodically held at the college to support student and community participation in the electoral process.

To broaden our students' educational experience, students are encouraged to actively participate in [Service Learning Projects](#). Our Service Learning Coordinator works with our faculty and [Service Learning Partners](#) such as Junior Achievement, the Field Museum, Restoration Ministries, and Thornton Township to provide [Service Learning experiences](#).

Sources

- 2018-2019 Operating and Non-Operating Budgets
- AAS Degrees and Stackable Certificates - Self-Study for ICCB 2017
- Art Galleries and Exhibitions
- Business and Career Institute - Web
- Business and Career Institute Training and Services - Web
- Chicagoland Speakers Network Events
- Community Job Fairs
- Cooperative Agreements Chargebacks - Web
- Core Values - Strategic Plan
- Dual Credit for High School Courses
- Equipment Upgrades and Acquisitions from Perkins Grants
- Facilities Master Plan 2017
- Facilities Master Plan 2017 Focus Group Meeting Notes
- First District Appellate Court of Illinois Law Day Activities
- Illinois Community College Board System
- Law Day Events
- Manufacturing Events
- Master Academic Plans and General Education Requirements
- Mission Dedication Goals Vision Values - Web
- PBI Annual Performance Report 2017
- Perkins Final Reports
- Reading Center
- Robotics Olympics
- Self-Study for ICCB 2017
- Service Learning - Web
- Service Learning Documentation
- Service Learning External Partners
- South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium
- SouthWorks MakerLab - Web
- Spring Options 2019
- STEM Events and Programs
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Strategic Planning Retreat Report
- Student Clubs and Organizations

- Student Government Association - Web
- Student Life and Leadership
- Student Online Orientation - Web
- Tuition and Special Tuition Programs - Web
- Voter Registration - Web

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

There is no argument.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2. A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

Response to 2.A

SSC establishes and follows processes for fair and ethical behavior. Integrity is maintained across all areas of the college including its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. The [Board of Trustees](#) ensures the financial stability and integrity of the institution and makes decisions in the best interest of the institution.

SSC follows the [Illinois Community College Board's \(ICCB\) Systems Rules](#), which establish guidelines for ethical conduct in finance, academic, and personnel functions. Every five years, the ICCB audits all Illinois community colleges to ensure each college is in compliance and meeting Illinois state standards. The [ICCB five year review process](#) is similar to the HLC reaffirmation visits, and requires the community college to provide evidence of effectiveness and integrity in instruction, student services/academic support, finance/facilities, and accountability. In 2017, SSC completed its five-year review and was [recognized](#) by the ICCB to be in compliance. See the [2013](#) and [2017](#) ICCB Final Recognition Reports for more information.

SSC's Board has established [policies and procedures](#) governing the operation and use of the college and its facilities. The administration reviews these policies regularly to ensure compliance with the [ICCB Systems Rules](#). [Changes to board policies](#) require a board vote in an open board meeting.

South Suburban College is a public community college with a locally elected [Board of Trustees](#). The board consists of seven trustees and one student trustee. Each trustee is elected for a term of six years and has the obligation of attending monthly board meetings. SSC has established ethical practices for the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff. The policies are enforced through the [Board Policy Manual](#), [Faculty Contract](#), [Adjunct Faculty Contract](#), and [Staff Contract](#).

Maintaining ethical conduct is fundamental to SSC's [mission, vision, and values](#). SSC assures its integrity in numerous ways. The following are some examples of SSC's [commitment to ethical conduct](#).

Sources

- Board of Trustees - Web
- Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual
- Commitment to Ethical Conduct
- ICCB Certificate of Recognition
- ICCB Final Recognition Report 2013
- ICCB Final Recognition Report 2017
- ICCB Recognition Manual
- ICCB System Rules Manual
- Mission Dedication Goals Vision Values - Web
- Policy Changes
- SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- SSCSSA Agreement 2017-2020

2. B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

Response to 2.B

SSC Website

SSC's website is the primary means of presenting information about the college. The [Communication Services and Media Design department](#) manages the website and works with the Department of Public Relations and Development to provide up-to-date news and information, including [athletics](#), [press releases](#), and [emergency information](#).

Policies, facts, figures, and reports are updated as needed and pages are reviewed annually. All departments provide accurate information for their webpages.

On the [SSC Foundation and Alumni page](#), information about donor activity, financial health, scholarships, and alumni is provided for donors and alumni.

On SSC's website, Communication Services also hosts the latest in broadcast technology. The college offers a full range of media services and production, including original programming for [Bulldog Bites](#), a news show about events and activities at South Suburban College. Students can work hands-on in the productions. [SSC360](#) is a magazine style show featuring news and events of South Suburban College by showcasing people and programs.

Furthermore, in compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) information is available on the website. The [About SSC page](#) has the college's mission, vision, core values, academic information including graduation rates, retention rates, total degrees and certificates awarded, and the student/faculty ratio. Furthermore, the college publishes yearly [crime statistics](#) in accordance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act.

Catalog

The college [catalog](#), available online and in print, provides information about academic policies, tuition, fees, program requirements, and courses. South Suburban College offers open and timely communication with its stakeholders about services and programs.

The SSC online catalog is dynamic. An example of a recent enhancement is SSC's [Student Self-Service](#). Students can access this service from a link on the college homepage. This service provides students with information to facilitate their transition to college. One example is planning and registering for classes. When students enter their chosen degree or certificate program, they are provided with the recommended course of study. Students can immediately use these resources to plan all of the courses needed and the semester in which they will take them. When registration opens for a new semester, students can access their saved information and register for the courses as planned.

Complaint Processes and Procedures

In addition, SSC has [processes for complaints](#). The complaint procedures are identified below:

- [Student Code of Conduct Related Complaints](#)
- [Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Related Complaints](#)
- [Violence and Threats of Violence Complaints](#)
- [Student Grade Appeal Complaints](#)
- [Affirmative Action Complaints](#)

SSC is also a member of the [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\)](#). SARA is an agreement among member states, districts, and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. Therefore, if the complaint resources have been exhausted and the student's concern is unresolved, the student taking classes online may follow up with the [Illinois Community College Board](#). If the student resides outside of Illinois, the student may also file a complaint with the state in which the student resides.

Programs and Requirements

South Suburban College provides detailed information about its degree requirements for the following degrees: [Associate in Arts \(AA\)](#), [Associate in Science \(AS\)](#), [Associate in Fine Arts \(AFA\)](#), [Associate in Engineering Science \(AES\)](#), [Associate in Applied Science \(AAS\)](#), and [Associate in General Studies \(AGS\)](#). [Master Academic Plans](#) are also available to students.

In addition, SSC offers a variety of [career programs](#). The [requirements and recommended course of study](#) for each career program are available in the catalog.

Faculty and Staff

SSC also provides employee directories, which contain contact information for all college [faculty](#), [staff](#), and [administration](#).

Costs

The college catalog contains a complete listing of [tuition and fees](#).

Accreditation Information

South Suburban College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The college is also approved by the [Illinois Community College Board](#). South Suburban College is also authorized for online learning by [National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements](#).

Career programs are [accredited](#) by the appropriate accreditation agencies.

The [student handbook](#) is updated yearly. It provides information and guidance about the academic calendar, the student code of conduct, academic assistance, counseling resources, registration, and student life.

Social Media

SSC also has official social media accounts, which include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Regroup Mass Notification System

Regroup sends a combination of voice, email, and text messages to our students and staff, allowing the college to not only communicate details on emergencies and campus closures, but to present various student activities, payment reminders, and purge information.

Sources

- AAS Degrees and Stackable Certificates - Self-Study for ICCB 2017
- About SSC - Web
- Accreditation Approval and Memberships - Catalog
- Administrative Directory - Web
- Affirmative Action Student Grievance Procedure - Web
- Associate Degrees Offered
- Associate in General Studies
- Athletics Program - Web
- Bulldog Bites - Web
- Career Programs
- Communication Services and Media Design - Web
- Crime Statistics - Web
- Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy for Students and Staff - Web
- Emergency Information - Web

- Faculty Directory - Web
- Filing Complaints - Web
- Grade Appeal Process - Catalog
- IBHE SARA Approval
- ICCB Filing Complaints - Web
- Master Academic Plans
- Press Release Samples - Web
- South Suburban College Foundation and Alumni - Web
- SSC Catalog 2018-2019
- SSC Certificate of Recognition 2022
- SSC360 - Web
- Staff Directory - Web
- Student Code of Conduct Complaints - Catalog
- Student Handbook 2018-2019
- Student Self-Service - Web
- Tuition and Fees - Catalog
- Violence and Threats of Violence Complaints - Catalog

2. C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

Response to 2.C.1

South Suburban College's (SSC) governing board is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution, the students, its employees, and to assure the integrity of institutional operations.

Elected in staggered terms by the residents of the college district, the seven member [Board of Trustees](#) is the primary governing board of South Suburban College. A student trustee is elected to the board each fiscal year by the student body. As an advisory vote on the board, the student trustee is a conduit of information from the student body to the board and administration.

The SSC Board of Trustees has [policies and practices](#) that articulate expectations, responsibilities, and accountability, as well as the division of authority and responsibility of the [President](#). The governing board retains authority to ensure that the institution meets its objectives, for selection and evaluation of the president, and for assuring that the institution operates with integrity. Responsibility for managing the day-to day operations of the college is delegated to the president, faculty, and senior leadership.

Three board-approved documents guide SSC's operations. The [Strategic Plan](#), [Facilities Master Plan](#), and [annual budget](#) establish college priorities, plans for resource allocation, and plans for supporting the college infrastructure to meet current and future needs.

The board is responsible for review and adoption of all three documents. The [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#) ([Strategic Plan 2008-2013](#)) and [Facilities Master Plan 2017](#) ([Facilities](#)

[Master Plan 2009](#)) are multi-year documents. The [annual budget](#) is developed in line with the resources, current strategic priorities, and capital maintenance projects. As part of yearly budget review process, the President, Treasurer, Vice President of Administration, and other senior administrators propose operating and non-operating budgets to be reviewed and approved by the board. The administration presents the tentative budgets that are reviewed by the board and the budgets are available for 30 days to the public. As stewards of taxpayers' dollars, the board is sensitive to fiscal matters.

The SSC board also demonstrates commitments to internal and external constituencies through its strategic plans. In the [2008-2013 Strategic Plan](#), the college collaborated with administrators, faculty, students, and the community serviced by Community College District 510. In the 2008-2013 strategic plan, the college commitment to the [mission statement and statement of goals was reaffirmed and eight commitments](#) were identified in this plan:

1. Competitive workforce
2. Effective transfer
3. Expansion of adult and developmental education programs
4. Universal technical skills
5. High quality
6. Affordable access
7. Ethical decision-making
8. Up-to-date facilities

The [2014-2019 Strategic Plan](#) was developed by community educational leaders, business leaders, administration, faculty, staff, and students. The eight commitments identified in the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan remains a focus of all college activities; however, like many other community colleges, SSC operates in a rapidly evolving, increasingly complex, and more challenging environment. Increases in these challenges are sobering trends of students' college readiness, college completion, and credential attainment.

SSC seized this opportunity as it began developing the [2014-2019 Strategic Plan](#). The planning process was guided by a dual focus upon student success and community prosperity. The planning process was open, inclusive, and transparent, beginning with a two-day retreat. Approximately 100 internal and external stakeholders attended. The information and opinions developed from these sessions were instrumental in the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. Details about the planning retreat are provided in the [strategic planning retreat report](#). The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan was presented to the board on October 9, 2014. Since its approval by the board, every action item that the Board of Trustees considers must be linked to the college's strategic plan. Additional details concerning the strategic planning process are presented in Criterion 5.C.

Finally, to ensure that the board is updated on a variety of topics, numerous presentations/reports are part of the agendas of regularly scheduled board meetings.

The board also participates in board retreats. At the most recent board retreat, board members participated in numerous activities, including a [board self-evaluation](#) led by an independent third party, the Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association. In the report, the Executive Director states, “The South Suburban Board is clearly a highly performing Board benefitting from high performance leadership at the Board and staff levels.” See [board retreat information](#) for more details.

Response to 2.C.2

The SSC governing board’s practices and policies encourage external constituencies to engage with the board and present their interests and needs.

The board has several committees. The committees make recommendations to the board for appropriate action at its regular board meeting. The board relies on these committees to make decisions in areas such as policy, audit, and finance. For example, the Finance Committee reviews financial-related matters that come before the board and makes recommendations to the board at its regular board meeting. Board agendas and minutes identify all actions brought before the board. Numerous examples are found in the [January 12 2017 board packet](#), [March 9 2017 board packet](#), [April 13 2017 board packet](#), [February 8 2018 board packet](#), [June 14 2018 board packet](#), [September 13 2018 board packet](#), and [October 11 2018 board packet](#).

All meetings of the board are open to the public and are subject to the Open Meeting Laws of the State of Illinois. Agendas for each meeting are distributed in accordance with state law to media outlets in the service area, and agendas are posted on the college website, as are meeting minutes and reports. Under Illinois law, the only portion of a public board meeting that may be closed must fall within specified statutory exceptions.

On the second Thursday of each month, the board meets in open session to conduct the business of the college. SSC publishes [agendas and minutes](#) of the board meetings on the college website and publishes agendas in local media outlets as required by the Open Meetings Act.

Each meeting of the board always includes an agenda item to allow the public to bring issues before the board, among [other items](#) that appear on monthly board agendas. [Board of Trustees agendas and minutes for the period of January-December 2018](#)

Response to 2.C.3

The board's [policies and practices](#) support its independence from undue influence. In addition, independent auditors review the institution's finances and operations. An important institutional practice relating to board independence and autonomy is the [acceptance of gifts](#) to the college.

The [South Suburban College Foundation](#) has separate policies and a self-governing Board of Directors which ensures that the college governing board is not unduly influenced by large gifts to the college.

All board members and administration must also file an ethics statement as required by [Illinois law](#).

The [Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual](#) establishes rules and regulations for [ethics in contracting and purchasing, vendors, hiring, and promotions and pay raises](#) that ensure ethical decisions and processes.

The duties of the [board, president, and administration](#) are clearly listed in the Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual.

Student Trustees

Student trustees represent students in decisions about education at the college, and they help keep students informed about issues affecting student life. They communicate regularly with students about board activities and gather student input about issues facing the board.

Student Leadership Program

The mission of the [Student Leadership Program](#) is to prepare students to succeed in an increasingly global culture by developing leadership skills and knowledge through core academics, social responsibility, activism, and service to others. Biweekly sessions address leadership, communication skills, and service.

Student Clubs and Organizations

The [Student Government Association](#) plays a critical role in shared governance, serves as the voice of the students to the administration, and acts on behalf of student interests through twenty clubs and organizations. The Student Government Association also encourages students to serve as Student Trustee. The Student Trustee position is one avenue by which students can have a role in campus decision-making.

Response to 2.C.4

The governing board has delegated responsibility for day-to-day management to the administration. Minutes of the board meetings and approved policies demonstrate that the board has effectively delegated these responsibilities. The college President and governing board value transparency of deliberations. Numerous examples are found in the [October 11 2018 board packet](#), [January 12 2017 board packet](#), [March 9 2017 board packet](#), [April 13 2017 board packet](#), [February 8 2018 board packet](#), [June 14 2018 board packet](#), and [September 13 2018 board packet](#).

The SSC governing board's [policies and practices](#) outline expectations, responsibilities, and accountability, as well as the division of authority and responsibility of the [President](#). Responsibility for managing the day-to day-operations of the college is delegated to the President, faculty, and senior leadership.

The board delegates day-to-day management of the college to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters. The President of the college is the contact person between the board and college employees.

An outline of the responsibilities is as follows:

President

The board delegates commensurate authority to the President, who is the conduit of policy information from the board to the college staff. The college President is hired by the board, taking directives from that body. Upon the direction of the board, the President provides leadership to meet the college's mission and to support the strategic plan.

The board is responsible only for [evaluation of the president](#). Faculty and staff are evaluated in accordance with [union contract agreements](#).

The President oversees the direction of President's Councils, task forces, and committees. These bodies engage in entrepreneurial thinking to realize the mission and goals of the college.

The president convenes regular [Presidents Council Leadership meetings](#) consisting of vice presidents, the college treasurer, and the college attorney. Issues germane to the college are discussed, and ideas are solicited across division lines. The exchange of ideas is valuable. Additionally, this forum fosters camaraderie among the vice presidents.

The Vice President of Academic Services, as chief academic officer, and the faculty manage all academic areas.

Administration

The monthly [Administrative Council Meetings](#) are another forum at which broad issues are discussed. Sharing information is encouraged. Agenda items may include the proper maintenance of personnel files, nuances of union contracts, suggestions made by faculty committees, and other relevant topics.

To achieve organizational efficiency, the [management hierarchy](#) is periodically realigned.

Faculty

College governance is a cooperative enterprise requiring faculty involvement. Faculty knowledge and expertise is used to make recommendations to the college's chief academic officer, president, and trustees. Toward that goal, the SSC [faculty contract](#) codifies faculty participation on the college's [numerous committees](#). Since faculty members are fundamental to the college's mission, the college considers it imperative that faculty guide teaching and learning.

SSC is a learning organization; it continuously responds to challenges because all members identify and resolve work-related issues. This responsive culture is sustained by the governing and administrative structures that encourage fresh management approaches and a collaborative spirit.

Students

The Student Trustee position is one avenue by which students can actively play a role in campus decision-making processes.

Sources

- 2018-2019 Operating and Non-Operating Budgets
- Administrative Council Meetings
- Administrative Organizational Chart
- April 13 2017 Board Packet
- Board of Trustees - Web
- Board of Trustees Agendas and Minutes - Web
- Board of Trustees Agendas and Minutes January-December 2018
- Board of Trustees Example Agenda Items
- Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual
- Board Policies 102.01 202.01 and 203.01
- Board Policies 306.01 310.0 412.01 and 414.02
- Board Policy 102.01
- Board Policy 206.01
- Board Retreat Information
- Board Self-Evaluation Report
- Duties and Responsibilities of the College President
- Facilities Master Plan 2009
- Facilities Master Plan 2017
- Faculty Adjunct Faculty and Staff Evaluations
- Faculty Committees - SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- February 8 2018 Board Packet
- Illinois Governmental Ethics Act and the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act
- January 12 2017 Board Packet
- June 14 2018 Board Packet
- March 9 2017 Board Packet

- Mission Goals Commitments - Strategic Plan 2008-2013
- October 11 2018 Board Packet
- President's Council Leadership Meetings
- September 13 2018 Board Packet
- South Suburban College Foundation Annual Report Summer 2018
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Strategic Plan 2008-2013
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Strategic Planning Retreat Report
- Student Government Association - Web
- Student Life and Leadership

2. D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

South Suburban College is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. Both the [Faculty Agreement](#) and [Adjunct Faculty Agreement](#) protect [Academic Freedom](#). The college publishes its commitment in numerous forms and within the [Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual](#) and the [college catalog](#).

The college's commitment to the freedom of expression is articulated in the Faculty Agreement. Faculty are encouraged to creatively utilize all appropriate methods and materials. Faculty have input on the selection of textbooks, create and develop evaluation tools to be utilized in their classrooms, and submit yearly outcomes assessment plans.

Faculty members also have [tuition waivers for SSC courses and graduate tuition reimbursement](#).

Faculty and administrators are also supported in the continued pursuit of truth in their discipline through funding for attending conferences, workshops, and other professional development opportunities. See [Professional Development Activities](#) for details.

[Board policy 408.02](#) addresses the rights of employees and students. It guarantees individuals' rights to appropriately discuss and express opinions

The college maintains formal grievance processes for all [faculty and staff](#) through their collective bargaining agreement. Student grievance rights relating to the [student code of conduct](#), [affirmative action](#), [discrimination and sexual harassment](#), and [violence and threats of violence](#) are documented in the college catalog and on the website. Grievance processes protect confidentiality, freedom of expression, and diversity of opinion.

[Sections 6.18, 6.19, and 11.8 of the Faculty Agreement](#) provide support for a broad range of professional growth opportunities. These include authorship, participation in professional workshops, and seminars.

In addition, several examples supporting SSC's commitment are among the [goals](#) as listed in the college catalog. These include the creation of an environment that encourages learning, development of relevant student experiences through partnerships with local stakeholders, and enrichment through a growing knowledge of social

responsibility and service. SSC offers internships and offers [service learning opportunities](#) toward this end.

