

**White Earth Tribal and Community College 02/15 Self-Study Report**



**To the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**

**The Higher Learning Commission**

**February 9 – 11, 2015**

## President's Message

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As President of White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC), it is my great honor to submit this 2014 Self Study Report to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) on behalf of the College, our Council of Trustees and our amazing faculty, staff and students. Our goal, of course, is reaffirmation of our accreditation, but in doing so we have a primary goal of strengthening teaching and learning at WETCC.

In building toward this Report we have created a shift in emphasis at WETCC that is mirrored at the HLC and in higher education nationally. That shift is toward accountability, integrity and data-driven assessment, evaluation and planning. White Earth Tribal and Community College is committed to decision-making processes that are driven by shared governance, broader inclusion of campus and community voices, integrated policy, data and planning. We will continue to be grounded in Anishinaabe teachings and values, but you will see how these teachings and values frame and define our mission and our core purpose of educating students.

Our first effort has been to define our student Learner Outcomes based on our Mission and Anishinaabe Teachings. From the bottom-up, these outcomes then drive our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, our Academic and Institutional Assessment Plans, our Facilities Plan, a comprehensive policy review and a draft Strategic Plan for 2015-2020. Upon finalization of our Strategic Plan this spring, 2015, we will then establish an Institutional Advancement and Development Plan which is already proceeding based on the priorities in the draft Strategic Plan.

This Self-study Report provides detailed responses to the HLC Monitoring and Probation Findings and the Observations of the 2012 Site Visit Team and we show how each of the five Criteria are being met.

We are under no illusion that there is much more work to be done. Since receiving the sanction of probation, WETCC suffered a serious setback with the failed administration of President Pellegrino. Once that matter was resolved, however, WETCC showed focus, energy and clarity of purpose to accomplish what you see in this report. In nine short months we have righted this ship and are moving with sure integrity.

WETCC is now firmly based with clear student learning focus, data-driven assessment, evaluation and planning and a strong vision for the future. There is hope and integrity at WETCC and our students and broader community are the beneficiaries. We believe you will see this throughout the report and we look forward to sharing it with you during your visit.

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## Introduction to 2014 Self-Study

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### Introduction to 2014 Self-Study

White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) respectfully submits this Self-Study Report to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). In June, 2013 the HLC placed the College on probation status. WETCC has entered this re-institution of full accreditation process at a period of major institutional disruption.

WETCC has recently hired a new President, has a restructured administration and operational system, and has had significant turnover in the Council of Trustee membership; all within the context of a previous iteration of the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria to new Criteria for Accreditation.

The June, 2013 HLC decision to place the College on probation as communicated in the July 9, 2013 certified letter to then President Vincent Pellegrino, clearly indicates that WETCC had strayed from a number of criteria, core components and assumed practices. The HLC wrote that the Tribal Council was involved in the management of the institution and the WETCC Council of Trustees has not clearly understood or properly assumed its role as the governing board of the College. The report cited other major concerns with regard to:

- Stable leadership
- Strategic planning
- Shared faculty governance
- Student grievances
- Policies and procedures
- Student enrollment management
- Assessment of student learning
- Academic program review

These major items, coupled with noted observations and gaps in the HLC Assumed Practices, has driven the entire College community to address these issues; therefore, strengthening WETCC's foundation and commitment as an institution of higher education.

After nearly ¾ of a year of dedicated work and commitment by the College's Council of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and community members led by the Self-Study Steering Committee (Leadership Team), the submission of this comprehensive self-study report provides for our accrediting agency a current report of our strengths, challenges, and deliberate plans for improvement.

## Accreditation History

| DATE                 | EVENT   |
|----------------------|---|
| Spring 2003          | White Earth Tribal and Community College submitted Preliminary Information Form to the NCA-HLC.   |
| May 10-12, 2004      | NCA-HLC Evaluation Team made site visit; team listed four suggestions for institutional improvement.  |
| October, 2004        | Initial candidacy status was granted by the NCA-HLC.  |
| May, 2005            | WETCC submitted a Progress Report to NCA-HLC addressing board and tribal relations, appropriate hiring of designated leadership, business management systems, and a copy of the last two audits along with a three-year financial plan. |
| March, 2006          | WETCC Self-Study Report was submitted to NCA-HLC.   |
| May 8-10, 2006       | Site visit by NCA-HLC Evaluation Team.  |
| October 20, 2006     | Formal notification of the Institutional Actions Council decision to continue WETCC's candidacy for accreditation.  |
| January 18, 2007     | WETCC formal notice of upcoming site visit scheduled for December 17-19, 2007.  |
| June 15, 2007        | WETCC notified of the proposed team members for the 2007 site visit.  |
| April 21-23, 2008    | Site visit formerly scheduled for December, 2007, conducted by HCA-HLC Evaluation Team.   |
| October 8, 2008      | Formal notification from NCA-HLC granting WETCC Initial Accreditation status limited to the Associate degree level.   |
| July 1, 2011         | WETCC submitted a Progress Report to NCA-HLC on financial management, implementation of a strategic plan, collecting and analyzing student learning data, and aligning mission and goals, vision and values with outcomes.              |
| September, 2011      | Subcommittees began to meet and collect data for self-study report.   |
| May 24, 2012         | WETCC notified of the proposed team members for 2012 site visit.  |
| July, 2012           | Draft of self-study report submitted to WETCC Council of Trustees and other constituents for review   |
| October, 2012        | Final draft of self-study report forwarded to HLC Peer Review   |
| December 3-5, 2012   | Site visit scheduled for NCA-HLC Evaluation Team.   |
| June 27, 2013        | Formal notification from NCA-HLC placing WETCC on Probation. WETCC required to host a comprehensive evaluation visit no later than February 13, 2015.   |
| Early December, 2014 | Draft of self-study report submitted to WETCC Council of Trustees and other constituents for review   |
| December 12, 2014    | Final self-study report forwarded to HLC Peer Review  |

## Overview of White Earth Nation and White Earth Tribal and Community College

The White Earth Reservation is located in northwest Minnesota, on the edge of the Red River Valley and the Minnesota Lake Country. The original boundaries of the Reservation were set by Treaty in 1867 to encompass 837,268 acres of land, or about 1,300 square miles. The Reservation is located in three counties (portions of Becker and Clearwater, and all of Mahnomen), and when established, contained 36 townships.



Figure 1 White Earth Reservation Location Map

The Reservation is located in a rural area sparsely populated and remote from any major metropolitan areas. The closest metropolitan area is Fargo/Moorhead, which is 68 miles from the edge of the Reservation. The Reservation includes five incorporated cities and seven villages and spans over 837,000 acres encompassing all of Mahnomen County and portions of Becker and Clearwater Counties.

The population of Mahnomen County is 5,532 with 3,407 people over the age of twenty-five. Of those, 696 (20%) have earned an A.A. or a Bachelor's Degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2012). Becker County has a population of 33,231 with 22,392 over the age of twenty-five. Approximately 5,695 (25%) earned an A.A. or a Bachelor's Degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2012). Clearwater county has a population of 8,838 and 5,948 are over the age of twenty-five (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012). At least 1,317 (22%) have earned an A.A. or Bachelor's Degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012).

The White Earth Nation has an enrolled Native population of over 19,500 with 9,000 living on the reservation. Major employers of Native Americans in this region include the Shooting Star Casino, the White Earth Tribal Council, Indian Health Service, the College, and independent farmers and harvesters of traditional foods.

The Anishinaabeg people of Northwestern Minnesota have historically lived a community-based culture whose traditional activities are seasonally determined. Education is a life-long process

wherein all students become teachers as they move through the life cycle. The educational process begins with encouraged observation, starting very early in life (depending upon the activity), moving to an extended apprenticeship where questions and modeling are valued. Families reinforce learning through storytelling and illustrative query.

When the federal government assumed educational authority over Native children, the utilization of boarding schools not only removed children from their families but also succeeded in removing families from the educational process resulting in the significant decimation of language and culture. The trauma of the boarding school era has nurtured a negative intergenerational resistance to education as evidenced in today's demographics regarding high drop-out rates, high school graduation and college matriculation data which in turn have contributed to perpetuating reservation poverty.

However, the despair and discouragement that accompanies such dismal statistics was changed forever when, on October 7, 1997, the White Earth Tribal Council established the White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) as a not-for-profit tribally controlled educational institution of higher learning. For the first time in the history of the White Earth Indian Reservation, Native and Non-Native students could attend a post-secondary school where Anishinaabe culture was validated, Anishinaabe language revered, and employment skills developed. Since that time the enrollment of the College has fluctuated with occasional growth spurts but also declines that can be alleviated with appropriate visioning and planning.

White Earth Tribal and Community College is located on the White Earth Indian Reservation in Mahnomen County within the City of Mahnomen, Minnesota. The campus consists of three non-contiguous buildings housing classrooms, administrative, faculty and program offices, a Drum Hall, a main library and a satellite library, a science lab, the Extension Office, a Student Services Center, and three kitchens. Classes are held during the day and in the evening and periodically on weekends (mainly for Extension activities). Community classes are offered through the College and the WETCC Extension Program.

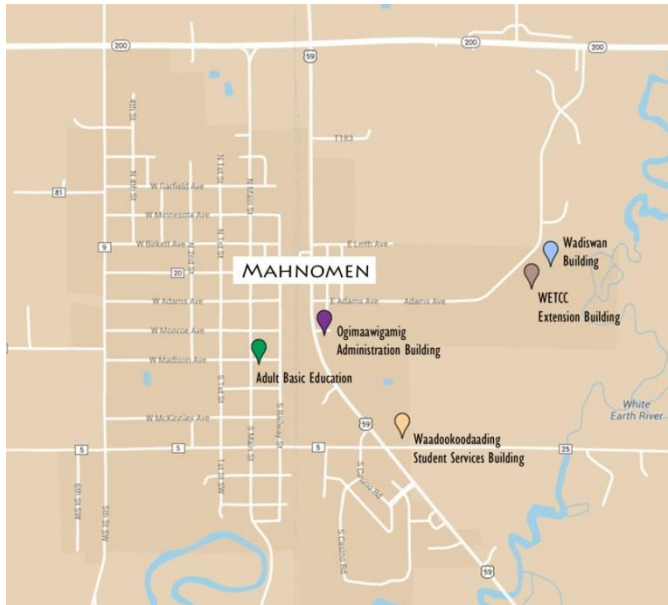


Figure 2 WETCC Facilities Location Map

WETCC’s primary goal has been to provide access to higher learning for both tribal members and members of the general public in an environment that validates the culture and epistemology of the White Earth Anishinaabe. The mission of the White Earth Tribal and Community College, an Anishinaabe-controlled liberal arts institution of higher education, is dedication to educational excellence through provision of a culturally relevant curriculum in partnership with students, staff, community, and industry.

Further clarification supporting the mission statement is found within the vision statement, the purpose statement, and through its teachings statements. The vision of WETCC is expressed as follows:

**Vision Statement**

Gaawaabaabiganikaag Gabegikendaasowigamig Waasa Inaabidaa  
 Gibimiwidoomin gidinwewininaan nigaanekeya  
 “We are carrying along into the future the way that we were given.”

The WETCC values describe for our students and community the ways in which we as an educational institution have chosen to serve our internal and external constituents. These ways are based on the Anishinaabe Seven Teachings, comprised of debwewin (truth), zoongide’iwin (courage), zaagi’idiwin (love), manaaji’idiwin (respect), nabwaaakaawin (wisdom), dabasendizowin (humility), and gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty). Serving our constituents based on these values creates an educational environment and learning atmosphere that is conducive to learning, exploring, debating, thinking, observing, pondering, and reflecting.

The purpose of higher learning at WETCC is described in its purpose statements. The purpose statements support the mission statement, vision statement, and values of the College. The

following purpose statements were established in collaboration with the community, students, staff, and faculty:

**White Earth Tribal and Community College Purpose Statements**

1. The College will present learning as a life-long process of discovery of knowledge embedded in the intellectual disciplines and the traditions of the Anishinaabe people.
2. The College will support self-determination of the Anishinaabe through the promotion and preservation of their history, culture, and language.
3. The College will seek to address the social, political, and economic needs of the greater White Earth Indian Reservation through programs that encourage service to the community.
4. The College will promote a philosophy based on the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabeg.

**The Self-Study Organizational Structure and Process at White Earth Tribal and Community College**

The president realigned the College’s committee structure, and the self-study team was tied into that alignment as described as follows:

- President Terry Janis appointed a Self-Study Steering Committee and committee structure in April 2014. The Self-Study Steering Committee has been comprised of the leadership team (IT Director, Extension Director, Academic Dean, Dean of Student Services, Development Director/Special Projects Director, Finance Officer, and President). All faculty, administrators, and staff were assigned to the various committees. The Special Projects/Title III Director was assigned as the Self-Study Coordinator for the self-study process.
- The purpose of these eleven (11) committees has been to address institutional effectiveness, teaching and learning, student services, and accreditation issues. The following chart shows the overall committee structure of the College which represents our self-study committee structure as well as our overall College committee structure:

| ENROLLMENT & MARKETING                 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT   | FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE                  | HUMAN RESOURCES                           | STUDENT RETENTION & SUPPORT |
|--|------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Dean, Student Services                 | Extension Coordinator* | Facility Manager                          | Human Resource Technician                 | Financial Aid Specialists*  |
| Admissions Officer                     | Exec. Assistant        | WETCC/Special Projects/Title III Director | President                                 | Registrar                   |
| IT Director                            | ORT Coordinator        | IT Director                               | Academic Dean                             | Dean, Student Services      |
| Outreach, Retention, Tutor Coordinator | Extension Coordinator* | Extension/Special Projects*               | WETCC/Special Projects/Title III Director | Librarian                   |
| Marketing/Communications Specialist    | Receptionist           | Maintenance                               | Finance Officer*                          | ORT Coordinator             |
| Faculty                                |                        | Security                                  |   | Faculty member              |
| Registrar                              |                        |   |   |                             |
| Receptionist*                          |                        |   |   |                             |

| COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES       | FINANCE                                   | ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING and PROGRAMS & INSTRUCTION | GOVERNANCE                                | POLICY AND PROCEDURE                       |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Dean, Student Services</b> | <b>Business Officer</b>                   | <b>Academic Dean</b>                               | <b>President</b>                          | <b>Extension Director</b>                  |
| IT Director                   | Finance Assistant ®                       | All Faculty  | Extension Director                        | Academic Dean                              |
| ORT Coordinator               | WETCC/Special Projects/Title III Director | Stepping Stones Faculty*                           | WETCC/Special Projects/Title III Director | WETCC/Special Projects/Title III Director* |
| Marketing/Commun. Specialist  | Procurement Clerk                         | Librarian  |   | Dean, Student Services                     |
| Human Resource Specialist     |   | Registrar  |   | Finance Officer                            |
| Receptionist*                 |   | IT Director  |   | Chief Business Officer                     |
|                               |   |  |   | Exec. Assistant                            |

\*Denotes recorder

- Weekly committee meetings along with periodic all staff meetings were scheduled and convened. In those meetings, impending tasks that progressively identified priority areas of concern for improvement and progress were communicated. Minutes of all committee meetings, drafts of plans for community engagement, enrollment management, campus planning, academic assessment planning, as well as an emergency response plan, policies, and facility usage all were addressed through this institution-wide committee structure.
- The concerted self-study effort involved all faculty and staff with focused leadership assignments to the registrar, financial aid office, admissions officer, the IT director, executive assistant, and all department heads; as identified in the above chart.
- The components (Table of Contents which included the Responses to the HLC Monitoring and Probation Findings Heading and Criteria) of the self-study report were shared with the Council of Trustees at the October 2014 regular meeting.
- The President shared a final DRAFT of the self-study report to all faculty and staff in early December, 2014.
- The final DRAFT of the self-study report was approved for submission by the WETCC Council of Trustees at its regular COT meeting, held one week later, on December, 10, 2014 regular meeting.

## Responses to the Higher Learning Commission Monitoring and Probation Findings

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White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) has entered this re-institution of full accreditation process at a period of major institutional disruption. WETCC has recently hired a new President, has a restructured administration and operational systems, and has solidified the Council of Trustee membership; all within the context of a previous iteration of the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria to the new Criteria for Accreditation.

Accordingly, these factors have made this self-study process enormously challenging, but nonetheless, an opportunity for significant institutional learning, improvement, and positive growth.

*HLC Finding: White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) is out of compliance with 2005 Criteria for Accreditation, Criteria One, Core Component 1.D, "the organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission".*

*Criteria One, Core Component 1.d of the 2005 Criteria for Accreditation equates in the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation with Criterion Two, 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" and Criterion Five, 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"; therefore, the previously identified issues also indicate that the College is out of compliance with Criteria Two and Five of the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation.*

Governance of the College is firmly placed in sole and independent authority of the WETCC Council of Trustees through its Charter, issued by the White Earth Tribal Council. The initial charter established in 1988, was revised and wholly superseded by the WETCC Charter of May 18, 2000. The tribally focused and culturally based mission of the revised charter remained essentially the same, but there are significant differences in the 2000 Charter that emphasize the sole and independent authority of the WETCC Council of Trustees. The 2000 Charter gives the WETCC Council of Trustees sole authority:

- To "establish all rules and regulations..." (Article IV),
- To dissolve the College (Article VIII),
- To establish or amend the College's By-Laws (Article IX), and
- To amend the Charter (Article XI).

The HLC Visiting Team took note of a study of the College that was commissioned by the Tribal Council in September 2012, without WETCC Council of Trustee consent or involvement and was described, by HLC, as an attempt by the Tribal Council to involve itself in the management of WETCC. This is an unfortunate breach of protocol and an unacceptable intervention by the Tribal Council in the management of WETCC. It should

be noted; however, that the Tribal Council is now fully aware that this type of unilateral intervention is in conflict with the WETCC Charter, By-laws, and established case law and the Tribal Council has subsequently engaged all WETCC issues through the Council of Trustees and the WETCC President.

The WETCC Council of Trustees and WETCC Administration have taken the following steps to ensure that it is sufficiently autonomous to assuring the integrity of WETCC and to allow the Board of Trustees to make decisions in the best interest of the College:

1. Establishment of full slate of Trustees consistent with WETCC By-laws.
2. Effective fulfillment of Trustee obligations through WETCC Presidential transitions in 2013 and 2014. Although the beginning of that period of time saw the Council of Trustees taking action in contravention of our By-laws, the Trustees ultimately asserted clear, decision-making authority, provided leadership to the College and stabilized College leadership. Please reference January 14, 2014 letter from Interim President Steve Dahlberg and January 15, 2014 letter from Council of Trustees Chairperson, Joan LaVoy to HLC President Sylvia Manning.
3. Regularly scheduled orientation and training for the Council of Trustees on a bi-annual basis and as needed for new members with most recent trainings conducted on December 2, 2013 and August 12, 2014 for the entire Council of Trustees and November 19, 2014 for new Trustees.
4. Establishment of Trustees' Committee structure to fulfill Trustee obligations related to finance and budgeting, policy review, strategic planning, development and fund-raising, communications and public relations, and Anishinaabe culture.
5. Maintenance of regular orientation and information-sharing schedule between WETCC President and White Earth Tribal Council to affirm the boundaries of the relationship and to advance mutual objectives in education.

Another critique under Criterion 1.d. is the instability of leadership at the WETCC President's position. At the date of President Manning's letter of July 9, 2013, WETCC had only recently hired a permanent president after a transition that extended beyond a year. That president was subsequently terminated by the Council of Trustees in October of 2013, and the current permanent President, Terry L. Janis, M.Ed., J.D., was hired and began his tenure as President on April 21, 2014. This response acknowledges the validity of that critique and points to the following remedies:

1. Leadership provided by the WETCC Council of Trustees during transition points since 2012;
2. Expeditious hiring of current permanent President; and,
3. Improvement of an institutional leadership structure and personnel that creates clear lines of authority, establishes clear departmental responsibilities and authority, and establishes an institution-wide leadership structure.

We have already referenced above, the ultimately effective leadership provided by the Council of Trustees during Presidential transitions in 2013 and 2014. We again reference the January 14, 2014, letter from Interim President Steve Dahlberg and January 15, 2014, letter from Council of Trustees Chairperson, Joan LaVoy to HLC President Sylvia Manning.