SSC offers a [diversified continuing education program](#) and demonstrates the college's commitment to its community and the pursuit of learning to a broad group of SSC students, including seniors. Any District 510 resident 62 years of age or older may take continuing education courses tuition free; the students must pay all course-related fees.

Sources

- Academic Freedom - Faculty and Adjunct Agreements
- Affirmative Action Student Grievance Procedure - Web
- Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual
- Board Policy 408.02
- Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy for Students and Staff - Web
- Grievance Procedures - Faculty Adjunct and Staff Agreements
- Mission Dedication Goals History - Catalog
- Professional Development Activities
- Service Learning - Web
- Spring Options 2019
- SSC Catalog 2018-2019
- SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021
- SSCFA 6.18 6.19 11.8
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Student Code of Conduct Complaints - Catalog
- Tuition Waiver and Reimbursement - Faculty Agreement
- Violence and Threats of Violence Complaints - Catalog

2. E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

Response to 2.E.1, 2.E.2, and 2.E.3

The [SSC Library](#) offers instruction to the SSC community with locating and ethically utilizing research sources. This instruction is an integral part of the [Library's mission](#) and supports the [framework](#) developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries.

SSC is committed to scholarly work with appropriate resources. SSC spends over \$81,408.05 annually on books, publications, and subscriptions (print and online). The Library also facilitates the loan of materials from other institutions. Approximately 378 interlibrary loan material requests are filled each year.

[I-Share](#) is a universal borrowing system for the state of Illinois. It is a free to South Suburban College students, faculty, and staff through our online catalog. SSC users can obtain print materials from other I-Share libraries by placing a request via our online catalog or by visiting an I-Share library.

The Library provides access to current research in journal articles, encyclopedias, and other online resources offered through various platforms.

The Library subscribes to numerous [databases](#) including EBSCOhost, OCLC First Search, and many more.

The Library collection focuses on the coursework at South Suburban College. The Library offers:

- 25,000 books in the collection
- 55 periodical titles
- U.S. government publications
- audiovisual materials
- free scanner use

- textbooks for classes for reference purses (not available for checkout)
- research and reference assistance
- 36 computers with Internet access

Although SSC faculty are not required to do academic research, the institution provides numerous research tools to assist our faculty in better preparing their classes or do selective research for their own professional growth. Institutional Research is also a resource to assist our faculty.

SSC also has contractual obligations that support faculty professional growth. [Section 6.19 of the Faculty Agreement](#) provides that faculty members are required to remain current in their academic disciplines. Faculty must complete a minimum of three credit hours in their discipline from an accredited institution or six professional growth units over the course of two years. The college encourages professional growth for its faculty and staff; this includes [tuition reimbursement](#).

In addition, the Faculty Development Committee organizes development days for faculty that provide a wide range of topic presentations and breakout sessions to enhance [professional growth](#). Faculty are also required to participate in a [three-year self-evaluation cycle](#). Each person establishes a plan for the evaluation, carries out the plan, and analyzes the results, implementing the changes as prompted by the results. Faculty development and the three-year self-evaluation process are fully discussed in Criterion 3.C.

South Suburban College students are guided in the ethical use of information resources from many sources. Some examples are [Information Literacy Month activities](#), [general education core classes](#) that teach appropriate research techniques, the proper citation of material, and the nuances of plagiarism. SSC's [Writing Center](#), as well as the [Teaching and Learning Center \(TLC\)](#), assist students and faculty.

South Suburban College's Academic Code of Conduct is published in several locations including the [college catalog](#), [student handbook](#), and [college website](#). The academic conduct policy addresses cheating and plagiarism as well as their consequences. In addition, students are encouraged to seek assistance from the instructor, the [Academic Assistance Center](#), or staff in the [Writing Center](#) to avoid cheating/plagiarism.

All SSC students are allowed due process for accusations of academic dishonesty and the steps are clearly identified in the [catalog](#).

Sources

- About I-Share
- About the Library
- Academic Assistance Center
- Academic Code of Conduct - Catalog

- Academic Code of Conduct - Student Handbook
- Academic Code of Conduct - Web
- Association of College and Research Libraries Framework
- Due Process for the Student Code of Conduct - Catalog
- Evaluation - Faculty Agreement
- General Education Objectives
- Information Literacy Month Events and Activities
- Library Catalog and Databases - Web
- Mission - Library
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Professional Growth - Faculty Agreement
- Teaching and Learning Center - Web
- Tuition Waiver and Reimbursement - Faculty Adjunct and Staff Agreements
- Writing Center

2. S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

There is no argument.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3. A - Core Component 3.A

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

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

Response to 3.A.1

South Suburban College (SSC) offers both degrees and certificates that support its mission and commitment to student success. The college's degrees and certificates meet industry standards and expectations, specialized accrediting agencies, and standards of practice of higher education in Illinois. All associate degrees require a minimum of sixty credit hours. The certificate programs require credit completion commensurate with knowledge required by the industry. SSC's degree and certificate requirements are in the college's [catalog](#) and on SSC's [website](#).

As a two-year public institution, SSC must comply with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), which establishes guidelines for course and program development in transfer, career, and technical fields. The ICCB must approve all curricula offered at public, two-year institutions. Applications for new degree or certificate programs must establish the need for the program, curriculum, faculty credentials, an assessment plan, and facilities available to support the program. Courses not part of the general education core also need approval by the ICCB and must be accepted for transfer by at least three baccalaureate institutions. The [ICCB System Rules Manual](#), [ICCB Program Approval Manual](#), [ICCB Program Review Manual](#), and [ICCB Recognition Manual](#) provide further details.

During the past 10 years, SSC completed two comprehensive self-studies for the ICCB [SSC 2012 Self Study](#) and [SSC 2017 Self-Study](#). In fiscal years 2013 and 2017, the ICCB conducted recognition evaluations of the college. These recognition evaluations are conducted to assure that colleges are in compliance with the ICCB standards. The standards selected for review during the 2013 evaluation were classified into five categories: instruction, student services/academic support, finance/facilities and accountability. The standards selected for review during the 2017 evaluation were classified into four categories: academics, student services/academic support, finance/facilities, and institutional research/reporting. Both of these reports reflect SSC's full compliance with a majority of the standards. In those areas that the ICCB made improvement recommendations, SSC outlined a response and identified specific actions to address the recommendations provided in the ICCB [Final Recognition Report 2013](#) and [Final Recognition Report 2017](#). Due to the low number and type of compliance findings in the 2017 report, the ICCB staff once again recommended [full recognition](#).

Career and technical education programs have an approval process similar to that of transfer curricula. However, the needs section requires evidence of labor market needs and employment opportunities for graduates possessing the degree or certificate. In addition, all career and technical education programs must have an advisory committee composed of experts and employers in the field who meet at least once annually to review curricula and align credentials with labor market needs.

In addition, SSC must comply with all requirements outlined in the [ICCB Program Approval Manual](#).

The State of Illinois has also established the [Illinois Articulation Initiative](#), a statewide transfer agreement consortium composed of subject matter panels of faculty and administrators from two-year and four-year institutions who review course materials to ensure consistency in general education courses. Upon approval, participating institutions agree to accept a package of thirty-seven to forty-one general education credits. The IAI reviews these requirements every five years to ensure that the content is relevant. SSC has [numerous courses approved](#) by formal review with the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), which will transfer for general education and major-related credit. The college provides information about the [IAI and general transfer information](#) in the catalog and on the college's website.

SSC's curriculum approval process aligns with the [system rules](#), [ICCB Program Approval Manual](#), and the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) requirements for course approval. SSC's [Curriculum Committee](#) reviews all new courses, changes to existing courses, changes to programs, new programs, and degree offerings. All approved changes are submitted to the ICCB if required by their rules. New programs and degrees must also be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and have [board approval](#).

SSC's faculty, staff, and administrators are responsible for maintaining the quality and relevancy of the programs and courses. The faculty has authority over course content

and determine curriculum and subject matter for courses, recommend pedagogy, textbooks, and other required course materials.

In addition, the ICCB mandates programmatic reviews of instructional areas on a [five-year review process](#) as outlined in the [program review manual](#). In fiscal year 2017, the ICCB created a more data-intensive program review that disaggregated course-level data, demographic data, and state and local labor market data to identify trends and equity gaps. Indicators included need, cost effectiveness, quality, data analysis, results, and further action.

SSC faculty and administration engage in a [five-year review process](#) in accordance with the [ICCB 5-Year Program Review Schedule](#).

Systematic program reviews ensure that the process is well-documented and informs campus planning initiatives, quality improvement, and budget allocations. As a result of our systematic program reviews, the college addressed deficiencies discovered during the review. More details are provided in the [Program Review Report 2018](#), [Program Review Report 2017](#), [Program Review Report 2016](#), [Program Review Report 2015](#), [Program Review Report 2014](#), [Program Review Report 2013](#), [Program Review Report 2012](#), [Program Review Report 2011](#), [Program Review Report 2010](#), [Program Review Report 2009](#), and [Program Review Report 2008](#).

Additionally, many of our career and technical programs also undergo program-specific reviews by outside accrediting bodies. SSC presently has multiple programs that are [accredited or approved](#) by outside external agencies.

South Suburban College offers [six Associate Degrees and approximately eighty certificate programs](#). The college is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and [approved by the ICCB](#). The institution is authorized for online learning by [SARA](#).

The college awards the Associate in Arts degree (A.A.), the Associate in Engineering Science degree (A.E.S.), the Associate in Applied Science degree (A.A.S.), the Associate in Science degree (A.S.), the Associate in Fine Arts degree (A.F.A.), and the Associate in General Studies degree (A.G.S.). Additionally, students enrolled in designated curricula may earn certificates of completion. Course [requirements](#) and [descriptions](#) for each degree and certificate program are in the college catalog and on the web.

All courses applied to degree and certificate completion must be college level. Students pursuing a degree or certificate must take a test to ensure placement into courses appropriate for their skills. If the test results so indicate, students should take developmental/college preparatory classes in the first semester and subsequent semesters until required work is completed. Development/college preparatory courses do not count towards degree or certificate requirements.

Details related to our degrees are provided in the [Master Academic Plans](#).

The college offers [alternative course deliveries](#) for some classes.

Response to 3.A.2

As stated in 3.A.1, SSC offers numerous [degrees](#), which are transferable to four-year colleges and universities. These include programs of study intended specifically for transfer to a four-year college or university, along with career programs in fields of study that prepare a student for immediate employment upon graduation. The college also offers certificate and basic certificate programs. Detailed information is in the [Master Academic Plans and General Education Requirements](#), [Degree Completion Requirements](#), [Career Programs](#), and [Minimum Credit Hours Required](#).

Additionally, the college departments have identified specific [student learning outcomes \(SLOs\)](#) for students taking courses within their department.

Response to 3.A.3

South Suburban College offers courses at two principal locations. The main campus is located at 15800 S. State Street, South Holland, Illinois 60473. The Oak Forest campus is located at 16333 Kilbourne Street, Oak Forest, IL 60452. Additionally, the college offers numerous online course offerings. Regardless of the delivery format or course/program location, the quality and learning goals for courses and programs are consistent.

The college's [Curriculum Committee](#) and [Distance Learning Committee](#) ensure that program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and locations.

The [Curriculum Committee](#) reviews all curriculum additions, modifications, and withdrawals and makes recommendations to the Vice President of Academic Services.

The [Distance Learning Committee](#) is [charged](#) with specific responsibilities for courses utilizing an online format.

Both committees meet monthly and all curricular changes are approved by the Vice President of Academic Services.

Online Courses

SSC's distance learning courses have grown. The college has offered distance delivered courses since 1999 and the faculty union contract was one of the first in the area to include language addressing the development of online courses as well as issues of intellectual property. To maintain high academic standards, SSC has procedures to ensure quality for its online courses. The college offers a number of distance-delivered courses in numerous academic departments but does not offer certificates or degrees online. These courses include online as well as blended

instruction. The college uses the following [review process for online courses](#) and hybrid courses. Decisions for these courses involve the academic administration in the same fashion as traditional course offerings but includes the [Distance Learning Committee](#) for additional oversight. Over time, the college has planned for the growth of distance delivered learning through the Distance Learning Committee, Academic Vice-President, academic deans, and faculty department chairs.

The [Distance Learning Committee](#) includes faculty, academic administrators, and the Director of Communication Services. The Distance Learning Committee makes recommendations that the administration uses to establish the need for distance learning courses and the process of supporting faculty as they develop courses.

The Administration and the [Distance Learning Committee](#) developed a [review process for online courses](#) that faculty must follow to offer and teach a distance learning course. The [online hybrid development checklist](#) identifies the review process.

Faculty teaching distance-delivered courses have the same academic credentials as those teaching in a traditional setting. These faculty members are assessed in the same fashion as well. In addition, all distance-delivered courses follow the same course outline as the traditional sections, including learning outcomes and assessment.

A helpdesk system is available to faculty and includes phone, email, and in-person assistance. The department operates an assistance center, the [Teaching and Learning Center \(TLC\)](#). This center is staffed by a full-time academic technology specialist who assists faculty and students with online resources and courses. In addition, a release time position of Faculty Technology Trainer is held by a full-time faculty member who supports faculty members teaching distance-delivered courses. The TLC staff and Faculty Technology Trainer offer training sessions during the semester as well as at the start of each semester during faculty development meetings. Students are also supported by a student helpdesk system and a support site developed and maintained by the TLC staff.

The college also supports faculty teaching online courses utilizing Moodle. This learning management system is used for our online, hybrid, and web-enhanced courses. The college provides training for faculty and generates a shell for every credit course section proposed to be offered online or utilized by a faculty member to enhance the traditional course. Moodle also provides interactive tools for communication, including bulletin boards, chat spaces, and email. The system supports assessment such as quizzes, discussions, and assignment submissions, as well as a grade book that privately displays individual records for each enrolled student. Students are automatically enrolled in the Moodle course based on their enrollment in that course within the SSC's Ellucian student database. Furthermore, the college offers an [online orientation for Moodle](#) that describes how to use Moodle and how to access SSC's support systems.

In addition, the college has one full-time faculty member who receives release time to assist faculty with Moodle and online course matters.

Most of the college's courses are delivered in the traditional face-to-face setting and vetted through the college's aforementioned shared governance. New courses and programs are developed by faculty in response to the changes within a discipline, needs of the student population, workforce demands, and sometimes, personal interests.

An interagency agreement has been established between the college and Ingalls Hospital in Harvey, Illinois. The agreement empowers the two entities to work cooperatively to provide students with an opportunity to pursue a certificate in the college's EMT Paramedic Training Program.

An intergovernmental agreement has been established between the college and the Cook County Sheriff's Department. The agreement empowers the two entities to work cooperatively to provide students with an opportunity to earn college credits in Criminal Justice.

The college maintains ownership of the curriculum delivered within both of the aforementioned partnership agreements. This is done through continuous review of curriculum alignment, vetting of teaching qualifications, observation of instruction, and student evaluations.

The college's [Adult Education Program](#) offers High School Equivalency (HSE) exam preparation classes as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. Non-native students may improve their English skills in levels from beginning to advanced in the English as a Second Language program. Each level includes a civics component to familiarize students with American history and government.

Instructors are provided a [Standard Syllabus Template](#) that identifies minimal information that is required to be included in their course syllabi.

In addition, SSC provides [dual credit opportunities](#) to the in-district high school students in relation to career and technical education fields. The dual credit courses offered must meet the standards of the Dual Credit Quality Act approved by the State of Illinois. High school students will earn college credit through completion of dual credit courses. Dual credit courses are approved by the program/department chair and dean. High schools must submit course syllabi for the chair and dean to review. Each year, the college hosts a dual credit articulation meeting with our high school partners to review dual credit offerings, review course learning objectives, clarify college departmental standards, and enter into dual credit articulation agreements for dual credit courses approved by the college and high school partners. Dual credit course instructors must have the same teaching qualifications as an SSC instructor teaching that program or course. Instructors of dual credit courses must comply with all SSC instructor requirements, including submission of midterm grades, certifying student attendance, and submission of final grades in accordance with the college's policies and procedures. Once the course and instructor are approved, the instructor must submit a syllabus to the program/department chair/dean each semester that the course is offered

for credit. The syllabus must meet the learning objectives of the course as stated in the college's standard course syllabi.

[Dual credit](#) at South Suburban College allows high school students to take college credit courses taught by college-approved high school teachers. Students earn credit for high school requirements while earning college credit. Dual credit courses are not pre-college or preparatory courses. These dual credit courses are college level and taught at the same level as college level courses. SSC offers many [approved dual credit courses](#) to thousands of high school students. Detailed information about the dual credit program is in our [Dual Credit Faculty Handbook](#) and the [Dual Credit student brochure](#) which is provided to our participating high school districts, faculty, and students on our college website.

South Suburban College has transfer guides and course articulations with four-year universities for guaranteed admission to select universities identified in the [catalog and on the website](#). The 2+2 agreements allow students to take two years of prescribed coursework at SSC, transfer these credits to a four-year college or university, and then complete the last two years of a specified bachelor's program at the transfer institution. The partnerships offer a seamless transition to several programs at the four-year college/university.

In addition, SSC offers a [Dual Degree Program](#) with Governors State University. The Dual Degree Program provides full-time students with the opportunity to earn quality, accessible, and affordable associate and bachelor's degrees.

Sources

- AAS Degrees and Stackable Certificates - Self-Study for ICCB 2017
- Accreditation Approval and Memberships - Catalog
- Adult Education
- Alternative Course Deliveries
- Associate Degrees Certificates Transfer Curricula - Viewbook
- Associate Degrees Offered
- Associate in General Studies
- Basic Overview of Five-Year Review Process
- Board Agenda and Minutes Approving Welding Certificates
- Career Programs
- Certificates
- Course Descriptions - Catalog
- Curriculum Committee
- Degree and Certificate Completion Requirements
- Distance Learning Committee
- Distance Learning Committee Charge
- Dual Credit
- Dual Credit Courses

- Dual Credit Faculty Handbook
- Dual Credit High School Student Guide
- Dual Degree Program Governors State University
- IAI and General Transfer Information
- IAI Major and General Education Courses
- IBHE SARA Approval
- ICCB 5-Year Program Review Schedule
- ICCB Final Recognition Report 2013
- ICCB Final Recognition Report 2017
- ICCB Program Approval Manual
- ICCB Program Review Manual
- ICCB Recognition Manual
- ICCB Self-Study 2012
- ICCB Self-Study 2017
- ICCB System Rules Manual
- Illinois Articulation Initiative
- Master Academic Plans
- Master Academic Plans and General Education Requirements
- Minimum Credit Hours Required for Associate Degrees and Certificates
- MySSC Moodle Instructions
- Online Hybrid Course Development Checklist
- Program Details Goals and Student Learning Outcomes
- Program Review Report 2008
- Program Review Report 2009
- Program Review Report 2010
- Program Review Report 2011
- Program Review Report 2012
- Program Review Report 2013
- Program Review Report 2014
- Program Review Report 2015
- Program Review Report 2016
- Program Review Report 2017
- Program Review Report 2018
- Requirements for Certificates and Degrees - Web
- Review Process for Online Courses
- SSC Certificate of Recognition 2022
- Standard Syllabus Template
- Teaching and Learning Center - Web
- Transfer Guides and Course Articulations for Colleges and Universities

3. B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

Response to 3.B.1

South Suburban College mission is to "Serve our Students and the Community through lifelong learning." SSC ensures that students are appropriately placed into courses in which they will succeed yet be challenged. SSC's general education programs provide students the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills for success in their academic, career, and personal lives. The purpose of general education at SSC is not simply to prepare students for a life of work, but to prepare them for the work of their lives.

The college's catalog articulates the purposes, content, and learning outcomes for its general education program. The mission of the general education program is supported by the [General Education Objectives](#).

SSC's general education program supports the college's mission by ensuring students complete comprehensive coursework through a range of offerings that encourage intellectual inquiry. It also ensures broad learning and skills.

In addition, all SSC degree programs are based on general education coursework. This foundation includes coursework from a range of topics including mathematics, science, humanities, social science, and physical education.

The aforementioned objectives support the [General Education Objectives](#) as well as ICCB course offerings. In addition to course offerings that support general education, SSC offers [several associates degrees](#).

The general education requirements for the [Associate in General Studies](#) degree consists of a minimum of 21 semester hours of credit. Minimum general education requirements vary for the A.A., A.S., A.F.A., and A.E.S. degrees. Associate in Arts requires 37-41 general education hours; Associates in Science requires 31-35 hours; Associate in Fine Arts requires 31 hours; and Associate in Engineering Science requires 28-31 hours.