The culmination of that effort was the stability provided by Interim President Steven Dahlberg from October 2013 to April 2014, and hiring the current permanent President, Terry L. Janis on April 21, 2014. The establishment of a clear and stable leadership structure has been a priority for President Janis. A new organizational chart was approved by the Council of Trustees at its regular meeting on May 13, 2014, with the inclusion of Departments and Directors in Finance, Development, Academic Services, Student Services, and Extension. Department Directors were appointed and hired with clear lines of authority over programs, budget, and staff. This new organizational structure has, in short order, provided our College community with structure and assurance of sound planning, adherence to policies and procedures, and effective teaching and learning.

In addition, the central role of the faculty within the governance of the college has been addressed by a revitalization of the Faculty Senate and the shared governance process. The Faculty Senate is a governance board that represents White Earth Tribal and Community College in all academic matters. The Faculty Senate is responsible for ensuring that academic freedom is encouraged and protected, and for acting as a guiding body to insure that all curricula promote student learning through a rigorous course of study. The Faculty Senate consists of the Academic Dean, full-time faculty, and adjunct faculty.

With regards to the issue of shared governance, WETCC faculty participation in the governance at WETCC is critical. Because the faculty is significantly smaller than other institutions of higher education, all faculty members are strongly encouraged to be part of the participatory decision-making process, and have a responsibility to develop educational policies that best serve the WETCC learner. WETCC recognizes the critical role of all faculty in the College's life and mission.

Participatory decision-making is aligned with the WETCC Mission, Vision, and Teachings and faculty governance has been significantly strengthened through the participatory process. Evidence of this includes, but not limited to the following: Actively participating in developing the academic budget; program development, assessment, and revision; development of the 4-semester course calendar; academic policy development, review, and implementation; the development, approval, and implementation of the course, program assessment, and program review processes that will provide decision making data; participation in developing institutional documents such as the Faculty Handbook, the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog, the Adjunct Faculty Contract, and the WETCC Course Syllabus Template; development of individual professional development plans; development of the WETCC Learner Outcomes which is utilized as a foundational tool for strategic planning, and numerous others.

Faculty participation is essential to the everyday operations of the College and shared governance is more than a set of boundaries and rules that govern. Faculty has moved toward sharing responsibility for identifying sustainable strategic directions in a participatory environment where open communication is encouraged and faculty members, administrators, and board members are collaborating to align and implement strategic priorities.

With regard to other concerns raised by the HLC 2012 review, the College has established:

- A process by which to adopt policies that are in line with other institutions of higher education; a formal indexing of a WETCC Policy Collection;
- A calendar and process by which faculty and staff is evaluated on an annual basis;
- A process and checklist for faculty files that include, among other documents, official transcripts for all full-time and adjunct instructor;
- An Assessment of Student Learning Plan; and,
- A Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

*HLC Finding: WETCC is out of compliance with 2005 Criteria for Accreditation, Criterion Two, “The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluating and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities, particularly Core Component 2., “the institution’s resource base supports educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.”*

*Criterion Two, Core Component 2.b of the 2005 Criteria for Accreditation equates in the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation with Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning”; therefore, the previously identified issues also indicate that the College is out of compliance with Criterion Five of the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation.*

While the College had conducted strategic planning activities on more than one occasion, efforts to engage in strategic planning had been episodic and fragmented. It was not clear that strategic initiatives had been translated into specific objectives and action steps assigned to those responsible for their accomplishment, or a timeline for implementation. A 2010-2012 WETCC Institutional Plan had been developed based upon WETCC’s institutional purpose statements (4) along with supporting goals and objectives. A progress report to the HLC in the areas of financial management, implementation of the strategic plan, collecting and analyzing student learning data, and aligning mission and goals, vision and values with outcomes were reviewed and accepted in July 2011.

The College subsequently conducted an UPDATED Institutional Plan 2010-2012 Progress Report Summary in July 2012 and further aligned the strategies with related HLC Criteria. The July 2012 reported findings showed that all strategies were either completed or making satisfactory progress.

The 2012 HLC accreditation visit and review subsequently found that WETCC did not have an active strategic plan or an enrollment plan, and that leadership processes and resource allocation did not present evidence or data that supported the decision making process. This response and subsequent responses under Criteria 2 will illustrate how we have resolved these issues from the ground up.

Our process, consistent with our mission and values, has been to focus first on our base—our students and community. You will find in this self-study report and these responses, an effort to first focus on what our students are learning. We engaged intensive conversations with faculty and staff to define what our students look like upon graduation from WETCC. Those conversations provided information that was given to faculty. From those conversations the WETCC Learner Outcomes were defined and a rubric developed. These outcomes are derived from our mission, vision, and teachings representing the true purpose of this institution. We then crafted our Assessment Plan, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Master Facility Plan, and Annual Budgeting Process based upon those Learner Outcomes; each of these four items is fully discussed in the Self Study Report.

From this base we have moved to development of a new draft 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. The current draft incorporates a series of events and surveys in which were gathered from community input and a broad environmental assessment of relevant economic, employment, demographic and educational data. We are aware that this is not a complete Strategic Plan, but it is a realistic representation of our internal debates. We will finalize our WETCC Strategic Plan no later than the spring of 2015 with a comprehensive environmental assessment, community input, and SWOT Analysis. We will then immediately follow up with an Institutional Development Plan that takes our strategic priorities and establishes clear and effective development and implementation strategies.

*HLC Finding: WETCC is out of compliance with 2005 Criterion Two, “The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluating and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities, particularly Core Component 2.C, “the organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.”*

*Criteria Two, Core Component 2.b of the 2005 Criteria for Accreditation equates in the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation with Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, “the institution works systematically to improve its performance”; therefore, the previously identified issue also indicates that the College is out of compliance with Core Component 5.D of the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation.*

The 2012 HLC Self-study review identified that the WETCC Strategic Plan should be dynamic and on-going culminating with the dissemination of a document to be shared with faculty, staff and students. It was determined that the Plan lacked the usage of data or evidence-based information and action oriented goals to measure outcomes.

The Council of Trustees identified and supported an Interim President and the process of hiring a permanent president was both thorough and expeditions. Under the new president's leadership, there has been an establishment of an institution-wide leadership structure which has been essential in providing our College community with structure and assurance for sound planning, adherence to policies and procedures, and effective teaching and learning.

The College currently serves Natives and Non-Natives in the surrounding communities, offering a strong liberal art's education grounded in Anishinaabe culture, values and systems. The College's current draft of the strategic plan has been structured using the Five Learner Outcomes which are based on the mission, vision and seven Anishinaabe Teachings. The five Learner Outcomes frame the structure of the Academic Assessment Plan and the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) making it seamless with the strategic plan, mission, vision and teachings of the College.

The Performance Dimensions and Overall Learner Outcomes state that students should:

1. Okwiinogamigwewin nitam (The Community First)
  - a. Exercise critical and creative thinking
  - b. Demonstrate civic and social responsibility
2. Mikigaadeg enendaagozing (Finding Purpose)
  - a. Identify and develop gifts and talents
  - b. Identify and develop interests and goals
3. Ogimaawin (Leadership)
  - a. Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully
  - b. Take responsibility
4. Naanaagadawenim miinawaa zhawenim ongow omaa akiing (Holistic in a Way that Honors all Things)
  - a. Committed to the development of the whole person
  - b. Honor interrelatedness of all things
5. Mino Bimaadiziwin (The Good Life)
  - a. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history
  - b. Take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe Way

Each requirement of the learner outcome is linked to a performance dimension. Faculty assessed previous learner outcomes and spent an extensive amount of time determining what skills the WETCC Learner needed to better serve the communities in which they reside. Because most students will continue to live on and work on the reservation, culturally relevant skills that are community focused are critical.

Students who feel a strong connection to their communities will find purpose in their own lives as a part of the larger community. Once they determine their own gifts and talents, they serve as leaders that are able to listen, communicate, and take responsibility for not only their own life's path, but also for the communities in which they exist. As the commitment to the community grows, and they become leaders in those arenas, they

gain a holistic perspective honoring the interrelatedness of all things. Only then are they able to take their knowledge and skills and determine the path to the good life.

The WETCC mission, vision, teachings, and institutional commitments all are based on the Anishinaabe culture which provides the context for institutional assessment, planning, data analysis, and data reporting that is required at every level to maintain educational excellence. The value of academic assessment data is that it creates connection points where clearly defined learner outcomes that originate in classrooms are linked to program and institutional student learning goals.

The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) plan uses the five learner outcomes as a structure to develop goals with Student Service programs, offices and committees. A process of strategic enrollment management will transition the College into a stronger institution linking more realistic goals to its overall vision and mission. The following Performance Dimensions as identified in the Learner Outcomes matrix are aligned with WETCC Student Services programs and services, as follows:

- Community First (Enrollment and Marketing),
- Finding Purpose (Student Retention and Support Committee, Student Counselor and Student Liaison),
- Leadership (Financial Aid),
- Holistic Perspective (Registrar and Data), and
- The Good Life (Graduation and Alumni).

The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) identifies the foundations of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) as:

- All SEM activities are mission driven.
- SEM develops an institutional culture of student success.
- SEM is synonymous with student success and is integrated into the institution's strategic plan.
- SEM involves all internal and external constituents.
- External partnerships are critical.
- Everything is assessed and measured assuring data driven decisions.
- Clear enrollment goals are established based on institutional capacity and the institution's strategic plan, and not simply on the student profile or revenue generation.

*HLC Finding: WETCC is out of compliance with 2005 Criterion Two, "The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluating and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities, Core Component 2.D, "all levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission."*

*Criterion Two, Core Component 2.d of the 2005 Criteria for Accreditation equates in the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation with Criterion Five, 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"; therefore, the previously identified issue also indicates that the College is out of compliance with Criterion Five of the 2013 Criteria for Accreditation.*

This critique represents the core of our efforts at WETCC. We have focused on completing core initiatives that emphasize student learning and integrate those learning objectives into our planning, budgeting and development processes. We first defined our Learner Outcomes then integrated these Learner Outcomes into our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Assessment Plan, and Annual Budgeting Process. We then completed a draft Strategic Plan, a Master Facility Plan for Phase III, and are moving to develop our Institutional Development Plan, and an AEP (Assessment Evaluation Planning) Calendar by which we will coordinate an annual, integrated process of continuous assessment, evaluation, and planning.

Subsequent chapters will fully develop each of the items listed above. It is clear that the Learner Outcomes represent the leadership and voice of our Faculty Senate to define our core learning objectives. Secondly, there is evidence that these objectives are at the core of our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and our Assessment Plan which have been developed with broad campus participation and are being implemented across campus. Finally, the budgeting process uses those priorities to define budget categories and amounts and how our budgeting process is integrated into a data-driven assessment process.

Each of these products was produced with intensive dialogue and debate. We received considerable input from faculty, staff, students, and community. The Council of Trustees has thoroughly reviewed and approved our Mission Statement, Vision Statement and draft Strategic Plan and has reviewed and approved all policy changes referenced in this Self Study Report. Combining this process with an initial community survey and external review of demographic, economic, employment and educational data we have produced a draft Strategic Plan to guide our process moving forward.

As stated above, we are aware that this is not a complete Strategic Plan, but it is a realistic representation of our internal debates. We will finalize our WETCC Strategic Plan no later than the spring of 2015 with a comprehensive environmental assessment, community input, and SWOT Analysis. We will then immediately follow up with an Institutional Development Plan that takes our strategic priorities and establishes clear and effective development and implementation strategies.

Finally, WETCC is committed to an integrated process of continuous assessment, evaluation, and planning. We are finalizing an AEP (Assessment, Evaluation and Planning) Calendar by which we will define and clarify deadlines and accountability for assessment (semester-based data collection requirements), evaluation (learning and programmatic evaluations at the end of each semester) bi-annual planning processes that take data and

evaluations with program-level and institution-level community input, and SWOT assessments. Each of these processes will inform our annual budgeting process and lead to an annual evaluation and update of our Strategic Plan.

*HLC Finding: WETCC is out of compliance with Federal Compliance requirements related to student complaints, "An institution shall make available an account of the student complaints it has received, its processing of those complaints, and how that processing comports with the institution's policies and procedures on the handling of grievances or complaints".*

A Complaint and Grievances Committee was created during spring semester 2014 with the overall goal to respond to complaints and grievances of students in a timely manner. The primary product of this committee was a clear process for students to make complaints and grievance and ask for resolution of complaints and/or grievances.

A **Complaint and Grievance Log** of student issues was created and is on file in the Dean of Student Services office. A copy of this file is also stored with Human Resource Office. The log includes information about written complaints and grievances for the past three academic years. The log will be kept up to date any time a student makes a written complaint or grievance.

The work completed by the Complaint and Grievance committee was reported at the staff/faculty meeting on July 21, 2014. After reviewing the 2013-2014 Complaint and Grievance policy, it was decided to revise the 2012-2013 policy to be more comprehensive.

The committee's final review of the policy and the changes are:

- 1) In the areas that students may grieve, include under "discrimination" all that is reflected on the WETCC website which is "Discrimination: Discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, sex, familial status, sexual orientation and reprisal"
- 2) All references to the registrar, changed to Dean of Students and/or Human Resources director.
- 3) The Complaint and Grievance Committee to hear all issues is the Director of Human Resources, Dean of Students, Dean of Academics, the Student Liaison and a student determined by the Student Senate.
- 4) Log: A log will be kept in the Dean of Students office and a copy in the Human Resource office beginning with the written complaint/grievance or with the online form. A log will be kept of the meeting of the Complaint and Grievance committee, the steps taken to resolve, and the resolution of the complaint or grievance.

An online form to file a complaint or grievance was developed by IT and was tested by the committee. A hard copy will also be available in the reception area of Wadiswan (Main Campus), at the Human Resource office, and with Student Services. The Interim Dean of Student Services researched written student complaints and grievances for the past three years. Logs were created and student complaints and grievances were entered for each year.

Students will learn about the complaint and grievance process during orientation by the Student Liaison. A flowchart of the process has been developed and is on display in the main campus building, in student services, and in the Human Resources office. The committee felt that it met its goal and adjourned to be replaced by the newly structured committee for student complaints and grievances.