Response to 3.B.2

General learning objectives and general education objectives are the foundation of student learning and are grounded in the State of Illinois general education framework. More information can be found in the [Strategic Plan for Assessment of General Education](#). [Course or program goals](#) are general statements that identify what students should accomplish. Course syllabi list several general objectives. Each course objective refers back to a general education objective. Students must achieve the listed objectives for their individual courses and/or programs of study. Individual course syllabi identify learning objectives and include general educational learning objectives, where applicable. Representative samples of course syllabi are provided that include courses taught by full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and online instructors. See [Syllabi Samples Group One](#), [Syllabi Samples Group Two](#), [Syllabi Samples Group Three](#), and [Syllabi Samples Group Four](#).

The Outcomes Assessment Committee developed [General Education Rubrics](#) to measure student learning. In addition, the committee developed a strategic plan for assessment, analysis, and implementation. Each year SSC collects and analyzes data in two general education areas, then implements changes. Learning outcomes in all areas are reported to the appropriate dean every semester. More information can be found in the [Assessment Plan Key Components](#). Outcomes for programs are reported to advisory committees for review. Detailed information is provided in Criterion 4.

Response to 3.B.3

Both degree programs and certificate programs offer students an opportunity to obtain basic requirements in their program of study. Students must demonstrate mastery of skills through internships, portfolios, and/or capstone experiences. Introduction, reinforcement, and mastering of content and skills for each course/program is established in course syllabi and course outlines. Curriculum maps grid each learning outcome or skill. General education outcomes are aligned with specific degree and

certificate programs. Using [curriculum mapping](#), general education outcomes are validated by faculty in each discipline at least once every five years. The five-year program review is detailed in Criterion 4. In addition, the general education outcomes are assessed campus-wide by the college's Outcomes Assessment Committee. Each general education outcome is assessed according to the plan detailed in Criterion 4. More information can be found in the [Assessment Plan Key Components](#). As part of SSC's general education assessment, departments and programs map course learning objectives. This mapping informs the college of the variety of courses and programs that promote, for example, collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. While departments may engage in particular general education learning outcomes appropriate for the discipline, mapping identifies the breath of disciplines that promote critical thinking, communication, and literacy.

Examples:

- Students in the Allied Health degree and certificate programs must master certain skills. Each program has a skill set identified in course outlines, program handbooks, and program annual updates. Students' skills are evaluated by clinical instructors each semester. Students are given copies of their evaluations and expected to analyze the feedback and make needed changes.
- The Reading Department requires the completion of a capstone unit as an exit project for all RDG 082 students. Other reading courses require students to gather data from current articles, apply annotation skills, then analyze and summarize the pertinent information.
- Courses in Social and Behavioral Sciences and Mathematics areas engage students in service learning projects that enrich their learning in social, political, and civic contexts. Similar approaches to inquiry and creative work is demonstrated by students from the English, Media Productions, and Art programs' showcase of work in the *Scriblerian* ([Scriblerian 2018](#), [Scriblerian 2017](#), [Scriblerian 2013](#)), and video production work for [Bulldog Bites](#) and [SSC 360](#).

Response to 3.B.4

SSC recognizes the importance of educating students and the community about human and cultural diversity.

Evidence of SSC's recognition of human and cultural diversity through educational offerings is a requirement for its A.A., A.S., A.F.A., and A.E.S. degrees. Under the degree completion requirements Group II: Humanities and Fine Arts, students complete a minimum of nine semester credits with at least one course selected from humanities and at least one course from the fine arts. The learning objectives are twofold for Group II, which emphasize that 1) students will identify and analyze ideas, movements, civilization and cultures, and 2) students will assess and express ideas about cultural diversity and individual roles in society.

SSC offers numerous courses that recognize human and cultural diversity, such as ANT 101 (Anthropology), BIO 102 (Environmental Biology), BIO 152 (Man and His Environment), BUS 137 (International Business Practice Firm), ART 219 (Non-Western Art), HIS 101 (History of Eastern Asian Civilization), HIS 151 (African-American History), HIS 155 (History of Latin America), HIS 271 (History of Modern African Civilization), HUM 210 (World Mythology), and MUS 223 (Introduction to African American Music). [Course descriptions](#) are found in the catalog.

Allied Health programs also addresses human and cultural diversity. Standards for communicating and interacting with people of varying backgrounds have been set by accrediting bodies. Other courses incorporate articles that highlight diversity, offering insight to other cultures. In addition to a regular sequence of Spanish courses, the college offers SPN 115 (Spanish for Health Care Providers). [Course descriptions](#) are found in the catalog.

Continuing Education also offers professional and special interest courses. For example, in the 2018 Fall Non-Credit schedule, Conversational Spanish and Sign Language of the Deaf for Adults courses are offered. SSC is creating a culture of community involvement. Twice a year through the continuing education schedule, experts teach a course in their area of expertise. These schedules reach approximately 100,000 homes in the district. SSC continuously explores opportunities to meet the needs of our generationally and culturally diverse community.

In 2017, the Outcomes Assessment Committee developed a [self-assessment for multiculturalism](#) to gain more information about our students' knowledge of diversity and related matters.

Response to 3.B.5

Being a two-year community college, the objective of SSC is providing excellent instruction and learning experiences. Unlike larger four-year colleges and universities, research is not a priority. Faculty members spend more time engaging with students to help them succeed. The student population that SSC serves comes from diverse backgrounds. The faculty commit considerable time and resources in success practices. For example, math faculty have a [Math 140 tutoring club](#) to help students outside the classroom. [Structured learning assistance](#) is provided for many courses, which is also aided by the [Predominantly Black Institution \(PBI\) grant tutors](#). Faculty members also incorporate this assistance in their courses.

The faculty contract is for two semesters with an annual minimum requirement of 30 credit hours load. This teaching load does not require teaching during the summer semester, encouraging faculty members to engage in scholarly pursuits. [Professional Responsibilities - Faculty Agreement](#) has complete information.

Faculty members have taken advantage of this opportunity. Two faculty members were selected as a faculty fellow in UIC's (a four-year university) bridges to baccalaureate

program in summer 2016. As a faculty fellow, faculty members collaborated with faculty from UIC and learned that our students can enjoy a standard research experience as a program participant. Many SSC students were selected for this program in the past and have done eight weeks of research at UIC under the guidance of UIC faculty and shared their work as poster presentations.

SSC students have participated in NASA's NCAS program, which is geared towards community college students and encourages them to choose a career in a STEM field. Our faculty encourages students to apply for the program and provide necessary support.

In addition, the faculty and students organize and participate in science fairs, robotics competitions, and field trips. For example, the chemistry students visit the local wastewater treatment facility to see day-to-day implications of the chemistry they learn in classroom.

Sources

- Assessment Plan Key Components
- Associate Degrees Offered
- Associate in General Studies
- Bulldog Bites - Web
- Course Descriptions - Catalog
- Curriculum Course Map
- General Education Rubrics
- General Institutional and Education Objectives
- Math 140 Tutoring Club
- Multiculturalism Self-Assessment
- PBI Grant Tutors
- Professional Responsibilities - Faculty Agreement
- Program Details Goals and Student Learning Outcomes
- Scriblerian 2013
- Scriblerian 2017
- Scriblerian 2018
- SSC360 - Web
- Strategic Plan for Assessment of General Education
- Structured Learning Assistance Program
- Syllabi Samples Group Four
- Syllabi Samples Group One
- Syllabi Samples Group Three
- Syllabi Samples Group Two

3. C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

Response to 3.C.1

The college has sufficient faculty to satisfy classroom and non-classroom duties. The [full-time](#) and [adjunct](#) faculty agreements establish the responsibilities and expectations for SSC faculty with respect to teaching load, professional development, participation in departmental work, and college-wide committee service. SSC has a long history of faculty participation with campus-wide decisions and activities. Program coordinators and department chairs are faculty who receive release time to perform administrative functions such as curricular review and assessment. See [Professional Responsibilities - Faculty Agreement](#) and [Employment and Tenure - Faculty Agreement](#) for further details.

The college has a total of 85 full-time faculty and approximately 100 adjunct faculty. The teacher to student ratios are appropriate: for traditional lecture classes, the ratio is 1:35; for online classes, it is 1:24; for science lab classes, it is 1:24; for studio art and other hands-on instructional models, it is 1:12; for English composition courses, it is 1:24; for development education classes, it is 1:15-22.

Oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance is faculty-driven and monitored by faculty-chaired committees. These standing committees include [Curriculum Committee](#), [Academic Standards](#), and [Outcomes Assessment](#).

Department chairs, as a part of their monthly meetings, participate in this monitoring. Each committee has designated [duties and responsibilities](#).

Response to 3.C.2

All instructors are prepared in accordance with accepted standards and practices for teaching, supervising, counseling, and administering the curriculum or supporting system to which they are assigned. The college engages in the following processes to ensure teaching staff meet qualifications to teach their subjects.

In 2016 and 2017, the academic deans and the Human Resources Specialist reviewed college transcripts for all eighty-eight of its full-time faculty. The review included verifying that official transcripts were on file; checking degree confirmation dates; verifying that degrees were issued from an accredited institution; and verifying that degree qualifications had been met by those teaching in transfer and career and technical education programs. The [Faculty Credential Guidelines](#) are revised each year based on faculty recommendations. The credential guidelines are used to determine qualification eligibility for all new hires as well as eligibility for current faculty to teach in sub-disciplines. Additional information pertaining to faculty responsibilities is in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and the [full-time](#) and [adjunct](#) faculty collective bargaining agreements.

Academic deans and the Director of Human Resources also reviewed the college transcripts for all 145 (Spring 2017) adjunct faculty members to verify that all adjuncts complied with the HLC's Credential Guidelines. The measures used to assess our full-time faculty members were also used to audit our adjuncts' transcripts.

Academic credential review for potential dual credit high school teachers are conducted in the same manner as the process for full-time and adjunct faculty. Credentials are reviewed prior to completion of high school course articulation agreements. High school teachers must meet the minimum qualifications established by the college to teach in a given subject. Course articulation is not fulfilled until the high school teacher completes the same hiring process as a SSC adjunct faculty member; this includes the submission of academic credentials.

The college maintains standards of hiring Dual Credit faculty in conjunction with following SSC faculty hiring procedures. SSC's Credential Guideline tool helps evaluate whether or not candidates meet qualifications to teach a college course. The tool has been shared with high school district liaisons as a guide when recommending candidates to teach Dual Credit courses. This process has been in effect for two years and has proven effective. The college's Human Resources Department will continue to maintain the instructors' personnel file for Dual Credit courses.

Lastly, to assist high school teachers with earning graduate credit hours to be eligible to teach a Dual Credit course, or for full-time faculty wishing to teach other disciplines,

programs such as that developed by Governors State University (GSU) have been shared with district liaisons. GSU offers an 18 credit English certification, all online.

Response to 3.C.3

The college maintains academic control of its unit of instruction and monitors this process with classroom observations in accordance with the tenure track process and gathering student evaluations each semester from randomly selected courses and programs. See section 9.13 of [Employment and Tenure - Faculty Agreement](#).

To maintain the quality of the college's educational process, full-time tenure track faculty engage in a three-year process to demonstrate their teaching effectiveness; ability to engage students; ability to demonstrate commitment to student success; and ability to demonstrate to their committee their contribution to initiatives that further the mission and goals of the department and institution. The three-year evaluation process includes development of syllabi and topical outlines and teaching materials that support learning outcomes; development of unit and final examinations that assess acquisition of knowledge; faculty and administrative visitations and observations; gathering feedback via student evaluations; and establishing professional development plans and statements of self-reflection. More details are in [Employment and Tenure - Faculty Agreement](#).

Feedback is provided to the faculty annually that addresses classroom performance, growth opportunities, student retention, engagement and persistence, review of portfolio materials, and future contributions to the college and student success during the tenure process. At the end of the third year of the tenure process and assuming the faculty member has proven to be an effective instructional leader, tenure is granted. The option of recommending a one-year extension is used as a remediation strategy if further growth is warranted beyond the third year. More details are in [Employment and Tenure - Faculty Agreement](#).

Additionally, the college has established a systematic approach to recognizing quality instruction and identifying professional development for its tenured faculty. The post-tenure review process is three tiered. Year 1 is the plan development stage; year two is the implementation stage; and year three is the analysis of the results and quality improvement stage. The Vice President of Academic Services must approve all post-tenure plans. More details are in [Employment and Tenure - Faculty Agreement](#).

Additionally, the college evaluates instructional quality and teaching for part-time faculty. The college confirmed that an evaluation process was being followed for all new faculty but was not followed consistently for returning adjunct faculty. Currently, the college maintains an evaluation practice that all new adjuncts continue to be evaluated during their first semester. In addition, the Dean of Academic Services reviews all adjunct faculty at least once every three years. This evaluation is in addition to evaluations that may have been independently completed by the department chair or dean of the area in

which the adjunct teaches. This process guarantees that at least once every three years, all adjunct faculty employed by the college are evaluated.

Response to 3.C.4

The primary mission of the [Faculty Development Committee](#) is to offer professional development programs for full-time and adjunct faculty. This faculty-chaired committee works with administration and meets monthly in face-to-face or virtual meetings as deemed appropriate. Its goal is to improve instruction and promote faculty excellence. This committee works with the Outcomes Assessment and Academic Standards Committees to inform faculty about the latest trends in classroom research, innovative teaching strategies, and technological advancements, all of which improve student learning.

The college has a staffed faculty development center known as the [Teaching and Learning Center \(TLC\)](#). Faculty enjoy assistance with training modules, professional articles, and faculty development resources. Faculty receive professional development utilizing hands-on technology and creating accessible instructional materials and pedagogy. The TLC provides numerous [services](#) to both faculty and students.

In addition to the professional faculty development opportunities offered by the TLC, faculty development training for full-time and part-time faculty is offered twice per year in the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. A [sampling of development agenda topics](#) offered for both full time and adjunct faculty covers a broad spectrum of topics. More detailed information is found in the [Faculty Development agendas](#) and [Adjunct Faculty Development agendas](#).

The college provides a comprehensive [faculty resource website](#) that provides information with professional articles addressing pedagogical best practices for adjunct and full-time faculty. On this site, faculty can engage in numerous training modules and upgrade their technology skills with many skill training programs such as Microsoft eLearning, a technology showcase repository, and additional IT technology demonstrations, workshops, and sessions.

The Human Resource Department also provides resources for faculty on the SSC Portal including institutional procedures, union contracts, benefit provider documents, and other information such as pay dates.

Faculty are also provided with numerous [user guides](#) on distance learning, video demonstrations, LiveText, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and a virtual faculty handbook on the SSC Portal. Information is also provided to faculty interested [teaching online](#).

Response to 3.C.5

[Section 6.11](#) of the faculty agreement states that all full-time faculty members (teaching online and face-to-face) must offer office hours to be accessible for students. Faculty members must schedule a minimum of five hours equating to 250 minutes a week for office hours. Two of these hours can be online and conducted off-campus. Furthermore, faculty members publish their office hours on their syllabi and on their office doors so that students are aware of an instructor's availability. Each semester, full-time faculty submit a form to the Vice President of Academic Services with their office times and days. In addition, all academic areas provide office space so that adjuncts may meet with students at agreed times arranged between the adjunct faculty and the student.

Response to 3.C.6

All student support services staff are qualified and receive support in their efforts to assist students. Student support services staff, like all college staff, have a job description that specifies not only their duties and responsibilities but also necessary qualifications. These qualifications are used as the basis for hiring student support services positions.

The college also utilizes faculty in some student support service roles. The faculty agreement, for example, outlines in [sections 6.12 and 6.17](#) responsibilities for career/transfer advisors, counselors, librarians, and program coordinators. These faculty positions have descriptions and duties determined by the Vice President of Academic Services or specified in the faculty agreement. Some positions are full-time student support related, such as our Counseling Department while others, such as program coordinators, are release time positions.

The college supports staff members in their development through numerous staff development events. The events are planned by the Staff Development Committee composed of staff members and college administration and are held regularly. In addition, the committee organizes a staff development day each semester, which allows all staff to participate in development activities. The development events and staff development days focus on a wide range of [sessions](#) for the personal and professional development of our staff.

All departments have meetings to discuss the work the area performs and to review processes to improve staff interactions with students. Additionally, department supervisors regularly evaluate all staff. Areas of improvement for individuals and departments are noted and guide individual and staff development efforts. All staff are offered the opportunity to continue their education with financial support from the college. This support includes free tuition for SSC courses and tuition reimbursement for courses offered outside our institution.

Sources

- Outcomes Assessment Committee

- Academic Standards Committee
- Adjunct Faculty Development Agendas
- Curriculum Committee
- Duties and Responsibilities for Curriculum Academic Standards and Outcomes Assessment Committees
- Employment and Tenure - Faculty Agreement
- Faculty Credential Guidelines
- Faculty Development Agendas
- Faculty Development Committee
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Resource Website
- Faculty User Guides
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Professional Responsibilities - Faculty Agreement
- Sampling of Faculty and Adjunct Faculty Development Agenda Topics
- SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Teaching and Learning Center - Web
- Teaching and Learning Center Services
- Teaching Online Guide

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

Response to 3.D.1

SSC provides extensive resources to students to assist in academic planning, personal development, and career attainment. These services range from preparation for college-level coursework to services for students in our college-level curriculum.

SSC provides many services for new and returning adults. These student services include an academic Counseling Center, an Academic Assistance Center, a Career and Development Center, a Financial Aid Office, a Veterans' Office, Services for Students with Disabilities Office, a Latino Center for Services and Information, a Transfer Center, and a Student Life and Leadership Office. See [Student Services General Information](#) for more information about these services.

Finally, the Adult Education Department offers a range of opportunities, including Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation classes, and English as a Second Language (ESL). All courses are offered free of charge.

[SSC Circle](#) is a convenient location that brings together support resources and staff to assist new and returning students in enrollment, including admissions, registration, and financial aid services.

The college offers numerous resources through [Admissions and Registration](#). The Admissions and Registration area supports students in all aspects of enrollment including applying, registering, placement testing, and financial aid.

Through the Office of Admissions, students obtain assistance in:

- Admission information
- Admission application
- Course registration
- School programs information
- Referral to a counselor

Students may also obtain information about financial aid, SSC scholarships, SSC waivers, and the SSC monthly payment plan.

Students also receive assistance in choosing courses via placement testing through the college's Assessment Center. Enrolled students also enjoy services such as the Transfer Center, which provides students with resources needed to transfer to a four-year institution.

Registration and Records maintains the accuracy, consistency, confidentiality, and integrity of student information. The area also oversees the grade records, for accurate transcription of student records, and for ensuring that the college adheres to ethical and legal requirements relating to student records.

The [Financial Aid Office](#) provides a comprehensive program of student financial assistance consisting of scholarships, grants, and student employment. All SSC students, full-time and part-time, must meet the college's guidelines for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

The college's Student Services area provides additional resources. These include our office of college recruitment, the Career Development and Jobs Center, and the Services for Students with Disabilities Office.

The [Career Development and Jobs Center](#) assists students, alumni and community members, businesses, and industry partners with career and job placement. Our center assists students in connecting with potential employers in the following ways:

- Allows students to scan our webpage for a list of employment opportunities
- Allows students to explore the internet and the Illinois Department of Employment Services website for job postings
- Students meet with employers on campus or at the spring job fair
- Students may attend on campus recruitment days

In addition, the center helps our students search for employment with the following services:

- Win-Way Resume software to compose a resume and cover letter
- Individual consultation and editing assistance from the center's professional staff
- Assistance in improving interviewing skills
- Successful job search strategies at workshops

The [Services for Students with Disabilities Office \(SSDO\)](#) offers numerous [services](#) including pre-admission counseling, priority registration, classroom accommodations, as well as special equipment for student use.

Student Services also oversees the Veterans' Center and the Latino Center.

The [Veterans' Services Office](#) assists students daily with personal or financial needs, such as the Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG), Illinois National Guard Grant (ING), veterans scholarships, and Veterans Tuition Waivers.

The [Latino Center for Services and Information](#) was developed in response to the growing Latino community. The Center is located in the Counseling Center and provides interpretation in English and Spanish, escorts prospective and current students and parents from office to office, and provides interpretation services for college programs/departments. In collaboration with college staff, the center provides informational sessions for parents/students in Spanish and maintains a scholarship database for Latino students, especially for undocumented-DREAMer students.

Our [Adult Education Department](#) offers numerous opportunities including Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation classes, and English as a Second Language (ESL). All courses are offered free of charge.

The [Student Handbook & Planner](#) provides academic calendars, emergency procedures, information about the college messaging system/SSC Alert, the student code of conduct, academic assistance information, study skills, and many additional resources to assist with college life.

New student orientation assists students in educational planning and introduces them to the resources available to SSC students.

The college provides sessions addressing sexual violence issues. For example, the *Prevention and Awareness 101* presentation promotes awareness of rape, acquaintance rape, domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault and stalking. [Bystander Training](#) explores strategies for interrupting instances of sexual violence and generating anti-violence cultural shifts. See [Student Development Events](#), and [LGBTQ Sexual Violence 101](#) for details.

Two [informational brochures](#) are also available to students and staff.

The college hosts sessions such as *World Aids Day: Did You Know? HIV Awareness and Testing* and a *LGBTQ 101 Training* session to provide valuable information to our students, faculty, staff, and the community. See [Student Development Events](#), [Student Leadership](#), and [History of Student Leadership program](#) for additional details.

The college provides numerous events and workshops. The following are some of the recent workshops and events offered to students.

- Workshop Wednesday - information on resume writing, cover letters, dressing for success
- Academic Survival Skills sessions
- Student Leadership program
- Study tips and techniques
- *Vintage Hitchcock: A Live Radio Play*
- Numerous sports events including soccer, volleyball, and basketball games
- Mexican folkloric performance
- Veterans appreciation day
- La Posada celebration
- Holiday concert
- *Finishing Strong: Fuel for Finals*

SSC also provides a [Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#). SSC's SAP program assists students with family, work-related, marital/relationship, legal, substance abuse, emotional, and financial issues.

Response to 3.D.2

SSC provides learning support and transitional curriculum for students not ready for college-level coursework. The college's preparatory instruction addresses the academic needs of its students in numerous ways. All students enrolling at the college must visit the college's [Assessment Center](#). All new degree or certificate seeking students entering college for the first time take a placement test unless exempt based upon previous college credit or ACT/SAT scores. The placement test consists of three sections: math, English, and reading. See [Placement Test Brochure in English and Spanish](#) for more details.

Math Placement

The college uses ALEKS PPL to test students from basic arithmetic through pre-calculus. The ALEKS test is "adaptive," meaning that each answer determines the difficulty level of the subsequent question.

English

To ensure appropriate placement, each student completes a handwritten essay response to a writing prompt. The essay is evaluated by the placement committee using

a rubric that addresses organization, development, conventions, syntactic maturity, and word choice. The student is then placed into the English course indicated by the rubric score.

Reading

Accuplacer assesses the ability to determine the meaning of words and phrases. Four categories are assessed: information and ideas, rhetoric, synthesis, and vocabulary.

The [Academic Assistance Center](#) provides free services through individual and/or group tutoring. The center also provides self-help tools including subject-specific videos and printed academic aids. The Academic Assistance Center also provides placement test reviews for incoming students, as well as academic survival skills sessions.

The [Academic Assistance Center brochure](#) has additional details.

In addition to student tutors, several faculty academic specialists provide support for specific disciplines such as biology or chemistry. Some areas of the college have developed their own academic assistance services. These include the Math 1:40 Club, the Reading Center, the Writing Center, and the Speaking Center.

For example, faculty in the math department offer math mentoring sessions for students. The [Math 1:40 Mentoring Club](#) offers free math mentoring sessions with faculty at designated times and days.

The [Reading Center](#) has computers and the latest software technology to assist with a range of reading concerns from basic comprehension to more advanced topics such as speed-reading. The center also assists African American males with reading skills that will help them matriculate through South Suburban College with a certificate or degree.

The Speaking Center aids students, employees, and the college community. Topics include overcoming speaker anxiety, presentational skills (both verbal and nonverbal), along with speech construction, outlining, and research.

The [Writing Center](#) is available to students who are currently enrolled and provides assistance to improve their writing skills for their coursework.

Additional details discussing how SSC has engaged in other projects and activities, including the curricular redesign project for its developmental math courses, participation in the HLC's Persistence & Completion Academy, and the PBI BLAST II project that support and enhance the previously identified support systems are offered in Criterion 4.C.3.

Response to 3.D.3

The [Counseling Department](#) is comprised of professional counseling faculty who serve the academic, vocational, and personal needs of our students. The counseling staff

assists students in determining career choices and in planning programs to reach their educational goals.

Individual counseling is available on a limited basis to assist students in developing greater self-awareness and problem-solving ability. Referrals to the Student Assistance Program and outside human services agencies are also available in the Counseling Center. Academic advising and counseling services are available to all students at the Counseling Center.

In addition, the college adopted Student Planning, an academic advising, degree audit, and registration program to assess program completion and develop academic plans. Student planning assists our students in staying on track in earning their degrees by identifying what students need to complete a program, as well as classes taken to date. This planning tool helps students clarify, plan, and track courses of study in order to more directly and confidently earn degree completion. See [Student Planning and SSC Self Service information](#).

Academic advising is also provided by faculty members in career programs such as the Allied Health and Paralegal Programs. Program coordinators over these areas advise students and guide them through program completion. The college also provides funding for three release time positions for faculty to serve as career/transfer advisors in selected programs. Counselors and advisors encourage students to make informed decisions about academic progress. The college has also implemented internal processes to keep our students focused on completion.

As examples, effective fall 2014, if a student is interested in withdrawing from a course, the student must do so in person. Students must obtain an Official Course Withdrawal form from the Registration Department. The student must first present the withdrawal form to an SSC Counselor. The student must sign the form to indicate that he/she has discussed and understands the academic outcome.

Students receiving financial aid must also present the withdrawal form to an SSC financial aid representative. The students must sign the form to indicate that he/she has discussed and understands the financial outcome. The signed withdrawal form is delivered to the Registration Department. Once processed, a "W" for the course/s is recorded on the student's transcript.

In addition, beginning with the 2018 summer semester, the [add/drop dates for credit courses](#) were changed to match both the length of a class as well as the individual section start date.

Refunds of tuition and fees occur only after the student has completed a "drop" through their portal during "drop" periods. Attendance in any class and receipt of a grade is subject to official enrollment in and payment of full tuition for the class.

No refunds are authorized for withdrawals or changes made after the term's refund date. Students wishing to discontinue attendance in a course after the close of the refund period must follow the withdrawal procedure in the college catalog.

Response to 3.D.4

The college's primary operations are located at its South Holland, Illinois campus. SSC also operates a satellite campus in Oak Forest; its Business and Career Institute is at this location.

Renovations, additions, and technological upgrades have improved the building and educational facilities. The upgrades have included:

- Renovation of English Labs
- Renovation of the Math Lab
- The [SouthWorks Maker Lab](#) at South Suburban College's Oak Forest Center officially opened in February 2016. This lab is one of a larger network across the community colleges and four-year universities in the region. The lab is visited by hundreds of community members. Numerous workshops for local teachers and community groups are hosted at the lab. The lab also hosted two summer camps for grammar school children. Overall, the lab serves to provide students, entrepreneurs, community members, and inventors access to high quality tools to which they may not otherwise have access. SSC also hosts the Annual SouthWorks Engineering & Robotics Olympics, as well as the Maker Girls and Etsy workshops.
- SSC Allied Health Addition Project - This project is in its preliminary stages. Funds will be allocated from the State of Illinois for a new state-of-the-art Allied Health building.
- Direct Digital Control (DDC) upgrade. This HVAC upgrade will improve even airflow throughout the building.
- 122 classrooms have presentation equipment and are continually being upgraded with new technology.
- Cyber Café is an area where students can use a provided computer with more flexibility. Students can access the internet while they eat and drink, collaborate on projects, or simply charge a smartphone or tablet.
- Main roof warranty extension and re-coating/re-sealing project to protect classrooms, offices, hallways, and equipment.
- Upgrades to Adult Education classrooms and offices. It is important to keep all of our students abreast of all cutting edge technology, thus enhanced smart rooms and teaching stations were added.
- Renovated the south elevator to meet code requirements and maintain the elevator. The rehabilitation included upgrading operating controls, hoistway, cab lighting, ADA accessibility, new finishes, and ventilation of shafts and the equipment room.
- Performance Art Center (PAC) chiller. The college replaced the PAC chiller unit to provide consistent temperatures in the PAC for our plays, music

performances, faculty forums, student classes, and employee training sessions. The old chiller unit was replaced with an energy efficient unit and supports the college's mission to become "green."

Additional information about the numerous renovations, additions, and technological upgrades completed over the last 10 years are found in the [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2008](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2009](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2011](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2012](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016](#), [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2017](#), and [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018](#).

The college has also made renovations and other improvements at the college with funding from the Primarily Black Institution grant. See [PBI Interim Performance Report 2017](#) and [PBI Annual Performance Report 2017](#).

Finally, with funding from the Perkins Grant, the college has also been able to acquire new equipment and technology for our career programs. See [Perkins Final Reports](#) for some recent examples of acquisitions benefitting our students.

Our [2014-2019 Strategic Plan](#) identified a number of [strategic goals](#) relating to student success and completion. Two of the strategic goals specifically focus on providing students and instructors the infrastructure and resources to support effective teaching and learning.

- SSC.2.19: Develop a process to modernize all classrooms, labs and other areas utilized by students, faculty, and staff as set forth by the college's master facilities plan.
- SSC.2.20: Develop a plan to access and improve technology support systems that advance learning.

In addition, one of the college's [dedications statements](#) states:

- SSC is dedicated to up-to-date facilities that help prepare students for transfer to baccalaureate programs or the job market.

South Suburban College provides resources to students and instructors as well as the infrastructure to support effective teaching and support services for a student body with diverse needs. The college's [Facilities Master Plan](#) identifies these needs and guides planning as well as continued maintenance.

In addition, SSC's [IT Strategic and Operational Plan](#) outlined IT's strategic priorities and the major IT projects to focus on during 2016-2022.

The college maintains science laboratory classroom spaces used in science courses. These lab designs are based upon the standards appropriate for educational laboratories in their respective disciplines. Equipment and other necessary materials are also provided through department budgeting processes.

South Suburban College integrates technology into the academic environment. Examples include classroom presentation equipment, instructional computer labs and student computer lab spaces. These resources are maintained by full-time employees and administrators in both our Academic Computing and Information Technology department and Communication Services department.

Both departments handle the infrastructure needs as well as support students and faculty. The departments share a common student and faculty helpdesk system that directs users to the most appropriate area. The college also has a [Teaching and Learning Center \(TLC\)](#) staffed by a full-time employee and is assisted by a faculty member in a release time position of Faculty Technology Trainer. This area is a resource for faculty members using technology in their classrooms, including online education. In addition, the TLC staff offers group training and one-on-one sessions as needed.

The college's Performing Arts Center (PAC) is another area that benefits students, faculty, and our community. The PAC features music and theater productions. The college also supports the arts with three art galleries. These spaces are used to display student artwork, and the college hosts numerous art exhibits featuring visiting artists. See [Student Services General Information](#) for more information about the art galleries, performing arts, and performing center.

The [Library](#) is a vital part of the college's mission and boasts resources and trained staff to support our students and faculty. The college employs full-time faculty members with extensive training in library sciences. Our librarians work with the administration and faculty in academic departments to ensure the Library collections are up-to-date and used by our students. In addition to physical collections, the college is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) with other academic libraries in our state that allows us to share in a much wider collection than we could provide onsite. Additional details for Library services are in Criterion 2.E.

The Library is also a service area for books, periodicals, audiovisual materials, subscription databases, and online resources that support students, faculty, and staff, as well as the research and information needs of the community.

The college also provides multiple computer labs with more than 600 computers housed at our main campus and Oak Forest Center. These computer labs provide access to software packages for word processing, databases, spreadsheets, and internet access.

The college has a Reading Center, a Speaking Center, and a Writing Center.

Finally, SSC maintains a close working relationship with many area businesses that serve as intern and clinical sites for programs.

Detailed information about the students services provided at SSC are found in [Student Services General Information](#).

Response to 3.D.5

SSC guides students in the use of its resources. The [Student Handbook & Planner](#) is updated annually and available in print and online. The Counseling Department incorporates the handbook in all its [Overview for College Success](#) courses. This class helps students become more informed and provides support and information on work/life balance.

The South Suburban College Library's vision is to be a vibrant environment where students research, learn, complete coursework, collaborate, and study. The librarians and Library staff's goal is for all students, faculty, staff, and community members to become information literate knowledge seekers who can find, evaluate, and utilize resources in a variety of formats. Faculty and staff provide information literacy skills in many ways, including library [orientation classes](#), [reference librarian staffing](#), and a month long series of [programs](#) during Information Literacy Month.

Details of how SSC provides guidance in the effective use of research and information resources are provided in Criterion 2.E.

Sources

- Bystander Training
- About the Library
- Academic Assistance Center
- Academic Assistance Center Brochure in English and Spanish
- Add and Drop for Credit Courses - Web
- Admissions and Registration - Web
- Adult Education
- Assessment Center - Web
- Career Development and Job Placement Center
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2008
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2009
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2011
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2012
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016

- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2017
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018
- Counseling Center - Web
- Equipment Upgrades and Acquisitions from Perkins Grants
- Facilities Master Plan 2017
- Financial Aid Office
- History of Student Leadership Program
- Information Literacy Month Events and Activities
- Informational Brochures
- IT Strategic and Operational Plan FY16-FY21
- Latino Center for Services and Information - Web
- LGBTQ Sexual Violence 101
- Library Orientation Classes Conducted 2013-2017
- Library Reference Desk Statistics 2013-2017
- Math 140 Tutoring Club
- Mission Dedication Goals History - Catalog
- Music and Art Events
- Overview for College Success
- PBI Annual Performance Report 2017
- PBI Interim Performance Report 2017
- Perkins Final Reports
- Placement Testing Brochure in English and Spanish
- Plays
- Reading Center
- Services for Students with Disabilities - Web
- Services for Students with Disabilities List of Services
- SouthWorks MakerLab - Web
- SSC Circle - Web
- Strategic Directions
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Student Assistance Program
- Student Development Events
- Student Handbook 2018-2019
- Student Leadership
- Student Planning and SSC Self-Service Information
- Student Services General Information
- Teaching and Learning Center - Web
- Veterans Services - Web
- Writing Center

3. E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

Response to 3.E.1

South Suburban College provides numerous co-curricular activities for students and the community. Several programs enrich and extend student learning beyond the classroom.

The [Study Abroad Program](#) annually sends students to Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The college's Service Learning Program combines service in the community with academic learning in the classroom wherein course objectives are linked to service learning. Students learn through participation in an organized service activity. By reflecting on their service activity, students better understand course content, appreciate the relevance of the course to everyday life, foster social and civic responsibility, and increase self-worth through contribution to the community. Detailed information about our service learning program and recent examples of service learning opportunities are found in the [Service Learning documentation](#).

SSC collaborates with many [service learning external partners](#). Recent opportunities have included a variety of [service learning experiences](#) for our students.

[Phi Theta Kappa](#), the International Honor Society of the Two-Year College, is a scholastic society of scholars of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, and fields of study. By promoting a bond of excellence, Phi Theta Kappa promotes the development of leadership and responsible citizenship. Applicants must possess a cumulative college GPA of 3.5 over a minimum of 12 semester hours credit earned in 101-level courses or above. PTK hosts extracurricular events throughout the school year. Finally, there are many [student clubs and organizations](#) available for those who are interested.

SSC has many co-curricular activities focused on media and the arts. Several [art gallery events](#) are hosted at the college with regular shows and receptions. SSC has roughly

six art shows per year, which are free to the community. Featured artists are community members or come from Chicago. Many of these artist have been featured on [SSC360](#).

Similarly, the Performing Arts Center hosts [music productions](#). Approximately twenty musical events are held throughout our community yearly. Performers are SSC students (credit and non-credit). These events are free to the public. These music events are open to both students and the community. Musical events have included:

- Jazz Orchestra Concert
- Orchestra and Chamber String Ensemble Concert
- Choral Festival
- Jazz Combo and Jazz Orchestra Concert
- SSC Voices
- Symphonic Band Concerts
- Student Recital
- Holiday Concert

The Theatre Department's SSC Playhouse, The Children's Company, and The PAC Rats Theatre Company produce shows year-round. Past productions have included *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pinocchio*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Actors are community members. Children's plays are performed by adult actors and are specifically for grade school groups, day care centers, and senior/special needs centers. Postcards are sent to addresses on a mailing list and events are posted on Facebook, the college website, *Shopper*, and other free news outlets. See [Plays](#) for more information.

The college's literary journal, *The Scriblerian*, features writing and art by students and faculty. It is published annually and distributed free to students. [Scriblerian 2018](#), [Scriblerian 2017](#), and [Scriblerian 2013](#) are representative samples.

The college's [athletics program](#) features several men and women's sports. Combining the accomplishments of the various teams—women's volleyball, women's softball, men's baseball, men's and women's basketball, and men's and women's soccer—the SSC Bulldogs boast many regional championships and multiple NJCAA Hall of Fame coaches. Hundreds of student athletes have transferred to play at the NAIA and NCAA levels, including the NCAA Division. More than fifty athletes have played professional or semi-professional sports.

TV production students gain hands-on experience as they assist in producing videos about the college. Many co-curricular programs and events are highlighted on [SSC360](#) and [Bulldog Bites](#).

For example, *Bulldog Bites* features short stories on news and events at SSC. Stories have included segments on the [Chicago Women's Conference & Expo](#), Manufacturing Day, Law Day, Study Abroad, Artist Receptions, International Literacy Month, Latino Center Grand Opening, Non-Traditional Workforce Expo, New Reading Center, STEM Day with NASA, and Thornton Township Faith, Dignity, and Respect Youth Conference.

More detailed shows highlighting people and events appear on SSC360. For example, SSC360 featured stories on alumni, veterans, the Study Abroad Program, service learning, SSC art and artist receptions, the SSC Foundation, sustainability, athletics, student leadership, high school workshops, musical and theatre events, *The Scriblerian*, SSC historical walls, adult education, and academic career program information.

Response to 3.E.2

Many of the previously discussed activities extend beyond the student body to the community. Most athletic and humanities events are open to the public. The [Service Learning Program](#) benefits many people within the community. SSC also provides multiple programs that extend to the greater community.

The [Adult Education Department](#) provides HSE (High School Equivalency) and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes for community members. The Adult Education Department helps people earn their High School Equivalencies, learn the English language, earn U.S. citizenship, and gain or improve employment.

The [Adult Education Department](#) aims to transition students to SSC's college credit classes or certificate programs. Furthermore, adult education students participate in an annual Illinois rally at the capitol in Springfield, which is supported by the IACEA (Illinois Adult and Continuing Education Association), giving students the opportunity of attending Legislative Awareness Day and fostering civic awareness and responsibility.

The Continuing Education Department and the Business and Career Institute offer courses to meet the needs of our student population, a multi-generational community from youth to senior citizens, throughout the academic year. See [Spring Options 2019](#) and [Business and Career Institute information](#) for more details.

Courses include personal and professional development seminars, healthcare programs, job skills, and just for fun or special interest. These classes are presented within our community and are hosted in several locations for easy accessibility. Non-credit programs are promoted on Facebook, SSC360, the SSC website, and other outlets.

A [College for Kids](#) program is also offered by the college.

SSC annually hosts the [Women's Conference & Expo](#), which has approximately 500 attendees. It is promoted through targeted mailing, Facebook, SSC's website, and other media outlets.

The Business and Career Institute hosts Breakfast with BCI. These events target community businesses and are open to the public.

Finally, the [Highway Construction Career Training Program](#) stresses increasing knowledge of local apprenticeship programs. This is a grant-funded program with

classes held three times a year. Sixty-five percent of the students exiting this program go on to enroll in an apprenticeship program. The construction program is featured on SSC360.

Sources

- Adult Education
- Athletics Program - Web
- Bulldog Bites - Web
- Business and Career Institute Flyers
- Chicago Womens Conference and Expo Event Information
- College for Kids
- Highway Construction Careers Training Program - Web
- International and Intercultural Studies Program
- Music and Art Events
- Phi Theta Kappa
- Plays
- Scriblerian 2013
- Scriblerian 2017
- Scriblerian 2018
- Service Learning - Web
- Service Learning Documentation
- Service Learning External Partners
- Service Learning Opportunities
- Spring Options 2019
- SSC360 - Web
- Student Clubs and Organizations

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

There is no argument.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

Response to 4.A.1

All college transfer programs (CTP), career programs (CP), and academic support service programs must complete a review process every five (5) years. The Vice President of Academic Services leads this process. The program review must meet the requirements of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). SSC sets high standards for programs and these reviews ensure the college provides high quality programs and complies with the ICCB requirements.