The newly structured Student Complaints and Grievances Committee will address all student complaints and grievances, resolve them in a timely manner, track them anonymously in a student complaint log, and complete an annual review of all complaints and grievances to identify ongoing patterns or underlying issues that need to be addressed

## Responses to Observations from the 2012 Comprehensive Visit Report

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1. Observation: The committee structure at the College is composed of extensive duplication of members on multiple committees.

At the time of the review the College functioned under two separate groups of committees, one group of committees focused on the Self-Study work and the other group of committees focused on the various components/functions of the College. As of May, 2014, WETCC has one main college committee structure.

The purpose of these eleven (11) committees is to address institutional effectiveness, teaching and learning, student services, and accreditation issues. Some staff serves on several committees. For example, the IT Director participates, at times only as requested, on the Facilities and Maintenance Committee, the Enrollment and Marketing Committee, Assessment, and the Complaints and Grievances Committee.

2. Observation: The College's planning processes does not include effective environmental scanning practices with economic entities in the immediate area.

For years, the College has relied on grant-driven funding to initiate the strategic planning processes, which includes environmental scanning. A grant from the Bremer Foundation produced the WETCC Institutional Plan for the period of 2010-2012. In August 2012 a proposal was submitted to the U.S.D.A., Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program, which requested funding to update and strengthen the college's strategic planning process for the next three years. Unfortunately, the College was not awarded the grant.

Most recently, the College entered into a service agreement with a provider to submit an analysis report, "[Northwest Regional Labor Data Collection and Analysis Report](#)" to the College. Based upon the State and Regional data presented in this report, it is this author's recommendation that consideration be given for potential WETCC academic programming in the following curricular areas: education, construction, health care/human services, and manufacturing. This recently submitted report identifies construction and manufacturing as areas WETCC may consider for potential academic programming. It is understood that these particular program areas would be a significant undertaking for WETCC and would require a broadening of our mission, but are essential to meeting the needs of our community.

3. Observation: The team observed during the visit that visiting the different locations for meetings and reviews was inconvenient and could provide a hardship for students, faculty, and staff.

At the time of the review, WETCC had five separate office and classroom locations within the City of Mahanomen. Unfortunately, this could not have been prevented as the College was in a period of transition. The College has been a menagerie of rental spaces, smaller buildings purchased by WETCC through grants and matching funds, and construction of a permanent location for WETCC.

Presently, the College is located in three separate but close in proximity locations, less than a mile from the Main Campus location. The Academic Dean and all faculty are located at the Main Campus in order to be more available to students. As previously described, the plans are to relocate the Student Services offices to the Main Campus location upon completion of Phase III construction.

4. Observation: With the many changes in academic administration there has been limited focus upon faculty evaluation.

WETCC recognizes that Faculty Evaluation is an important part of the academic process. It serves as a means to create a complete and accurately documented record, utilized for making recommendations and reaching decisions on contract renewal, promotions, and salary increases. Equally important is the use of Faculty Evaluations as a mode through which strengths are reinforced, achievements recognized, weaknesses identified and addressed, and constructive criticism offered with the objective of improving faculty performance. The evaluative process is also intended to be a means for exploration of attitudes about changes in academics or at the college, and to provide a formal framework for open dialogue with a constructive exchange of ideas.

WETCC Faculty Evaluation takes place for both adjuncts and full-time faculty. In the summer of 2014, full-time faculty, in collaboration with the Academic Dean, designed an evaluative tool to assist with the evaluation of adjunct faculty. Most adjunct instructors teach only one or two courses per semester and their contracts do not include the expectation for the same level of scholarship, service, and other duties expected of full time instructors. As such, the evaluation process must be different for adjunct faculty. Their evaluations will take place at the end of the semester unless the instructor is contracted for two consecutive semesters, in which case it will take place at the end of the final semester. In addition, the types of evidence that will be included in the process will be reduced, as will the standards they must meet.

Evaluation of faculty members is based on the following process:

1. Full-time Faculty Evaluation:

- At the start of each academic year, each faculty member completes a Professional Development Plan (PDP) that addresses the five areas of an instructor's job duties: Instruction, assessment, research, service, and student advising. In the PDP, s/he details a plan for the academic year and how s/he will provide evidence of how s/he is completing his/her plan.
- The PDP is submitted to the Academic Dean who reviews it and suggests changes, if any.
- At the end of the February, faculty members write Activity Reports detailing progress and areas for improvement on their PDPs. The Academic Dean will review it, meet with the individual, and make recommendations at the March review.
- The Academic Dean conducts classroom observations using criteria established by the entire Faculty. The Dean and the Instructor observed, jointly review and dialogue about the results of the observation.

- Some faculty members use a section of their course evaluations to solicit student feedback on improving course structure or teaching methods. Any of this additional feedback may be included in the evaluation process at the instructor's discretion. Student feedback reported directly to the Dean or other staff may be used at the Dean's discretion. This information is then shared with the faculty member in question. If appropriate, an informal mentoring system that helps guide and encourage the faculty member may be established.

2. Part-time or adjunct faculty will be evaluated based on student evaluations, timely submission of attendance, midterm, and final grades, and classroom evaluations done by the Academic Dean.

Both evaluative processes are consistent with institutional policies and procedures. Full-time faculty evaluations took place in October of 2014 (Evaluations filed with Human Resources) and adjuncts will be evaluated in December of 2014.

5. Observation: Although, there is evidence that not all of WETCC degree programs have differentiated outcomes, developing and implementing a plan to address the lack of differentiated outcomes for these remaining programs would be advantageous.

Program level learning outcomes have been in place for the Environmental Science Program since 2006. They were revised in early 2014 in response to recent changes in the program design. Also during the summer of 2014, the Faculty Senate worked with the instructors who oversee the Native Studies and Business Programs to develop learner outcomes for these programs. These outcomes are still in the refinement process and need community input, among other things, before they will be ready for adoption. Currently, faculty is reviewing the AA in the Humanities to assess current program outcomes to determine if they are measurable. This process is expected to be complete before the end of the current academic year.

Outcomes for the newly reinstated Education and Human Services Programs require the hiring of qualified instructors to oversee them. These hires are expected before the beginning of the spring 2015 semester. Program learner outcomes, finalized degree plans and curricular design, appropriate course learner outcomes will be in place by the beginning of fall 2015. Henceforth, all program level learner outcomes and assessment plans will be reviewed as part of the regular Program Review process and revised as needed.

6. Observation: The Business Program, as the college is aware, is void of a full-time faculty member.

Business was one of three programs eliminated in the fall of 2013. With the change in leadership in the spring of 2014, WETCC needed data to determine which, if any, of the eliminated programs should be reinstated. Faculty and administration conducted a number of needs analyses to determine which programs could be identified as sustainable and supported by community needs. These efforts included:

- A meeting between a Minnesota DEEDS (Department of Employment and Economic Development) representative and faculty
- Surveys of student interest and demand
- Community input

The determination was made to reinstate the Business Program in fall of 2014 with a qualified full-time faculty member assigned to oversee the program in collaboration with the Faculty Senate and the Curriculum Committee. Courses were evaluated to determine transferability in accordance with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC). Former program learner outcomes are in the final stages of the evaluative process, course sequences are being established, and an assessment plan for each is being outlined.