The [ICCB Program Review Manual](#) and the [ICCB System Rules](#) outline the requirements for completing these reviews. A [5-year program review schedule](#) identifies the programs and departments under review during that academic year and provides a timeline for completion. For example in [2018](#), forty career and educational programs were reviewed, both degree and certificate. The college also reviewed cross-disciplinary programs for remedial/developmental math and reading programs. Finally, the college reviewed two student and academic support services programs: Career Center and Job Placement and the Tutoring Center. Departments and programs must involve faculty and staff and require input from students and program participants. Programs reviews are also provided for [2017](#), [2016](#), [2015](#), [2014](#), [2013](#), [2012](#), [2011](#), [2010](#), [2009](#), and [2008](#) and provide additional evidence of the consistent and systematic review of our programs over the last 10 years.

The college's program review is collaborative, including multiple departments. The Information Technology department provides data that includes program and course enrollment, certificate and degree completion, and seat utilization. The Director of Institutional Research provides data in enrollment patterns, student demographics, student evaluation at the course level, and analysis of assessment data at the program and college level.

Academic deans provide data about job market analysis when appropriate; they also provide advisory committee feedback, emerging trends, and predictions within a discipline and/or field of study.

Program reviews identify short-term and long-term program plans of action to address expansion or withdrawals. When applicable, curriculum changes are [presented and approved by](#) the [Curriculum Committee](#) prior to final submission for ICCB approval.

The action plan is a critical component of program reviews. As part of the college's continuous evaluation of programs, these reviews have sometimes included substantial changes to address deficiencies.

For example, in the [Nursing Program review in 2015](#), SSC [critically reviewed and assessed](#) its Associate Degree of Nursing program. The nursing department also developed a [Nursing Improvement plan](#) to improve NCLEX-RN pass rates. This plan was accepted by the Illinois State Board of Nursing. As a result of the actions taken by the college, the [NCLEX pass rates](#) for the past four years have substantially improved.

In addition, many career programs conduct annual or bi-annual advisory board meetings to review the progress of their programs. Many advisory board suggestions are implemented to improve the programs, or to alter curriculum to adapt to the changing needs of their respective fields. Career programs disclose cohort characteristics such as annual national pass rates, if applicable, semester retention and attrition, and program completion rates. See [Paralegal](#), [Echocardiography](#), and [Coding Specialist](#) program reports as examples of the detailed information contained in these reports.

The college transfer programs meet annually with their academic deans, department heads, and faculty to discuss trends in their respective fields of study, student trends in learning, fluctuation in student scores, and potential revisions of course outlines.

Finally, the college has adopted a model with outcomes assessment (OA) through LiveText. Each program must complete goals for exams, capstone projects, or writing assignments, and record the results on an annual update form. These results assist in information gathering for program reviews and are now a college-wide resource.

Response to 4.A.2

SSC is committed to the integrity of the credits that it transcripts. The college evaluates all credit transcribed and follows best practices in awarding credit for military service, experiential learning, prior learning, and advanced placement.

SSC recognizes that college level academic competence can be achieved with [alternative credit](#). All [policies for transfer](#) and awarding of credit are in the catalog.

Students must submit official transcripts to the Admissions Office via mail or e-mail. Transcripts are evaluated daily in the order received. If the evaluation is time sensitive, students may request a transcript of credit evaluation in the Admissions Office or the Counseling Department and their transcript evaluation will be given priority. The student must have a designated program of study or curriculum. Once the transcript requests are received, a designated counselor will review the courses according to the Illinois Articulation Agreement using transferology, course descriptions, and/or course syllabi to determine appropriate equivalencies before credit is awarded. Posted transfer credit hours can be used to fulfill program, elective, or general education requirements at SSC.

Students work with the Counseling Department and specific program coordinators to determine which transfer credit is applicable toward program completion. Transfer of credit evaluation may take seven to ten days.

Response to 4.A.3

SSC policies assure the quality of credit it accepts in transfer. These policies outline the number of credits a student must complete at SSC. SSC accepts only college transfer credit from an institution of higher education as recognized by a regional accreditation organization at the time credit was earned. When a course is transferred in and the equivalent course at SSC was determined, it will be built in TCEQ (Transfer Course Equivalencies). This ensures consistency, accuracy, and efficiency because the equivalent was already determined. If it is unclear how a course should be transferred in, evaluation counselors may request a syllabus from the student of the course in question to better understand what the course covered. The evaluation counselor also may contact the program coordinator (for career courses) or department chairs (for general education courses), for assistance in determining course equivalencies. If a

course has an [IAI number](#) and South Suburban College lacks an equivalent course, evaluation counselors will transfer that course in as the IAI number, thus satisfying general education requirements.

SSC also has articulation agreements with other higher education institutions to assist students who wish to transfer from into a baccalaureate degree program. General education courses appear on the [Illinois Articulation Initiative \(IAI\)](#), ensuring that students who transfer from one state college or university to another will receive credit for general education courses.

Response to 4.A.4

The college's [Curriculum](#) and [Academic Standards](#) Committees oversee any changes, modifications, or alterations in the curriculum for courses and programs and applicable academic standards policies. Faculty lead these committees. [Committees](#) will suggest changes in courses, pre-requisites, or degrees/certificates, and the Curriculum Committee ensures that the curriculum is consistent with college objectives. Once approved by the committee(s), proposals are forwarded to the Vice President of Academic Services for final approval.

The college ensures that all full-time and part-time faculty are qualified through education and/or professional experience as determined by the 2015 revised HLC credential guidelines for Determining Qualified Faculty through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices. Four tenured faculty were identified as lacking credentials to teach in the discipline for which they were granted permission. One faculty member has completed the required 18 graduate credit hours and is therefore eligible to teach mathematics; one has since become an administrator and credential eligibility is no longer an issue; and two remain ineligible to teach within the disciplines for which they were approved. The [2017 ICCB Self-Study](#) has more information.

The Vice President of Academic Services, the academic deans, faculty and the Director of Enrollment Services continually review dual credit programming to ensure adherence to all state laws, regulations, and accreditation standards. Potential dual credit courses go through an articulation process in collaboration with participating high school faculty, college faculty, and academic deans. The most common dual credit courses for the college has been dual credit courses taught at the high school by high school teachers. The college has improved articulation by increasing the number of articulation meetings hosted with the high school faculty and increased the number of training workshops offered to high school liaisons. Academic credentials for potential dual credit high school teachers are reviewed prior to completion of course articulation. High school teachers must meet teaching qualifications established by the college. Course articulation is not fulfilled until the high school teacher completes the same hiring process as an adjunct at the college—including submission of all academic credentials. Once a course is articulated for dual credit, students are selected by the high school counselor or approved faculty teaching the dual credit course. The students are informed of any course prerequisite or testing prerequisite. If a placement test is required, a test date is

established. The completed prerequisites are assessed by the Director of Enrollment Services/Dual Credit Liaison and the Dean of Student Development. Students who meet the academic criteria can take the dual credit course. Students who do not meet the prerequisite requirements cannot enroll in the dual credit course. The [2017 ICCB Self-Study](#) contains more details.

Students and faculty have access to numerous [learning resources](#) through the Library.

Response to 4.A.5

SSC is an [officially recognized](#) community college district by the ICCB. Many of SSC's programs are also [accredited or approved by external agencies](#) and samples of [approval letters from external accrediting bodies](#) are provided as evidence. Accredited programs also utilize a [Program Accreditation Master Calendar](#) to track our program accreditation schedules.

In addition, accreditation reports contain detailed information about the program, advisory committee information, faculty, assessment, courses, and student information. See [Paralegal](#), [Echocardiography](#), [Pharmacy Technician](#), and [Coding Specialist](#) program reports as examples.

The [National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements \(SARA\)](#) also [authorizes](#) SSC for online learning.

Before enrolling in certain programs, students are advised to review the applicable licensure/certification procedures/requirements and state law of the profession to ensure that they are eligible to receive a license/certification following program completion.

Upon successful completion of many of our programs, students are eligible to take national/certification/board exams.

Response to 4.A.6

Some programs (Allied Health, Paralegal) must maintain contact with graduates to determine employment status or to determine if students continued their education at a four-year institution. Many of these programs must contact their graduates pursuant to the policies and procedures of their respective governing bodies.

In addition, programs that utilize an advisory board evaluate the needs of the specific discipline. In some instances, former students are invited to the advisory boards to explain how the program prepared them for interviews and, ultimately, job performance..

However, with most other programs, no mechanism determines what happens to a student after graduating from or simply leaving SSC. The college is developing a final exit interview for all students applying for graduation. As expected, tracking students

after they have left the institution is difficult, even in the programs that are required to maintain contact. Students are not required to maintain contact with the college. Thus, students may ignore correspondence, inquiries, and phone calls regarding their status.

Each program must determine the necessity of an internship or service learning project. As an example, the Paralegal Program determined that due the field's competitive nature--and the demand from employers that the applicant have some experience--that an internship was necessary. See [Career Program Brochures group one](#) and [Career Program Brochures group two](#) for more information about the programs. [Service learning](#) is available to all students and is promoted by the Service Learning Committee through emails to instructors, a bulletin board, and advertisements on the televisions.

Sources

- Academic Standards Committee
- Accreditation Approval and Memberships - Catalog
- Alternative Credit - Catalog
- Approval Letters from External Accrediting Bodies
- Career Program Brochures group one
- Career Program Brochures group two
- Coding Specialist Program Report
- Curriculum Committee
- Duties and Responsibilities for Curriculum Academic Standards and Outcomes Assessment Committees
- Echocardiography Program Self-Study
- Highlights from Nursing Program Review
- IAI Major and General Education Courses
- IBHE SARA Approval
- ICCB 5-Year Program Review Schedule
- ICCB Program Review Manual
- ICCB Self-Study 2017
- ICCB System Rules Manual
- Illinois Articulation Initiative
- Library Learning Resources
- NCLEX Pass Rates
- Nursing Program Improvement Plan
- Nursing Program Review 2015
- Paralegal Program Interim Report
- Pharmacy Technician Program Report
- Policies for Transfer and Awarding of Credit
- Program Accreditation Master Calendar
- Program Review Report 2008
- Program Review Report 2009
- Program Review Report 2010
- Program Review Report 2011

- Program Review Report 2012
- Program Review Report 2013
- Program Review Report 2014
- Program Review Report 2015
- Program Review Report 2016
- Program Review Report 2017
- Program Review Report 2018
- Service Learning - Web
- SSC Certificate of Recognition 2022

4. B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

Response to 4.B.1

SSC is committed to improving learning through comprehensive assessment of student learning. SSC's goals for student learning are at the course, program, and institutional levels established by faculty with support from academic administrators.

As part of its last 10-year reaffirmation, the HLC review team required that SSC file a report on assessment of student learning by March 2, 2012, and the college submitted its [progress report](#). On March 14, 2012, the HLC issued its acceptance of the report. No further reports were required.

As part of our assessment review, the college's Outcomes Assessment Committee created and maintains a comprehensive assessment plan in collaboration with all areas of academics and student services. See [Assessment Plan Key Components](#) and [Outcomes Assessment Handbook 2015-2020](#)

A team of three faculty and one administrator attended the HLC Academy to redesign our general education assessment plan.

Pursuant to the plan we developed, the most recent cycle of assessment of general education extends over a six-year period and identified a designated assessment activity. See our [Strategic Plan for Assessment of General Education](#).

Furthermore, to be transparent in identifying ongoing assessment activities, the Outcomes Assessment Committee created an [assessment poster](#) to communicate the college's assessment plan.

Every program/department participates in assessment. Assessment activities measure the student's understanding of the subject matter. The assessment activities are consistent with the goals of each course, department, or program.

A number of [key components](#) were included in the assessment plan.

Program and course objectives are developed by faculty and [evaluated](#) by the [Curriculum Committee](#). Program and course objectives, rationales, assessment methods, delivery modes, prerequisite skills and knowledge, and other features are reviewed and evaluated. Approved program goals are articulated in the college catalog, and course objectives appear on course syllabi.

The course syllabus contains student learning outcomes. The syllabus also states the methods to be used by students in demonstrating proficiency. Each department and program have articulated student learning outcomes on the college website. The college has [general education objectives](#) which are in the college catalog and on the college website.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs publish goals on the website and in the college catalog. Program faculty regularly evaluates academic program goals.

Career and Technical Education faculty identify program-level objectives in addition to course-level objectives. CTE program-level objectives are developed in collaboration with advisory committees and comply with [ICCB requirements for program approval](#). The CTE course-level objectives introduce and reinforce learning objectives that develop program-level skills. Course-level objectives are found in course syllabi. Program-level objectives are on the department's web page.

Courses in the baccalaureate/transfer programs align course-learning objectives with the course goals related to the subject content. These course objectives are also written in the framework of the [Illinois Articulation Agreement \(IAI\)](#) and course alignments with baccalaureate institutions to ensure transfer.

Program reviews are performed on a [5-year program review schedule](#) as required by the [program review manual](#) to report information that supports the relevance, viability, and sustainability of an academic program. Enrollment, graduation, financials, student learning assessments, and job opportunities and placement are included in the five-year reviews. This comprehensive five-year review process illustrates the strengths of programs, highlights of areas for improvement, and provides an overview of programs for institutional stakeholders. For example, the [2014](#), [2016](#) and [2017](#) reviews illustrate a variety of programs and disciplines that were reviewed as part of this five-year cycle.

Response to 4.B.2

The college regularly assesses learning outcomes of courses and programs. Faculty members collect data on learning outcomes each semester. The data may be

aggregated annually at the department level and then become part of the dialogue between faculty and academic leaders improving assessment.

The college also takes seriously its claim that it matriculates students who communicate effectively in oral and written forms, think critically, use technology, conduct research, and embrace multiculturalism. Our assessment plan includes a cycle for assessment, curriculum mapping of course objectives to the general institutional and education objectives, six [rubrics](#), course assessment, departmental and program assessment, and LiveText data reports. See the [curriculum course map](#) for more information.

Since 2011, college faculty have evaluated hundreds of students using many rubrics and metrics to assess general education outcomes. With the LiveText system, faculty regularly evaluate students.

The college analyzes data collected from the faculty utilizing the written communication rubric. As an example see [Assessment Report for Developmental Written Communication](#).

The college analyzes data collected from the faculty utilizing the critical thinking rubric. As an example see [Assessment Report for Developmental Critical Thinking](#).

In addition, the college analyzes data collected from the faculty utilizing the oral communication rubric. As an example see [Assessment report for Oral Communication](#). As an example see the [Assessment Report for Oral Communication](#).

This process provides deans, chairs, program coordinators, and departments with data to identify trends in learning. The process continues to be refined through discussions of improvement and faculty scoring alignments. As new technologies become available, the college will consider alternative ways of assessing student learning. As our culture of assessment evolves, future successes will benefit from the foundations established previously by the faculty and staff who envisioned this system years ago.

Co-curricular assessment is relatively new for many departments in the college. The college has recently implemented a number of activities.

Response to 4.B.3

The [Outcomes Assessment Committee](#) is a liaison to faculty and administration regarding outcomes assessment and represents the faculty and administration in advising the Vice President of Academic Services on outcomes assessment. South Suburban College has a vibrant Outcomes Assessment Committee with faculty represented from numerous disciplines.

Each department/program is responsible for analyzing assessment data and sharing those results with faculty or an advisory board. The information is used to determine weaknesses and strengths of a class or program. Advisory boards are an objective

evaluator, making recommendations that increase the student's understanding of a subject matter.

Each instructor assesses student proficiency with at least one [general education objective](#) using one of the [general education rubrics](#) each semester. The instructor completes their assessment by completing an online form which records a student's proficiency in various dimensions. Annual update forms are submitted to the assessment committee to provide the instructor with feedback on how to improve methods and foster learning. For recent examples, these [annual update forms](#) have been included.

Currently, the Outcomes Assessment Committee analyzes this institution-wide data. This review provides an opportunity for faculty to discuss possible improvements in our assessment. The Outcomes Assessment Committee reviews this information and brings it back to faculty in [outcomes assessment newsletters](#). Faculty are asked to gather with their departments and determine, upon analysis of the data, changes to improve learning. This information is documented through the implementation form.

At SSC, assessment is not simply the evaluation of student learning outcomes. Assessment uses data from numerous sources to identify opportunities to improve student learning.

For example, the Paralegal Program used a detailed [paralegal assessment plan](#) as part of an updated report submitted to the American Bar Association. This plan identified assessment activities conducted, student learning objectives and goals, and expected outcomes. In addition, the plan reviewed assessment results and provided a plan for improvement.

The math faculty also utilized [math data](#) to determine if the redesign of its lowest level math course improved student progression.

As another example, SSC faculty utilized [nursing data](#) to evaluate and improve student outcomes in the Nursing Department.

Response to 4.B.4

The college has significantly increased the awareness of global assessment through faculty development assessment training sessions and handout materials:

- [Outcomes Assessment Handbook 2015-2020](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Presentation 01-09-2014](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Presentation 08-15-2014](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Puzzle](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Pyramid](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment Newsletters](#)

At the time of the previous HLC site visit, the college lacked a formal assessment tool. Subsequently, the college purchased, incorporated, and encouraged faculty to utilize [LiveText](#) as the primary assessment tool. Currently, participation among faculty is at 50%. The college recognizes that although faculty participation in assessment has increased with LiveText since the last HLC site visit, the participation is not at target levels. The administration and the Outcomes Assessment Committee are working to improve faculty participation.

The [Outcomes Assessment Committee](#), comprised largely of faculty, has promoted the [Assessment Grand Plan](#) to the faculty. Faculty engagement with LiveText and the survey form has increased since the last HLC visit. The college has learned a great deal about student learning and instruction. The plan ends in 2020 and our current plan will be re-evaluated in our continuing quest to increase student success. Revisions to our current assessment plan will be vetted through the Outcomes Assessment Committee. An analysis of what has succeeded, what processes need to improve, and what, if any, new technologies can assist our faculty in assessment will be part of our internal review. The college anticipates that faculty will continue to be engaged in the process and develop a grassroots effort to develop a more organic approach to assessing student learning led by faculty from every department and program. This will include co-curricular assessment. The administration looks forward to working with the faculty to improve assessment. The college is currently implementing the construction of a data warehouse to enhance the productivity of the Institutional Research Department in analyzing student success data and outcomes. See [Horizon Dashboard Reporting System](#) and [Dashboard examples](#).

Sources

- Outcomes Assessment Committee
- Assessment Plan Key Components
- Assessment Plan Poster
- Assessment Report for Developmental Critical Thinking
- Assessment Report for Developmental Written Communication
- Assessment Report for Oral Communication
- Curriculum Committee
- Curriculum Course Map
- Dashboard Examples
- Duties and Responsibilities for Curriculum Academic Standards and Outcomes Assessment Committees
- General Education Rubrics
- General Institutional and Education Objectives
- HLC Progress Report 2012
- Horizon Dashboard Reporting System Overview
- ICCB 5-Year Program Review Schedule
- ICCB Program Approval Manual
- ICCB Program Review Manual

- Illinois Articulation Initiative
- LiveText Instructions
- Math Data
- Nursing Data
- Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Presentation 01-09-2014
- Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Presentation 08-15-2014
- Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Puzzle
- Outcomes Assessment Faculty Development Pyramid Handout
- Outcomes Assessment Handbook 2015-2020
- Outcomes Assessment Newsletters
- Outcomes Assessment Sample Annual Report
- Paralegal Program Assessment Plan
- Program Review Report 2014
- Program Review Report 2016
- Program Review Report 2017
- Strategic Plan for Assessment of General Education

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

Response to 4.C.1

SSC's continuing focus on retention, persistence, and completion rates demonstrates its commitment to improvements in the degree and certificate programs.

The college identifies performance metrics common among other two-year institutions in Illinois, which are reported annually. These include graduation rates and retention rates for full-time, part-time, and first-time students.

The college, as part of its ongoing review process, reviews its performance in retention and graduation rates relative to peer institutions. Using data from ICCB, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the National Student Clearinghouse, South Suburban College examines retention and graduation rates and presents the findings to the administration for consideration in strategic planning.

In 2012, senior administration reviewed data from other Illinois institutions for the period of 2008- 2012. After reviewing the data and determining that the college had to develop new strategies and directions to address student success, a strategic planning task force team was formed. This task force team was charged with incorporating into the [2014-2019 Strategic Plan](#) a plan to build a culture of student success. The focus of the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan was to align with the American Association of Community College's (AACC) 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community College's

2012 report, [*Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future*](#). In addition, this commitment to student success was in line with the national focus on student engagement, persistence, and retention.

SSC examined three areas most relevant to the college's vision, opportunities, and priorities:

1. Increasing students' readiness to undertake college level work
2. Improving completion rates
3. Closing skill gaps, aligning graduates' learning and credentials with industrial and occupational demand

The college is committed to helping students achieve their goals in affordable and efficient ways. These objectives, referred to in the college's [2014-2019 Strategic Plan](#) as "[strategic directions](#)," include the following:

1. Help more students become college ready. (S.D. #1.2, #1.3, #1.4)
2. Increase the likelihood of students earning a certificate and/or an associate's degree. (S.D. #1.5 & #2.1, #2.2, #2.3, #2.4, #2.5, #2.6, #2.7, #2.8, #2.9, #2.11, #2.12, #2.14, #2.15)
3. Help students learn trade skills leading to future employment. (S.D. #2.1,, #2.13, #2.14, #2.15)
4. Facilitate student transfers to four-year universities for eventual bachelor's degree attainment. (S.D. #3.3, #3.4, #3.5)

As further evidence of the college's commitment to student success, and its recognition that the college needed to improve student success measurements, SSC submitted an [application](#) to be part of the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy and received [acceptance](#) to participate in the academy on May 26, 2015. Details about our involvement with the HLC Academy are discussed in other sections of the Criterion 4 argument.

In addition, as a Predominantly Black Institution, SSC is sensitive to the issues and opportunities presented by a diverse student population. In 2015, the college submitted a [Predominantly Black Institution grant proposal](#) to the US Department of Education to improve the education of members of its minority populations, particularly African-American males. SSC proposed to implement a project titled BLAST II. The college received the initial five-year grant award notification from the US Department of Education on October 4, 2016, in the amount of \$2,029,147.

The college implemented the BLAST II project based on a review of its IPEDS data coupled with an analysis of its College Profile, Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) data, and the strategic directions identified in the college's [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#).

IPEDS, ICCB, and College Profile data confirmed negative enrollment for SSC's part-time student populations, particularly African-American students. Data indicated that

retention rates had fallen since 2016. Several theories and anecdotal accounts from students emerged in the college's analysis. One theory was that fewer full-time, first-time students enrolling in the college affect retention and completion rates, causing fluctuation. The second theory was that students entering college, particularly African-American male students, require significant remediation of academic skills before enrolling in college-level course work.

The BLAST II project was designed to increase African-American male persistence and to increase their success and retention from semester to semester, ultimately leading to degree and certificate completion. Details about BLAST II are discussed in other sections of this Criterion 4 argument, the [PBI interim performance report](#), and the [PBI annual performance report](#).

As part of our [BLAST II grant proposal](#), the college identified a need to improve its data infrastructure by building a data warehouse and management system that will provide detailed, long term data analysis to assist SSC to identify student persistence and completion patterns that may assist in the development and measurement of strategic initiatives.

As an open admissions institution, the college seeks to enhance its ability to utilize more comprehensive and targeted research into student academic success. As a result of much deliberation and discussion, the college will be better able to define targets once the auditing of data is completed. When the data warehouse is fully implemented, the college will better establish goals for enrollment, retention, and graduation.

Response to 4.C.2

South Suburban College routinely uses state and national benchmarks to determine student and institutional success. According to annual reports and data gathered from federal (IPEDS) and state (ICCB) sources, peer analyses indicate relatively consistent and stable performance levels for the college over the past few years with an average retention rate of 50% for full-time, first-time students and a three-year graduation rate of 17%. [Tables 1 and 2](#) summarize rates of full-time, first time student cohorts.

Although no metrics of higher education provide a complete analysis of an institution's success rates, South Suburban College continues to look for new ways of using data to inform, discuss, and facilitate dialogues with administrators, staff, and faculty. The establishment of academic labs and assistance centers, new course scheduling methods, and adjusting the hours of services provided to students are a few examples of recent actions. Using national, state, and institutional data, the college will establish benchmarks and appropriate resources to reach targeted goals.

To increase access and success in higher education, the college continually uses peer benchmarks and research to evaluate all strategic initiatives and endeavors. The college has invested significant resources in technologies to streamline reporting and

provide new avenues for research. Performing full longitudinal studies of student outcomes is one example of the power of this technology.

One enrollment trend of concern for the college is the loss of part-time students. For decades, South Suburban College depended on this student population—particularly, the enrollment of women between the ages of 20 and 45—to maintain revenues and continue services and programs. With shifting demographics both from a local and national scope, part-time females are enrolling at lower rates. Retention rates for part-time students are affecting offerings and schedules of classes.

[Table 3](#) summarizes the part-time retention rate over the past few years.

Response to 4.C.3

SSC regularly evaluates and utilizes data on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to improve programs, learning support systems, and student support services.

The college ensures that data is regularly collected to provide data for our ICCB program reviews, program accreditation self-studies, PBI annual reports, and HLC Academy reports. Based on the data contained within these reports, the college has made improvements in data collection and reporting, curriculum redesign, and programmatic changes to improve our student completion, retention, and persistence rates.

For example, a wealth of information is contained in the Program Reviews that we submit to the Illinois Community College Board. For example, the following information was provided relating to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, Medical Assistant Program, Pharmacy Technician Program, and Speech Language Pathology Assistant Program in the [Program Review Report 2016](#).

Occupational Therapy Assistant

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Enrollments	22	20	20	20	20
Completions	17	18	20	16	18
Retention	77%	80%	100%	80%	90%
Certification Pass Rates	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Placement Rates	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%
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Medical Assistant Program

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Enrollments	19	21	20	10	15
Completions	14	18	16	8	12
Retention	74%	85.7%	80%	80%	80%
Certification Pass Rates	75%	76%	80%	85%	80%
Positive Placements	71%	70%	70%	75%	70%

Another example of how programs use enrollment and completion data and address trends is illustrated with the Criminal Justice Program (CJS) as reported in the [Program Review Report 2017](#).

Criminal Justice Program

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Number of Students Enrolled	142	287	99	74	79
Number of Completers	35	27	39	28	28

The department reviewing the data trends for enrollment and completers identified a negative trend in enrollment and number of program completers. Our program coordinator met with students to assess the causes. It was determined that many current CJS students are aware that many local (Chicago, and its suburbs) law enforcement agencies require only at least 60 college credit hours. Thus, many local departments do not require an actual degree. Many of our students are testing for police departments in the Chicagoland area once they have met the 60 credit hour requirement. In addition, several factors determine if student applicants are being hired. Many of our students are under the age of 21. State law requires that police officers must be 21 years of age at the time of hiring. To address the program completion concern, program coordinators and instructors meet with students to stress degree completion.

The program reviews contain information about our programs, improvements, and rationale for action, enrollment trends, and occupational demand. More details are found in the [Program Review Report 2018](#), [Program Review Report 2017](#), [Program Review Report 2016](#), [Program Review Report 2015](#), [Program Review Report 2014](#), [Program Review Report 2013](#), [Program Review Report 2012](#), [Program Review Report 2011](#), [Program Review Report 2010](#), [Program Review Report 2009](#), and [Program Review Report 2008](#).

As a participant in the [HLC Persistence and Completion Academy](#), the college submits detailed reports and receives responses from our HLC mentor and scholar. To date, the college has submitted six academy reports. The reports address initiatives, projects, and activities demonstrating the college's commitment to educational improvement for our students.

For example, in the [HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 1.0](#), the college identified several objectives and goals in developing an improved plan to assess data collection, improve our data, infrastructure, and to improve the institution's data analysis.

[HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 2.0](#) identified the formation of an academy task group charged with mapping more specific details of our academy project and identifying steps for its implementation. This report also recommended the creation of a retention specialist position, recommendations for a one student, one program declaration process, the creation of a data task group to improve special population collection and reporting, and the development of the Student Identification System (SIS). The report also provided the plan for revising the college's remedial education programs. Objectives included a new reading center, an accelerated remediation project in English and Mathematics, reconfiguration of English Composition and Writer's Workshop classrooms, more Structured Learning Assistant (SLA) offerings in Math 095 (Elementary Algebra), Streamlining the Developmental Math Sequence, piloting a developmental math bridge program, and the revision of our orientation and advising. Finally, this report identified the framework for building and improving our data infrastructure for Data Management and Analysis.

[HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 3.0](#) primarily focused on the Math curricular redesign of the academy project and provided preliminary data analysis about the redesign. The report also provided updates and actions with respect to the retention specialist position, the establishment of our new reading center, and provided updates on the Student Identification System, the reconfiguration of two new English Compositions and Writing workshops, and the Data Warehouse project. This report also outlined the implementation of a new Colleague Student Planning system.

[HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 4.0](#) provides a detailed summary about the primary code for students initiative. For several years, the college allowed students to identify themselves with multiple program codes. With the implementation of this initiative, students have a primary program code in their student

profile survey. Further, to better serve a student with his/her academic plan, a student must meet with a counselor to change the academic program code. This report also provided updated data evaluating the developmental mathematics redesign. The college observed improving pass rates compared to previous years from Fall 2015 and greater persistence rates (comparing Spring 2016 and 2017). Because of improved data collection initiatives, the college can analyze data relating to special population groups. The college is committed to improving the education of all of its students, particularly those in a special population group. SIS links students identified in special population categories to appropriate services. With the use of scanners located in student support areas, data is collected in the Academic Assistance Center, Job Development Center, Services for Students with Disabilities Office, Counseling, and the Reading Center. In this update report, data is also provided relating to our enhanced English 098 initiative and numbers for students utilizing our Writing Center in the 2016-2017 academic year. This update report also provides information about our retention specialist and more effective utilization of our [retention alert system](#). Finally, the report provides information about our Colleague student planning and student orientations initiatives.

[HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 5.0](#) provides an overview of all initiatives implemented by the college since joining the academy. This report also identifies as one of its future goals, the formation of a Data Integrity and Governance Group.

[HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 6.0](#) summarizes the activities of our third year consultation sessions with our HLC mentor. The focus of SSC's third year consultation was enhancing the use of data to inform the community about SSC, track of student progress, and evaluate the student success intervention. Detailed mentoring session agendas identify the scope and topics covered during the mentoring sessions. This report also provided updated data measuring the effectiveness of the developmental mathematics redesign. More detailed information about these sessions is found in the [Third-Year Consultation Meetings](#) document.

Additional data and analysis is provided in the SSC's [PBI Annual Performance Report 2017](#). For purposes of the PBI grant, FY 2017 was designated the baseline for ENG 098 and MTH 095, with an expectation of increasing rates by 5% each year after:

- Baseline for African-American males in ENG 098 = 58%
- Baseline for African-American males in MTH 095 = 41%

The report also noted that the GPA of African American male students at SSC utilizing tutoring services increased from 2.56 to 2.86 (30% increase) between Fall 2016-Fall 2017 (including summer).

The new [Reading Center](#) opened in February 2017 to provide reading and comprehension tutorials along with skill building techniques to nearly 400 students each semester. Each semester a [schedule](#) is posted.

An executive summary of the 2017 annual performance report highlights the key aspects of the project. Key performance objectives and measures are highlighted below:

1. In review of African-American males enrolled in ENG 098 during the Fall 2016, 62 out of 84 passed (74%).
2. In review of African-American males in enrolled in ENG 098 during the Spring 2017 (based on midterm grade), 23 out of 49 were passing at midterm (47%).
3. The Academic Year Average for ENG 098 is 63.9%. This is our baseline. The goal is a 5% increase each year.
4. In review of African-American males enrolled in MTH 095 during Fall 2016, 59 out of 114 passed (52%).
5. In review of African-American males enrolled in MTH 095 during the Spring 2017 (based on midterm grade), 33 out of 176 passed (19%).
6. The Academic Year Average for MTH 095 is 48.4%. This is our baseline. The goal is a 5% increase each year.
7. Number of students attending orientation and receiving advising services (577 of 822). SSC students were African-American and participated in orientation and advising services (70%).

In closing, SSC recognizes that many of our students have diverse needs and various degrees of preparation. Our goal is to work with each student to address those needs and remediate where necessary, provide guidance for those without direction, and advocate on behalf of students with inadequate support. The college has many services and initiatives to address student needs, including:

- [Retention alert system](#) to identify students at-risk of dropping out of a course or from the college
- [Career Program Brochures group one](#) and [Career Program Brochures group two](#)
- Primarily Black Institution (PBI) grant-funded retention specialists
- [Academic Assistance Center](#) & [tutoring services](#)
- Speaking, [reading](#), and [writing](#) centers which offer free remedial services to all students seeking to improve essential academic skill areas
- [Math 140 tutoring club](#)
- [Information literacy and library resource classes](#)
- Faculty-Student mentoring program
- [Degree audit and student self-service planning module](#)
- Day and evening availability of counselors to all students
- [College success course](#) (OCS 121, which is now mandatory for all new students)
- Math remediation curricular redesign initiative

With these and other services, South Suburban College offers students ample opportunities to succeed. With feedback from advisory boards and student/clients, these initiatives are refined to meet constituent needs. Because all students have individual needs, no single approach is sufficient. Over time, the college will have sufficient data to determine which approaches work best with specific populations of students.

Response to 4.C.4

SSC's processes and methodologies of collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. The college adheres to the IPEDS and Illinois Community College Board methodologies with regard to data collection for student retention, persistence, and completion. This data and information from the annual IPEDS Feedback Report is utilized to make prudent decisions and improvements as warranted by the data.

The college will be better suited to set ambitious but achievable timelines and performance targets once sufficient data is regularly analyzed. In fact, this was one of college's objectives for applying to the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy. The college recognized a need for improved data analysis for strategic planning. Details are provided in Criterion 4.C.3 about data analysis initiatives implemented as part of our Persistence and Completion Academy involvement. The decision to limit students to one active program and ending programs for students who withdraw from the college due to inactivity demonstrate how the college now has better processes to document student completion and success.

Another measure under consideration is the scaling up of a student mentoring initiative in the career programs to ensure that a student is on track to timely completion of the program by a regular review of the student's progress. The college has documented interactions and increased success with programs and departments strengthening contact with their students. This is likely to become a documented best practice which could yield dividends for the college and students. Greater coordination of resources and advisors will be needed, but the college is considering this and other innovations to build upon previous successes.

Sources

- Academic Assistance Center
- Academy Panel Review and Recommendation Form
- Acceptance into HLC Persistence and Completion Academy
- Application for HLC Persistence and Completion Academy
- Career Program Brochures group one
- Career Program Brochures group two
- First-Time Student Retention Rates and Graduation Rates Tables
- HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 1.0
- HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 2.0
- HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 3.0
- HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 4.0
- HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 5.0
- HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Report Version 6.0
- HLC Third-Year Consultation Meetings

- Library Orientation Class Attendance 2011-2017
- Library Orientation Classes Conducted 2013-2017
- Math 140 Tutoring Club
- Math Lab
- Overview for College Success
- PBI Annual Performance Report 2017
- PBI Grant Proposal 2015
- PBI Grant Tutors
- PBI Interim Performance Report 2017
- Presentation at Annual HLC Conference
- Program Review Report 2008
- Program Review Report 2009
- Program Review Report 2010
- Program Review Report 2011
- Program Review Report 2012
- Program Review Report 2013
- Program Review Report 2014
- Program Review Report 2015
- Program Review Report 2016
- Program Review Report 2017
- Program Review Report 2018
- Reading Center
- Reading Center Hours
- Reclaiming the American Dream Community Colleges and the Nation's Future
- Retention Alert System
- Strategic Directions
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Student Self-Service - Web
- Writing Center

4. S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

There is no argument.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5. A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

Response to 5.A.1 and 5.A.2

Fiscal Resources

SSC has the fiscal resources to support and sustain operations of the college. SSC also has a very experienced Board of Trustees, Senior Administration, and Treasurer/Controller to address financial challenges.

For example, the Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) appeared at the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of South Suburban College on January 11, 2019, to present the ICCTA Service Award to Chairman Frank M. Zuccarelli for his forty years of service to the Board of South Suburban College, Community College District 510, and the Illinois Community College System.

In addition, our Vice Chairman, John A. Daly (1991) and Chair of the Board's Finance Committee, Anthony De Filippo (1989), have long standing tenure as board members and bring a wealth of financial and management experience to the board.

The Illinois Public Community College Act requires an annual audit of accounts, financial records, and transactions of all funds of the college. Independent certified public accountants conduct the audit. The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) awarded a [certificate of excellence in financial reporting](#) to South Suburban College for its CAFR for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017. This award is granted only after review of the CAFR by a panel of certified public accountants and practicing school business officials. This is the twenty-sixth year that the college has received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting award.

In the [Single Audit 2018](#) and the [Letter from Auditor](#), the auditors reported that the college complied, in all material respects, with the requirements referred to in the audit that could have a material effect on each of its federal programs for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018. The college's financial audits are consistently positive with minimal findings or questioned costs.

For fiscal year 2018-2019, operating expenditures are budgeted at \$32,165,133 with projected revenue of \$27,760,231. Non-operating expenditures are \$19,352,828 with revenue projected at \$18,961,237. In aggregate, fiscal year expenditures are \$51,517,961 with projected revenue at \$46,621,468. More information is in the [document for 2018-2019 operating and non-operating budgets](#).

The college over the last several years has had declining enrollment and reductions in state funding. The college continues to struggle with negative revenue trends and the ability to attract and retain our student population. Total credit hours have significantly declined for the period of 2005-2018. In addition, a negative trend in state funding continued to persist during the period of 2005-2018. More information is in the [document for 2018-2019 operating and non-operating budgets](#).

Details from our most recent Comprehensive Financial Annual Report (CAFR) [CAFR 2018](#) show that the college received revenue from sources including Tuition and Fees (2.18%), State Sources (43.13%), Property Taxes (28.00%), Federal Grants and Contracts (21.03%), Local Sources (.90%), and other Operating and Non-operating (4.76%). [Revenue by source](#)

Operating revenue for fiscal year 2018 to \$3,326,162 from \$4,145,138 in 2017 [operating revenues decreased](#). This decrease was primarily the result of enrollment declines, which affected auxiliary enterprise revenues, specifically with the college bookstore.

Total operating and non-operating revenue increased by \$5,495,347 or 11%. State sources showed a noticeable spike to \$23,936,063 compared to \$18,912,296 in 2017. The primary reason was that the state approved \$4,455,707 on July 6, 2017, for its FY 2017 appropriation for the college. However, since the date fell in fiscal year 2018,

those proceeds were realized in 2018. Federal sources improved to \$11,671,607 from a 2017 balance of \$10,453,983.

Total [operating expenses](#) for the year are \$56,188,989, an increase of \$1,925,737 from 2017 or 3.5%.

The result was that net position declined from the previous year because of continued declining enrollment. The college mitigated this trend without cutting services to our students.

The college has also engaged in efforts to increase enrollment and revenue while holding the line on expenses.

In addition, SSC issued \$9.97 million general obligation debt with long-term rating of A+. Standard & Poor's cited the following in arriving at its [rating](#):

- Access to the deep and diverse Chicago metropolitan area economy
- Very strong available reserves despite recent drawdowns. See [CAFR 2018](#).

It must also be noted that state funding to institutions of higher learning across the State of Illinois was substantially reduced due to an Illinois budget impasse. The budget impasse was a 793-day-long crisis from July 1, 2015, to August 31, 2017. Illinois was without a complete state budget for fiscal years 2016, 2017, and part of 2018.

Historically speaking, the college's composite ratios have always been strong. The college had plenty of reserves to be applied in the event of some type of unexpected shortfall, such as this impasse. The adverse effect from the budget stalemate resulted in no state funds for the college as well as not funding the Monetary Awards Program (MAP) for our students. The loss of direct state revenue and the loss of financial aid to our students has propelled the college's composite ratios negative the last three years.

In 2016, SSC and all other Illinois institutions of higher learning were required to submit a report to the HLC to address financial concerns due the budget impasse. In our [HLC Financial Report 2016](#), the college outlined its financial position and identified several proactive initiatives to address declining enrollment and revenue trends affecting the college since 2010. For example, at the time of the submission of the 2016 report, SSC had experienced decreased enrollment for the previous five years. Detailed financial information is provided in the [CAFR 2018](#), [CAFR 2017](#), [CAFR 2015](#), [CAFR 2014](#), [CAFR 2013](#), [CAFR 2012](#), [CAFR 2011](#), [CAFR 2010](#), [CAFR 2009](#), and [CAFR 2008](#) for the years 2008-2018.