7. Observation: The College needs processors and an operating system which enables faculty, students, and staff to devote the maximum amount of time in learning the benefits of technology rather than troubleshooting it.

Hardware and operating systems have been brought up to a newer less problematic state. All student computers have been upgraded to an Intel Core I5 or newer, as well as Microsoft Windows 7 Pro, Mac OS 10.6, or later. All Faculty and Staff units are Intel Core I3 or newer, as well as Microsoft Windows 7 Pro, Mac OS 10.6, or later. These advancements in newer hardware and software have created a more stable environment for all users on WETCC's network.

8. Observation: Learning outcomes are not consistent across course syllabi.

WETCC Learner Outcomes are woven into both program and course outcomes and objectives and are communicated in the WETCC Syllabus Template that is utilized by all faculty members. The WETCC Institutional Learner Outcomes, based on Higher Education norms and Anishinaabe teachings, incorporate the following that provide a framework for programming, curriculum, and course assignments:

1. **Okwiinogamigwewin nitam** (The Community First)
  - a. Exercise critical/creative thinking
  - b. Demonstrate civic/social responsibility
2. **Mikigaadeg wendjising** (Finding Purpose)
  - a. Identify and develop gifts/talents
  - b. Identify and develop interests/goals
3. **Ogimaawin** (Leadership)
  - a. Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully.
  - b. Take responsibility.
4. **Aapiji naagadawendam zhawenim ongow omaa akiing** (Holistic in a Way that Honors all Things)
  - a. Committed to the development of the whole person.
  - b. Honor interrelatedness of all things.
5. **Mino Bimaadiziwin** (The Good Life)
  - a. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history.

- b. Take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe Way.

Skill levels range from a benchmark of 1 to a capstone of 4. Learner's skill levels increase through their educational journey with the goal of attaining the capstone level by graduation.

The College has a syllabus template that all instructors are expected to use. This template includes the above five Overall Learner Outcomes along with a section for the instructor to spell out the course level outcomes. This section also includes guidelines and best practices to assist adjuncts, in particular, in developing these outcomes.

Finally, the Faculty Senate has reviewed the syllabi for all courses taught by full-time instructors and collaboratively critiqued all course level learner outcomes, as well as plans for assessment and data collection points. The next step in the process is to align course level outcomes to program level outcomes, and then to map program outcomes to the institutional learner outcomes. This process assures that every program of study offered by the College serves the overall mission, vision, and teachings. Furthermore, this process assures that the learning outcomes identified for each course, must map appropriately to the goals of the overall program of study, and are woven from the WETCC Learner Outcomes.

9. Observation: Cultural Advisory Council has not been implemented to provide input needed for inclusion of the culture into the curriculum and student services.

A Cultural Advisory Council has not yet been developed because of the need, in a short time frame, to focus on core elements of assessment and evaluation, planning, and governance. The cultural focus and integrity of the College remains a priority; however, with some work having been completed by establishing a Culture Committee on the Council of Trustees, identification of this priority in our draft Strategic Plan, and establishing clear areas of responsibility among our Leadership Team to ensure that seasonal and critical ceremonies are carried out with understanding and integrity, we have been moving in this area. A Cultural Advisory Council process will be implemented spring 2015.

10. Observation: Lack of policies and procedures that explicitly ensure ethical conduct in research or the practices of intellectual property rights.

The WETCC Council of Trustees approved [Policy 5.501 – WETCC Copyright and Intellectual Property Policy](#) which identifies Intellectual Property and Ownership as such:

- The ownership of any materials, processes, or inventions developed solely by an employee's individual effort and expense shall vest in the employee and be copyrighted or patented, if at all, in his/her name.
- The ownership of materials, processes, or inventions produced solely for the College and at College expense shall vest in the College and be copyrighted or patented, if at all, in the name of the College.

- In those instances where materials, processes, or inventions are produced by an employee with College support, by way of use of significant personnel, time, facilities or other College resources, the ownership of the materials, processes or inventions shall vest in (and be copyrighted or patented by, if at all) the person designated by written agreement between the parties entered into prior to the production. In the event there is no such written agreement entered into, the ownership shall vest in the College.

This policy applies to all WETCC employees and students. The policy also applies to non-employees who may be authorized to use any WETCC resources. The principles of this policy extend to, and include, any use of College resources, regardless of its location. Access to information resources, the sharing of information, and the security of the intellectual products of the community all require that each and every user accept responsibility to protect the rights of the community.

The Leadership team has been responsible for the development of a plan (Spring 2015) and implementation of an IRB process (Fall 2015) to ensure ethical training and behavior related research.

11. Observation: The College may consider reinstating the Dean of Student Services position and relocate close to students.

The position of Dean of Student Services was filled in July of 2013. Plans are to relocate the Student Services offices to the Main Campus upon completion of the Phase III construction project. Efforts to lessen the distance between Student Services and the main campus began in the fall of 2014. One financial aid specialist conducts office hours at the main campus two days a week for one hour each day. There is also a van available for transporting students to and from student services to help alleviate gasoline costs for students.

12. Observation: Developing a formal plan describing the methods of evaluation and the processes for compiling and analyzing data in order to respond to the community and other external constituents' needs could ensure continuity of services.

Since the hiring of the current president and new organizational structure the College has engaged in extensive process of soliciting input from our various constituencies. These activities include:

- Meeting with Veteran's group and Community Councils
- An Alumni Appreciation Day
- A Halloween Party for community children – Student Senate sponsored event
- A Community Appreciation Day
- A campus open house during the Minnesota Indian Education Conference held in Mahnomon
- Veterans Dinner

- Several meetings and ongoing dialog with the University of Minnesota, Crookston – an important nearby transfer institution offering many online degree programs
- Post-Secondary Enrollment meeting with area high schools
- Beginning the creation of White Earth Nation Education Network

The goals for most of these activities included soliciting feedback from the participants in the forms of surveys and/or dialog to be used in institutional assessment and strategic planning.

The College is also a participant in the Aazhoogan Consortium, a partnership between Bemidji State University and all of the Tribal colleges of Northern Minnesota. The goals of this consortium have to do with building a common distance education infrastructure on all partner campuses, but an additional benefit is the collaborative effort to identify unmet training needs among regional employers and to develop educational programs to address those needs. As such, the consortium serves as another external constituent as well as providing data for planning and assessment.

The WETCC Extension Service collects community feedback as a regular part of its work through surveys administered at each Extension event, focus groups held in the community, and regular meetings with an extensive list of community and regional partners. These data are analyzed at least quarterly, if not monthly, and used to refine Extension programming and grant requests. In addition, relevant results are reported by the Extension Director to the Leadership Committee where it is incorporated in college-wide planning.