Funding from Illinois had also significantly decreased over this same period. Despite efforts to increase enrollment with new marketing approaches such as targeted marketing, the college's efforts to increase enrollment had not provided any significant increase in student enrollment. In addition, the FY 2017 and FY 2018 budget projected deficit spending.

The college has taken a number of reactionary steps as a result of the state's budget stalemate.

At the February 11, 2016, regular Board of Trustees meeting, a number of right sizing initiatives were approved to lower the operational overhead (described in detail in Core Component 5.A). A number of other cost saving measures were also enacted from 2016 to present.

Currently, the college has a very unique opportunity for [additional cost savings](#) as it relates to our existing full-time faculty. We will be strategizing a way to encourage those eligible to retire to take that option without incurring additional expenses.

In light of the ongoing issues affecting the college, the administration also recommended not to replace 31 full-time faculty due to retirement and/or resignation resulting in base salary cost reductions due to substantial declines in enrollment.

Finally, the Board of Trustees and administration were compelled to take additional steps to address continued enrollment and revenue declines. The administration, in compliance with its collective bargaining agreement believed it was necessary to take steps to right size the college through staff adjustments. The process of a reduction in force affected full-time, part-time, and temporary employees across departments.

The right sizing analysis included a review of significant amount of [right sizing data](#).

As part of our [right sizing analysis](#), the institution analyzed areas from across the college. Based on review of the data and discussion with the faculty and staff union representatives, adjustments were made through salary freezes, furloughs, union contractual concessions, the closing of the Child Care Center and, ultimately, a decrease in the college workforce across divisions. The Board of Trustees approved the [recommended right sizing actions](#) at the February 11, 2016, Board of Trustees meeting.

The administration also engaged with the [support staff](#) in bargaining discussions.

Presently, the college continues its strategic class scheduling process by involving faculty, deans, and the Vice President of Academic Services and Vice President of Student Services. In planning class schedules, all areas must analyze past and projected departmental enrollment data to maximize opportunities for our students while minimizing the number of classes cancelled due to low enrollment. Strategic scheduling allows the college to maximize seat utilization for each class and reduce per section cost.

Additionally, SSC continuously reviews its internal processes to reduce costs. The college has implemented new marketing strategies, including targeted marketing on social media to bring in new students and assess new program opportunities. The renewed focus on targeted marketing efforts included hiring an Executive Director of

Public Relations & Resource Development with position responsibilities that include implementing a multi-level strategy to include public relations advertising, publications, media, corporate and business partnerships, foundation board development, endowment growth, major donor outreach, resource development and identification of new grant opportunities, crisis communications, and special events.

Over the last several years, SSC has worked with our feeder high school districts to increase dual credit opportunities. SSC supports dual credit at the college and the ICCB is also committed to expanding dual credit opportunities to high school students. Over the last several years, the college has also granted dual credit tuition waivers to these high school students. For FY 2018, tuition waivers of \$1,281,365.26 were given to these high school students. In addition, the Board of Trustees also grants tuition waivers to eligible students in the district.

While the financial situation has turned negative over the last several years, the college is under its legal debt limit for issuing new debt. The college issued new bonds in December 2017 for [capital improvements and upgrades](#) to physical and technological infrastructure.

SSC has provided funds for capital improvements and upgrades to infrastructure and technology despite the negative enrollment and revenue trends. Furthermore, the college has continually upgraded its infrastructure and technology over the last 10 years. A list of some of the improvements and upgrades over the last ten years are also found in the [CAFR 2018](#), [CAFR 2017](#), [CAFR 2016](#), [CAFR 2015](#), [CAFR 2014](#), [CAFR 2013](#), [CAFR 2012](#), [CAFR 2011](#), [CAFR 2010](#), [CAFR 2009](#), and [CAFR 2008](#).

Human Resources

Employees

The President's Council consists of the President, three Vice Presidents, an Associate Vice President, and the Treasurer/Controller. Additional information about the President may be found at the [Office of the President - South Suburban College](#) web link. SSC's [Administrative Organizational Charts](#) provide information about our administrative team for the past ten years. The President is the chief executive officer, reporting directly to the [Board of Trustees](#). The [Administrative Directory - Web](#), [Faculty Directory - Web](#), and [Staff Directory - Web](#) provide detailed information for our employees. With the decline in enrollment, the college decreased its number of employees. The college has decreased from having 361 full time employees in 2010 to 321 full time employees presently.

An up-to-date listing of all vacated positions is reviewed with the President. All positions are slow or no-fill positions unless the positions are critical. There were seventy-three faculty and eleven administrators who resigned or retired between 2010 and 2017. The college continues to evaluate every vacated position as it relates to the mission, departmental-program directions and needs, and budgetary constraints.

Physical Plant

South Suburban College was founded as Thornton Junior College in 1927, and the institution was developed into a 502,105 square foot building in 1972. The college prides itself on a safe, attractive, and evolving learning environment. In 1992, SSC opened a 75,000 square foot facility to accommodate our students in the western end of our district, now called the Oak Forest Center. The college has a total of 125 classrooms and 54 labs, equipped with interactive whiteboards, computers, and teacher stations. The college continues to update classrooms, as technology becomes available, to maintain the quality of teaching. Two Facility Master Plans were approved over the last ten years. The [Facilities Master Plan 2009](#) and the [Facilities Master Plan 2017](#) identified current and future projects that keep our students, faculty, staff, and community members safe on campus. Both campuses, as well as the gymnasium, have new roofs. Several [focus group meetings](#) were held to gather information and input from faculty, students, administrators, and community members for the 2017 plan.

Technological Infrastructure

The college maintains an IT department to support students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Helpdesks support students and employees working remotely and on campus. The institution made significant investments in network connectivity and infrastructure to support bandwidth intensive applications and innovative curriculum. See [Networking Connectivity and Technology Infrastructure Improvements](#) for more details.

SSC maintains a focus on educational programs and academic support. As a result of sound fiscal planning and focus on educational priorities, the college has increased expenditures on instruction and academic support even as revenue has declined.

Response to 5.A.3

In the college's mission statement, South Suburban College declares its commitment to lifelong learning for all by stating, "The mission of South Suburban College is to Serve our Students and the Community through lifelong learning." SSC's administration, faculty, and staff lead by example in this lifelong pursuit of knowledge. Many staff members are practitioners in their disciplines, participating in professional organizations, sharing talents, abilities, knowledge, and expertise through cultural events, academic pursuits, intellectual discourses, and professional activities. The college's goals and mission are realistic in light of the institution's capabilities and resources.

The [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#) identifies four main [strategic directions](#).

Response to 5.A.4

SSC employees have the training and qualifications for their positions. Faculty qualifications are detailed in Criterion 3. The college has processes for identifying

qualifications for various positions, for advertising openings to diverse populations, and for facilitating comprehensive screening for all positions. Hiring committees review applications prior to interviews to determine if candidates meet or exceed required qualifications. Only qualified candidates advance through the interview process.

All final candidates must meet the minimum job qualifications set forth by the applicable job application. Once hired, all board-approved new hires go through an immediate new hire orientation within the first three days of hire with Human Resources. The new hire must then go through a department new hire orientation with their supervisor. In addition, SSC mandates that all newly-hired employees attend [new employee orientations](#), which are conducted semi-annually. The college President, Vice Presidents, Executive Director of IT, campus police and others give presentations at these times to familiarize employees about their roles and expectations as well as highlighting various aspects of the institution.

Faculty and staff must also engage in annual training concerning campus safety, sexual harassment, Title IX, and FERPA. Campus safety staff provide annual training for emergency preparedness, active shooters, and personal safety.

Consistent reviews of an employee's performance and goals provide assessment of job knowledge and skills of staff and professional staff. With the implementation of the Colleague system in 2010, HR tracks who has completed required goals and an individual's performance level each year. The faculty agreement requires faculty members to submit self-evaluation to the appropriate Vice President on a three-year cycle. The [SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021](#) has additional details.

The college supports professional development for faculty and staff. Faculty regularly engage in professional development activities as outlined in Criterion 3. Professional staff can participate in local training and attend national and regional training and professional development programs. All faculty and staff may register for tuition-free credit courses at SSC.

Many [professional development opportunities](#) are available to staff and faculty employees through staff/faculty development committees. These include on-campus workshops, seminars, and all-day events.

The SSC Board of Trustees, the administration, and union associations recognize the value of the human resources of the college and strive to:

- A. Encourage employees to use the educational resources of the college
- B. Empower employees to improve through education
- C. Affirm commitment to programs that improve employee achievement
- D. Affirm the value of the associate's degree, certificates, and diplomas awarded by the college

The International/Intercultural Studies Committee, under the auspices of the SSC

Foundation, sends one administrator or faculty member each year on a two-week international exchange program with an administrator or faculty from similar or related fields. Expenses are largely underwritten by the College Foundation.

Response to 5.A.5

SSC's budget process (detailed in Criterion 5.C.3) is transparent and engages all campus stakeholders. In addition to regular monitoring of expenses, college finance leaders also monitor revenues due to the volatile nature of funding. Operating departments have access to real-time budget data through the student management system. Detailed expenditure, revenue reports, and a report of actuals vs. budget are presented to the governing board each month in public session. A representative sample of reports submitted to the board meeting include the investment report and financial summary and the board request form for payment of bills. An example is the [February 8 2018 Board Packet](#). Monthly finance reports are published on the college website as part of the monthly report of board activities.

All department managers have access to detailed expenditure reports on a daily basis. These reports are detailed against the existing budget and inform managers when expenses run beyond budget parameters.

Sources

- 2018-2019 Operating and Non-Operating Budgets
- Additional Cost Savings Due to Faculty Retirement
- Administrative Directory - Web
- Board of Trustees - Web
- Capital Improvements and Upgrades
- Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2008
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2009
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2011
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2012
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2017
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018
- Decrease in Operating Revenues for Year Ending 06-30-2018
- Dual Credit High School Partners
- Facilities Master Plan 2009
- Facilities Master Plan 2017
- Facilities Master Plan 2017 Focus Group Meeting Notes

- Faculty Directory - Web
- February 8 2018 Board Packet
- HLC Financial Report 2016
- Law Day Events
- Letter from Auditor
- Networking Connectivity and Technology Infrastructure Improvements
- New Employee Orientation
- Office of the President - South Suburban College
- Operating Expenses for Year Ending 06-30-2018
- Organizational Charts 2008-2019
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Recommended Right Sizing Actions for Board
- Recommended Staff Reductions
- Revenue by Source for Year Ending 06-30-2018
- Right Sizing Analysis
- Right Sizing and Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Right Sizing Data
- Single Audit 2018
- SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Staff Directory - Web
- Standard and Poor's Rating Definitions
- Strategic Directions
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019

5. B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

Response to 5.B.1

The SSC governing board is knowledgeable about the institution, institutional operations, and provides oversight of college finances, operations, and academic practices. The board meets monthly in public sessions. All board members receive a packet of briefing material along with the meeting agenda prior to each session.

In addition to information shared during scheduled board meetings, the President informs the board members of important events and issues at the college.

The SSC Board of Trustees is familiar with the institution and provides consistent oversight of the college's financial, academic, and general operations. The board is engaged in best practices and professional development for college governance and has the information necessary to enhance governance issues. Additionally, the board's policies promote leadership and collaboration. As described in [board policy 100.01](#), the Board of Trustees shall "from time to time, establish rules and regulations which constitute guidelines for conducting its business and governing the affairs of the College, as deemed necessary by the Board." These board-approved policies are in the [Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual](#) and are available on the college's website.

The governing board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities through policies that govern the college. The board's [duties and responsibilities](#) are detailed in its policies. In addition, the board policies are detailed in [Section 2.1 of the faculty agreement](#). The board delegates [responsibilities](#) to the President and holds the President accountable through regular evaluations and monitoring of key operating data.

The [Board of Trustees](#) consists of seven voting members (six-year term) elected at large by the qualified voters of District 510 and one student member (one-year term) elected by the student body. The student board member casts an advisory vote and has the privileges of membership, including the right to make and second motions and to attend executive sessions. The Board of Trustees holds public meetings each year. Board packages, including agendas, minutes, and detailed information on action items, are available for review by the college community on the website. Elected leaders from SSC's faculty and staff unions are represented at each monthly public meeting. In these public sessions, trustees approve such items as monthly reports from the treasurer, payment of bills, the college budget and any budget adjustments, the capital improvement plan, tuition rates, hiring of administrators and faculty, establishment of staff positions, union contracts, and settlement agreements.

The board chair establishes board committees and assigns board members as representatives to these committees. The board has [Board of Trustees standing committees](#). Each committee is made up of three trustees: a chairperson and two other members.

The board regularly reviews institutional finances and operations; these processes are detailed in Criteria 5.A.1, 5.A.2, 5.C.1, 5.C.2, 5.C.3, and 5.C.4. Similarly, more details relating to board policies and details relating to the board, and their actions are in Criteria 2.A, 2.C, and 2.D.

In addition to financial issues, the board approves such items as the college mission statement, strategic plan, new units of instruction to be submitted to the Illinois Community College Board, awards of tenure, faculty promotion in rank, and board policies covering students and employees.

During 2017-2018, the board fulfilled its responsibility for the hiring of the college's new [President](#), Dr. Lynette D. Stokes, upon the retirement of Donald Manning. Dr. Stokes is the first woman president in SSC's history. She previously served as the Vice President of Academic Services at the college.

Since her tenure as President of SSC, President Stokes has encouraged a more transparent and inclusive communication loop across organizational lines through her initiative of hosting informal gatherings whereby all employees have an opportunity to directly communicate and share with the President their views and opinions on internal and external events and issues of global relevance to the college community. As a result of the listening sessions, pending projects include expansion of professional development opportunities, hosting standing meetings with union representatives, increased awareness of cost efficiency strategies across the college and a recommitment on the part of administration to creating a questioning culture and shared governance model.

Board members regularly attend meetings at the state and national level, sponsored by organizations such as the Illinois Community College Trustees Association. In addition,

all new board members receive an orientation to the college from the college President and her designees.

The board encourages administration, faculty, staff, and students to participate in strategic thinking and planning collaboratively while satisfying our mission and core values, longstanding strengths, future trends, and unique opportunities. Presentations are given to the board at most monthly meetings and cover a variety of topics.

Periodically, members of the governing board participate in board retreats for board training, discussion of board responsibilities, and in setting goals for the board. These retreats strengthen understanding among board members and assist the board in setting goals for the board and the college President. For example, the board held a [retreat](#) from July 27-29, 2018. Topics on the agenda included HLC reaccreditation site visit updates, board policy and procedure updates, Illinois statutory updates, board self-evaluation discussion, and advertising/communication strategies.

Response to 5.B.2 and 5.B.3

SSC's governance structure is based on shared governance through councils and committees that offer engagement of all internal constituencies. SSC brings all voices to the table in furthering the work of the college.

The organizational structure of the college allows for involvement of all internal college stakeholders in establishing and enforcing academic policies and processes. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students may participate in decision-making discussions relating to policies that affect them. Each area has administrators responsible for working directly with staff and faculty. See the [Administrative Organizational Chart](#).

Faculty members participate in instructional governance and institutional oversight through standing committees and faculty members are strongly represented on committees including curriculum, academic standards, faculty development, outcomes assessments, international/intercultural studies, academic computing, academic appeals, honors, and distance learning. Faculty also participate in professional growth, calendar, disciplinary standards, and academic conduct committees. Faculty also participate in departmental committees.

SSC staff and administrators participate in governance and oversight through committee participation and through the college's strategic planning and budgeting. The Administrative Council includes representatives from all key operating areas. The primary purpose of the Council is to ensure communication, cross-divisional coordination, and regular review of issues and opportunities. See [Administrative Council Meetings](#) for additional information.

Administration, faculty, staff, and students are engaged in reviewing and setting academic requirements, operating policies, and in evaluation of operating processes.

Administration

The key [Leadership](#) body at SSC is the President's Council. Led by the President, the council regularly meets and includes the Vice President for Academic Services, Vice President of Student and Enrollment Services, Vice President of Administration, Associate Vice President of Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness, and Treasurer/Controller. The Council reviews and discusses key issues, policies, and practices at the college. On October 1, 2018, the Treasurer/Controller was added to the leadership team under the new President. The financial health of the institution is of global relevance and thus it was deemed critical that the Treasurer/Controller be added to the President's Council leadership team. The purpose is to offer feedback, assessment, and insight into the intricate, constantly changing, and complex day-to-day financial operations of the college. See

In addition, [Administrative Council meetings](#) strengthen college governance by bringing all administrators together to achieve institutional goals.

The Vice Presidents also regularly meet with their respective Deans, Directors, and Managers to share information and discuss issues/concerns affecting their areas.

Lastly, with a renewed focus on accountability and transparency at SSC, administration has embraced the need to redefine professionalism and expectations in the workplace, with the January 2019 reinstatement of the [Administrative Employee Handbook](#).

The handbook is intended to serve as a guide to assist SSC Vice Presidents, Executive Directors, Directors, Managers, and grant employees in their day-to-day performance of administrative and management functions. The handbook contains instructions for completing forms, compliance expectations, professional attire, attendance expectations, and other general duties.

Faculty

Full-time faculty at SSC have multiple channels for participating in college governance. The South Suburban College Faculty Association, a chapter of the Cook County Teachers Union, Local 1600, AFT, AFL-CIO, represents the faculty. Representatives of the faculty association collaborate with SSC's administration to develop a contract through the interest-based bargaining process. The most recent [contract](#) approved by the board is effective from 2016-2020. The interest-based bargaining also helps to generate a memorandum of understanding between the college and the faculty association concerning shared governance.

The Faculty Association provides representatives to many college-wide committees that help direct the work of the college. The college maintains standing committees identified in [Section 6.2 of the faculty agreement](#) that have responsibilities for oversight of instruction areas, student affairs, and staff welfare. Committee membership includes

representation from all relevant internal stakeholders. All internal constituencies are regularly involved in strategic planning and master planning.

Faculty members participate in instructional governance and institutional oversight through a variety of standing committees mentioned above.

Each month, a departmental chair meeting is held with the administration. Although the deans are responsible for the supervision of full-time faculty and adjunct faculty, departmental chairs/coordinators convene periodic meetings with full-time faculty as well as adjunct faculty to address issues affecting academic programs. At these meetings, the administration works with the departmental chairs to review, evaluate, and develop strategies for student success. A recent example of this group's collaboration resulted in establishing criteria to be considered when cancelling classes and the creation of the [low enrollment justification form](#).

Adjunct faculty are also involved in college governance. The Adjunct Faculty Association represents adjuncts. Adjunct faculty may participate in college-wide activities such as strategic planning and faculty development. Adjunct faculty may attend departmental meetings to stay abreast of changes and provide input. See the [SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021](#) for more information.

Staff

The South Suburban Support Staff Association, Cook County College Teachers Union AFT Local 1600, represents staff at the college. The most recent [staff agreement](#) extends from 2017-2020. Staff also participate in college-wide activities such as strategic planning.

Students

Each year, students elect officers and representatives to the Student Government Association (SGA). The student trustee is an elected representative of the student body, works with the elected board members, and influences actions on behalf of the students.

The voice of SSC students is heard through these venues: the elected position of student trustee, numerous student clubs and organizations including Student Government, and internal surveys conducted both college-wide and locally at the program or department level.

One such survey was conducted by Student Services during the 2013-14 academic year regarding the placement testing review sessions that are offered through the Academic Assistance Center.

Analysis of the survey data revealed:

- The great majority of students (83%) did not utilize a review session prior to taking the placement test.
- Of those, 83% claim they would have attended had they known about them.
- 84% of participants chose the math review session as one of those attended.
- 75% of attendees believe the session helped them perform better on the placement test.

Additional examples of collaboration between administration, faculty, and staff include:

- New programs and courses, as well as significant changes to existing programs and courses, are discussed and recommended through the Curriculum Committee. Each department has a representative, usually the chair. For example, when a new course HIS 275 (History of Latin America I) was proposed in September 2017, committee members raised questions, including the appropriateness of the course number on a freshman-level course and the possible need for a prerequisite, since one of the required methods of assessment was a research paper. Discussion continued for two months and this new course was approved at the October 2017 curriculum committee meeting. See [Curriculum Committee meetings](#).
- Ethical policies and communication practices are the charge of the Academic Standards Committee. In 2016, the Committee researched practices at other colleges regarding time limits on mathematics placement criteria (test/ACT/SAT scores) and gathered information from SSC faculty. After several months of discussion, the motion passed to place a two-year time limit on math placement test scores at the May 5, 2016, Academic Standards Committee meeting. See [Academic Standards meeting](#) for details.
- Each semester, 1½ days are dedicated to mandatory inservice events planned by the Faculty Development Committee. The Committee informs faculty of trends in classroom research, innovative teaching strategies, and technological advancements. For example, following a recommendation by the Counseling Department in 2016, the Faculty Development Committee promoted collaboration with the One Million Degrees Program. This program was launched at SSC in fall 2018. [One Million Degrees \(OMD\)](#) Chicago, a nonprofit organization that empowers low-income motivated community college students to succeed in school, work, and life, expanded to SSC.
- Adjunct faculty also have a half-day of development per semester. For the past two years, the Faculty Development Committee worked with the Dean of Academic Services to organize the day based on requests from the adjunct faculty and on issues that arose the previous term. This also serves as orientation for new adjunct faculty. [Recent agendas](#) for adjunct faculty days illustrate the variety of topics.
- Support staff also have a day of development each May, organized by the Support Staff Committee. Administrators are invited to address issues of concern, new technology is explored, and there is an opportunity to network and socialize outside of the day-to-day work environment.

Sources

- Academic Standards meeting
- Adjunct Faculty Development Agendas
- Administrative Council Meetings
- Administrative Employee Handbook
- Administrative Organizational Chart
- Board of Trustees - Web
- Board of Trustees Policy and Procedure Manual
- Board of Trustees Standing Committees
- Board Policies 101.01 101.02 408.02
- Board Policy 100.01
- Board Powers and Responsibilities - Faculty Agreement
- Board Retreat Information
- Curriculum Committee meetings
- Duties and Responsibilities of the College President
- Faculty Committees - SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- Low Enrollment Justification Form
- Office of the President - South Suburban College
- One Million Degrees
- President's Council Leadership Meetings
- SSCAFT Agreement 2017-2021
- SSCFA Agreement 2016-2020
- SSCSSA Agreement 2017-2020

5. C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

Response to 5.C.1

SSC's budget and resource allocation are guided by our [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#) and aligned with the [mission, vision, and core values](#) of the college. The SSC mission and institutional priorities drive allocation of resources. All planning aligns with the mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

The principles in these documents guide how SSC budgets its money, how it designs and utilizes its spaces, how it hires and supports its employees, and the time and effort allocated to initiatives and activities.

One of SSC's top priorities is to offer the highest quality academic programs and curriculum to students. At a time when state funding for public institutions is declining in Illinois (as it is in other states), SSC has increased funding for instruction cost by \$1,361,227. Instructional cost was \$23,145,201 (41.19% of total expenses in 2018 from \$21,783,974 (40.14% of total expenses) in 2017). See [CAFR 2018](#) for additional details.

Sound fiscal management policies have allowed the college to offer high quality services and programs despite declines in state revenues and support over the years.

SSC is a partner in local economic development activities. As a key provider of professional and workforce training, the college has allocated resources to support this role. The college energetically meets non-credit training needs of area companies. Furthermore, the college addresses training and professional development needs of the existing workforce to increase their earning power.

Spending requests and recommended actions must be justified and aligned with the strategic plan before receiving board approval. As an example, the [February 8, 2018, board packet](#) included board action request forms for the approval of financial reports, payment of bills, request to revise board policies, and the approval of the resignation, retirement, appointment or reappointment of college staff.

Examples of resource allocation aligned with the college mission and strategic plan are included in a variety of board action request forms from the [January 12 2017 Board Packet](#), [March 9 2017 Board Packet](#), [April 13 2017 Board Packet](#), [May 11 2017 Board Packet](#), [June 14 2018 Board Packet](#), and [September 13 2018 Board Packet](#).

Response to 5.C.2

The college budget and planning are data driven. In addition to data on enrollment, operations, and the operating environment and student services, SSC planning addresses the needs of our external partners, especially our feeder high schools.

Examples of sources of key data and information that we review include data from program reviews as well as information gathered during strategic planning including the [Environmental Scan Report](#), the [Facilities Master Plan 2017](#), and the Capital Resource Allocation Management Plan ([RAMP](#)), IPEDS benchmarking data, information from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and student outcomes data.

Data from these sources are reviewed through many venues: meetings of the Administrative Council, the President's Council, and meetings of standing committees including Curriculum, Academic Standards, Outcomes Assessment, and Marketing.

College-wide academic assessment is fully discussed in Criterion 4.

The assessment activities are the result of planning among all academic areas, including faculty, administrators, and IR staff. Budget considerations included the financial and training investment in LiveText (the data collection instrument) and released-time for the faculty chair and co-chairs of the Outcomes Assessment Committee. The [Assessment Grand Plan](#) helps ensure that SSC students are proficient in the general education areas of critical thinking, oral and written communication, technology, research, and multiculturalism. Part I developed an assessment cycle, which includes a timeline for each area to be showcased, tested, and analyzed. Part II developed rubrics for assessment. Part III consists of assessing, analyzing, and closing the feedback loop.

Program/departmental assessment is done yearly and reported through annual updates. Each academic area chooses an objective or course to focus on. Planning ensures that all faculty, adjunct and full-time, administer the assessment in the same way for obtaining valid data. As an example, the Chemistry Department developed a standardized final exam for CHM 111 that is administered in all general chemistry

classes. Exam scores are utilized to assess how well students understand the material. Faculty then collaborate to recommend appropriate changes in pedagogy to improve understanding. These recommendations can range from spending more time on material to adding Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) to the course. In repeating the project for several consecutive years, the department's goal is to review data and to converge the information collected into an instructional model that increases student success.

As another example, placement testing was identified as a weakness during our last strategic planning process. Therefore, the placement process into English, reading, and math courses was revised. Preliminary results have been positive, and data analysis is ongoing. Program evaluations are connected to planning and budgeting. Infrastructure and programmatic priorities align with the [Facilities Master Plan 2017](#). Resources for students align with the mission, vision, and core values identified in the [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#).

The most recent Facilities Master Plan 2017 incorporated [input](#) from administrators, faculty, students, and the community to assimilate information about facility utilization and growth.

SSC's performance goals include better use of assessment data for effective programming and instructional changes, more partnerships with local businesses and industry to maintain a competitive workforce and to provide workplace internships, and enriching the student experience to include civic responsibilities, ethical decision making, and cultural understanding. The practice of administrators consistently reviewing long-term plans in accordance with the strategic plan further ensures that SSC responds well to future developments.

Individual performance evaluations and goals provide assessment of job knowledge and skills of staff and administrators. SSC conducts annual evaluations of all employees following various contractual guidelines.

Response to 5.C.3

Strategic Planning

SSC engages in regular, comprehensive strategic planning. Strategic planning occurs every five years, resulting in a plan that guides strategic and operational activities.

Strategic planning at SSC includes the entire institution, a wide range of internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders. Over the last ten years, the college has engaged in two extensive strategic planning processes, resulting in the [Strategic Plan 2008-2013](#) and the [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#).

Both plans clearly identified its constituencies. These include academically prepared students taking credit courses and earning degrees for transfer to a four-year college or

university; students seeking high quality, accessible, and affordable courses and certificate and degree programs to prepare for occupations demanding education beyond high school; and students requiring developmental instruction and English as a Second Language skills to succeed in college programs, complete a high school equivalency program, and to expand adult education. Other constituencies include local businesses and industries that partner with the college to maintain a competitive workforce and improve workforce development; people who come to the college seeking personal growth, educational enrichment, and cultural understanding within a diverse learning environment; people who desire greater knowledge of the community and civic responsibility; and people who want to develop skills for leadership and ethical decision making.

In planning our [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#), SSC engaged diverse stakeholders in the community, as well as internal college personnel and students. Our planning was inclusive and transparent, market-focused, and data-driven. It engaged internal and external college communities not just as stakeholders, but as true "stockholders" in SSC. [Strategic Planning Retreat Report](#), [Strategic Planning Retreat Documents](#)

It included an online survey to gather input on SSC's performance and desired future strategic directions from internal and external college stakeholders. The college also conducted economic, workforce data, program gap, and surplus analyses. See [Environmental Scan Report](#) and [Environmental Scan Executive Summary](#). This report was distributed to internal and external constituents before the commencement of the strategic planning retreat. SSC then convened approximately 100 internal and external college stakeholders in the strategic planning retreat, held on February 12-13, 2014, to gather input, discuss critical needs and opportunities, and create strategic directions to guide the college's new strategic plan. A summary of all of the retreat activities is described in the [strategic planning retreat report](#).

SSC's strategic planning supports student success and community prosperity. It aligns with the American Association of Community College's (AACC) 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges' 2012 report, [Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future](#). A detailed [strategic planning retreat report](#) includes details about the keynote address highlights, discussion panels, and break-out group activities. In addition, the strategic planning retreat agenda, list of external invitees attendees, President's letter to external participants, the President's invitation to the strategic plan campus-wide webinar, webinar sign-in sheet, retreat breakout retreat template, a list of panelists, and a list of strategic plan steering committee members are included as further evidence of internal and external participation in our strategic planning. See [Strategic planning retreat documents](#) for additional information.

During the February 2014 strategic planning retreat, participants developed, refined, and came to consensus on the five strategic directions. SSC used these [strategic directions](#) to develop goals, strategies, and activities.

Response to 5.C.4

SSC responsibly allocates resources. Under the leadership of our President, Vice Presidents, and the Treasure/Controller, the college critically reviews all cost requests in light of declines in revenue and enrollment.

Our annual budget planning begins with a timetable and guidelines are distributed to administrators who then compile requests for staffing, remodeling, capital equipment, special funding initiatives, and general operational budgets. The Vice Presidents then review each department's plan for appropriateness and connection to the college's strategic plan and mission. This information is shared with the President, who works with the Vice President of Administration and the Treasurer/Controller in an ongoing cycle of analysis. A proposed tentative budget is presented for a public hearing in August and the [final budget](#) is presented for board approval in September.

As previously discussed, the budget cycle requires the requestor to tie the budget request to the strategic plan, facilities master plan, and student success initiatives.

The identification of student learning objectives are key components for evaluating college operations, and these affect budget allocation. Improvements identified in the review must provide the rationale for corresponding budget appropriations.

Equipment needs and physical space issues are identified in our [Facilities Master Plan 2017](#), [Facilities Master Plan 2009](#), and the college [capital resource allocation plan \(RAMP\)](#).

In our most recent RAMP submitted to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), SSC is requesting capital funds to build an addition to the current structure as an allied health, child care, and education facility. This report provided a detailed programmatic justification.

SSC also considers the national and local economy, political challenges, and enrollment projections when developing plans.

South Suburban College uses dialogue, data collection, and analysis to foster continuous improvement. The allocation of physical, technological, and fiscal resources align with the college's mission, aimed primarily at student learning. The strategic plan provides the framework in prioritizing upgrades and substantive changes, while fluctuating and unpredictable revenue from tuition and the state are also considered. Constituent groups, including academic leaders from feeder high schools, business owners who employ our students, and other external partners are encouraged to provide input to the college.

Multiple [success initiatives](#) have been implemented to provide guidance and pathways for students interested in attending SSC.

In addition, a number of major strategic initiatives have also been implemented over the last 10 years to provide opportunities and support for our students. Details are provided in the [CAFR 2018](#), [CAFR 2017](#), [CAFR 2016](#), [CAFR 2015](#), [CAFR 2014](#), [CAFR 2013](#), [CAFR 2012](#), [CAFR 2011](#), [CAFR 2010](#), [CAFR 2009](#), and [CAFR 2008](#).

As part of our [concern for sustainability](#) and conservation of energy and resources, numerous actions have also been implemented.

Response to 5.C.5

SSC planning, on all levels, accounts for changes in technology, demographics, and globalization.

The Latino population is the fastest growing minority population at the college. In May 2017, SSC opened the [Latino Center for Services and Information](#) to support prospective and current students and parents.

The center offers English/Spanish interpretation; administration and program navigation; informational sessions for parents/students in Spanish; and a scholarship database for Latino students, especially for undocumented DREAMer students. SSC continues to increase SSC recruitment staff onsite and at community Latino events. When compiling our data for retention, the college identifies Latino students and assigns to each a Latino SSC recruitment staff member. The identifier improves tracking, and the contact person is an additional mentor.

SSC also awards the Latino Outreach \$1000 Scholarship to one outstanding Latino student to be used the following academic year for tuition, fees, and books. The award is determined by academic excellence and a written essay.

[New technological initiatives](#) have also been recently implemented to expand opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff.

SSC has outlined a number of initiatives in the [IT Strategic and Operational Plan FY16-FY21](#) to keep up with emerging technologies.

Sources

- 2018-2019 Operating and Non-Operating Budgets
- April 13 2017 Board Packet
- Assessment Plan Poster
- Capital Resource Allocation Management Plan
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2008
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2009
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2011

- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2012
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2013
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2014
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2015
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2016
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2017
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018
- Environmental Scan Executive Summary
- Environmental Scan Report
- Facilities Master Plan 2009
- Facilities Master Plan 2017
- Facilities Master Plan 2017 Focus Group Meeting Notes
- February 8 2018 Board Packet
- IT Strategic and Operational Plan FY16-FY21
- January 12 2017 Board Packet
- June 14 2018 Board Packet
- Latino Center for Services and Information - Web
- March 9 2017 Board Packet
- May 11 2017 Board Packet
- Mission Statement - Web
- New Technological Initiatives
- October 11 2018 Board Packet
- Reclaiming the American Dream Community Colleges and the Nation's Future
- September 13 2018 Board Packet
- Strategic Directions
- Strategic Plan 2008-2013
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Strategic Planning Retreat Documents
- Strategic Planning Retreat Report
- Success Initiatives
- Sustainability Actions

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

Response to 5.D.1 and 5.D.2

The Institutional Research (IR) and Information Technology (IT) departments collaborate to support all areas of the college for data and reports relating to institutional performance. These two departments also collaborate to provide the data for compliance with numerous data requests from across the college and to satisfy reporting requirements of both internal and external parties.

IR is a central coordinating point for data development, data sharing, cross-divisional communication, and for quality improvement.

One of the areas that the college identified for improvement was collection, entry, and reporting of special population data and other required data. Therefore, in 2014, the college created a [Data Task Group](#) to review our processes and to make possible recommendations for data collection, entry, and analysis improvements. In addition, the college recognized that it needed to review internal processes to provide more robust reports for our college community.

SSC documents performance in academic and non-instructional programs across the college. The reporting software supports a wide range of operating reports based on information in our student management data system. Standing reports are available for finance, financial aid, HR/payroll, and student support. These operational reports are available to campus leadership for oversight and at the departmental level for day-to-day management and oversight.

The college is committed to benchmarking against external organizations and comparative cohorts of colleges. IPEDS cohorts are used to evaluate measures including enrollment, graduation rates, and other data for faculty. The college has participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and the Survey of Entering Students Engagement (SENSE). IR and IT have developed internal and external reports, IPEDS, and other annual planning reports for the governing board and reports for administration and faculty.

IR also prepares, upon request, reports for individual departments and operating areas that are then used to improve operations.

The college administrative and finance leadership develops regular reporting of college finances and operations that are presented to the governing board. See [February 8 2018 Board Packet](#) as an example. An independent accounting firm audits college finances annually. See the [Single Audit 2018](#) for more information.

The governing board receives reports of activities including a detailed annual report of operations and outcomes. In addition, every month at the board meeting, the Controller/Treasurer submits an Investment and Financial Summary and a Board Action Request for Payment of Bills. See the [January 12 2017 Board Packet](#), [March 9 2017 Board Packet](#), [April 13 2017 Board Packet](#), [May 11 2017 Board Packet](#), [June 14 2018 Board Packet](#), [September 13 2018 Board Packet](#), and [October 11 2018 Board Packet](#) for evidence examples.

The college leadership, faculty, and staff are [committed to using data](#) and information from ongoing operations to improve performance.

SSC's involvement in the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy and with the Primarily Black Institution grant illustrate how the college uses information to evaluate and drive improvement. In addition, numerous examples are provided about improvements based on data generated during our cyclical program reviews.

Over the past five years, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has assumed a leadership role in helping the institution become a more effective learning organization. In addition to gathering data and ensuring that the college meets reporting requirements, IR and IT have become far more active in policy conversations, discussions of institutional effectiveness, and in working with faculty to evaluate teaching and learning outcomes. Within the past few years, the college has engaged in more conversations across the campus concerning teaching, excellence, and high impact practices.

One area SSC identified as an area for improvement is in graduate follow-up. Although the career track programs track students as they transfer to other institutions, the college has yet to consistently track all graduates, determine graduate satisfaction, and obtain their plans for future education. One area for improvement is committed to the development of a more robust institutional graduate follow up.

Program Review

All instructional programs and academic concentrations participate in a formal five-year cycle of review. [Basic Overview of Five-Year Review Process](#) SSC's program review process is discussed more extensively in Criterion 4.

The program review ensures that SSC continues to offer high quality programs, identifying the current state of each program and outlining recommendations for the future. The Illinois Community College Board sets the schedule.

A variety of data, including enrollment reports, are provided to the departments by the IR department. The departments evaluate a wide range of information, such as student learning and assessment data, enrollment and completion data, programmatic accreditation results, and impact on strategic goals.

Career and technical education programs also use information from respective advisory committees to assist in this process.

Student and academic support services offices also engage in the formal program review. This includes career services, learning and tutoring centers, athletics, the cashier's office, student life, and advising and counseling.

College Readiness, Student Success and Completion, Educational Pathways, and Partnership Development

As the college reviewed operational performance, SSC identified areas for improvement. The college elected to create a new position, the Associate Vice President of Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness, to provide more focus and guidance in these areas.

Guided by our most recent [Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#), the college formed strategy teams with the charge of developing and implementing plans to address the [four strategic directions](#).

Strategy-working teams focused on strategies for our student success plan and building a culture of student success. Our success strategy teams helped initiate success initiatives over the last five years including a redesign of the developmental math curriculum, as well as:

- Redesigned classrooms for the English Writing Labs and Math Labs
- New Reading Center
- New orientation online program
- New student advising and registration tool
- Expansion of service learning

To further support student success, SSC joined the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy and earned a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) Grant focused on completion and success of African American males. These have been fully explained in detail in both Criteria 3 and 4.

IR continues to improve its processes to provide more useful data as SSC develops, implements, and evaluates interventions designed to improve student success. SSC's student success initiatives are discussed more extensively in Criteria 3 and 4.

Assessment

Since the HLC visit in 2008, SSC has increased focus on assessment. The college has provided details for assessment activities in Criterion 4.

State and National Benchmarking

SSC capitalizes on opportunities to use state and national data to study college performance. The Illinois Community College Board collects data from all state colleges, and submits data to the Integrated Post-Secondary Data System (IPEDS).

SSC Foundation

The [SSC Foundation](#) consistently documents its performance to develop strategies for increased revenue and donor relation improvement. SSC is committed to improving performance and has multiple mechanisms to move the college forward.

As stated in each of the areas outlined in Criterion 5D, data is not merely collected but is used to evaluate programs and initiatives and shift directions when necessary. The program reviews are utilized to identify the status of each program and to identify recommendations.

In each of our program reviews submitted to the Illinois Community College Board, the reviews must determine the action the college is taking with the program, suggest recommended improvements, and significantly modify, discontinue, or review the program, if appropriate action is required.

Similarly, the college's ongoing assessment guides each course and program to define learning objectives and to assess progress toward those goals. Our assessment forms require an action plan so that a loop is created that ensures our courses are changed when appropriate. State and national benchmarking provide data that informs the college and allows SSC to expand successful initiatives. In addition, benchmark reviews empower the college to search for new practices and/or initiatives when progress has been stagnant or minimal.

Sources

- April 13 2017 Board Packet
- Basic Overview of Five-Year Review Process
- Commitment to Using Data
- Data Task Group

- February 8 2018 Board Packet
- January 12 2017 Board Packet
- June 14 2018 Board Packet
- March 9 2017 Board Packet
- May 11 2017 Board Packet
- October 11 2018 Board Packet
- Program Review Report 2008
- Program Review Report 2009
- Program Review Report 2010
- Program Review Report 2011
- Program Review Report 2012
- Program Review Report 2013
- Program Review Report 2014
- Program Review Report 2015
- Program Review Report 2016
- Program Review Report 2017
- Program Review Report 2018
- September 13 2018 Board Packet
- Single Audit 2018
- South Suburban College Foundation Annual Report Summer 2018
- Strategic Directions List
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019

5. S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

There is no argument.

Sources

There are no sources.