Extension is also a member of an intertribal group with organizations from the Leech Lake and Red Lake Reservations that works collaboratively on food sovereignty, traditional crafts, and a variety of other topics of interest to each community. This group was awarded a community innovations grant through the Bush Foundation. One of the activities of this project is to gather input from the three Reservations to be used for planning and evaluating the project. Once again these results feed into the WETCC institutional assessment and planning process.

13. Observation: Encourage the college to seek other articulation agreements with both public and private colleges/universities in the surrounding area.

WETCC has had high level discussions for partnership and articulation with the following colleges and universities in our surrounding area: Northland Community and Technical College, Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks, MN, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN, University of Minnesota Crookston, Crookston, MN, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, MN, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN, Northwest Technical College, Bemidji, MN, Leech Lake Tribal College, Cass Lake, MN, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Cloquet, MN, and Red Lake Nation College, Red Lake, MN. Each of these institutions has been chosen because they are regional colleges

where our graduates most frequently matriculate and/or they have specific degrees areas that we want to emphasize in our articulation agreements.

Northland Community and Technical College partnered with WETCC in 2006 and 2007 to establish a program that would graduate certified nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses using Northland's established program and hosting most of the classes at WETCC. The program lasted the two years that its funding lasted and graduated 40 students. We are exploring partnerships in a range of health related fields. WETCC hosted the leadership of Northland on our campus on 6/19/14 which included President Tempte, their leadership from both of their campuses, their Vice-President of Academic Affairs, and heads of nursing and enrollment management. In addition to on-going discussions on articulation, Northland has been particularly helpful providing advice and support on the accreditation process.

Minnesota State University Moorhead is the university where most of our graduates pursue their four-year degree. President Janis travelled to Moorhead to meet with MSUM President Blackhurst, Provost Malot and their deans of Education and Human Services, Liberal Arts and Social Work. Our discussions are leading to articulation agreements and possible joint degree programs in education and human services. WETCC is also advising on their possible development of a Native American studies major and collaborations between their sustainability degree and our environmental sciences programs. Further solidifying the relationship, President Janis delivered the keynote address at President Blackhurst's inauguration on 9/26/14.

The University of Minnesota Crookston is the closest university to WETCC and our discussions have been particularly dynamic with UMC leadership visiting WETCC on 9/9/14 and a return visit scheduled for with WETCC leadership at UMC on 11/25/14. Our discussions have focused on a broad liberal arts articulation that would cover the majority of our course offerings and arranging a satellite agreement where students can complete the UMC on-line degree program at WETCC.

At the University of Minnesota Duluth we are discussing an articulation between our Native American Studies emphasis and their new Native American Studies major. UMD is a natural fit with their undergraduate degrees and a master's degree in Tribal Governance. Although our discussions are very new, we believe this has the potential of being a very dynamic and successful relationship.

Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College are part of a broad partnership with WETCC, Leech Lake Tribal College, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, and Red Lake Nation College to establish distance learning and joint degree programs in the health and hospitality industries. This partnership was organized in support of a ten million dollar proposal to the Department of Labor. Unfortunately we were not successful. We are, however, continuing our conversations to pursue other funding options and to move forward on aspects of this partnership. In particular, we have

retained grants to establish distance learning infrastructure at WETCC, Red Lake and Leech Lake. This funding will put us on a par with Fond du Lac and Bemidji State in terms of distance learning capacity.

The four tribal colleges in Minnesota, White Earth Tribal and Community College, Leech Lake Tribal College, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, and Red Lake Nation College have solidified their partnership by reviving the Minnesota Indian Education Alliance. The four tribal college presidents meet on a quarterly basis to advance the details of our joint efforts in distance learning and to support one another. We have recently begun, on 11/18/14, formal discussions between our Academic Deans to “hammer out” the details of a comprehensive articulation agreement between the four institutions.

## Advancement Section

|    | <b>GENERAL<br/>ADVANCEMENT<br/>CHECKLIST</b>   | <b>RESPONSIBLE DEPT.</b>            | <b>EXPLANATION<br/>STATUS</b>  | <b>DATE TO BE<br/>COMPLETED/OR<br/>COMPLETED</b> |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1  | Acquisition and use of a plagiarism evaluation system.   | ACADEMICS                           | Grammarly.com  | October, 2014                                    |
| 2  | Provide faculty an integrated grading rubric for curricular assignments.   | ACADEMICS                           | Several grading rubrics are currently utilized by faculty based on discipline.                       | ON-GOING   |
| 3  | Background checks on all staff.  | HUMAN RESOURCES                     | Completed  | October, 2014                                    |
| 4  | Job descriptions per each position within Academics and the College.   | HUMAN RESOURCES                     | Completed  | October, 2014                                    |
| 5  | A systematic course delivery sequence.   | ACADEMICS                           | A 4-semester rotation for course work was developed. As programming increases this will be reviewed. | ON-GOING   |
| 6  | A revised or full review of the Faculty Salary Schedule.   | HUMAN RESOURCES                     | Presently being reviewed   | DATE TBD   |
| 7  | Review and revision of Policies and Procedures applicable to Academic Affairs.                                   | ACADEMICS                           | Presently being reviewed/some policies added to WETCC Policy Collection                              | ON-GOING   |
| 8  | Faculty credentials are regularly checked for appropriateness and maintained on a semester by semester schedule. | HUMAN<br>RESOURCES/ACADEMIC<br>DEAN | VERIFIICATION<br>CHECKLIST in Human<br>Resources Office  | July, 2014                                       |
| 9  | An annual Employee Satisfaction Survey.  | HUMAN RESOURCES                     | On Calendar of<br>Financial/Operational<br>Events/annually   | October, 2014                                    |
| 10 | An annual Student Satisfaction Survey.   | ACADEMICS/STU SVCS                  | April/annually   | April, 2014                                      |

|    |   |                          |  |  |
|----|---|--------------------------|--|--|
| 11 | Consider requiring an AA degree minimum for all employees College-wide.   | HUMAN RESOURCES          | Position Description revised...as appropriate for the position | October, 2014                            |
| 12 | Develop an Emergency Response Plan.   | AD HOC COMMITTEE         | Completed  | November, 2014                           |
| 13 | Direct Deposit.   | BUSINESS OFFICE          | Direct Deposit was instituted                                  | June, 2014                               |
| 14 | Suggest that an institutional rep. be designated to become a Consultant Evaluator – Peer Reviewer within the HLC. | To be addressed          | This item is presently being considered                        | Spring, 2015                             |
| 15 | IT Director to participate in the Leadership Panel decision making process for WETCC.                             | LEADERSHIP               | As suggested, the IT Director participates                     | July, 2014                               |
|    | <b>GENERAL ADVANCEMENT CHECKLIST:</b>   | <b>RESPONSIBLE DEPT.</b> | <b>EXPLANATION STATUS</b>                                      | <b>DATE TO BE COMPLETED/OR COMPLETED</b> |

## CRITERION ONE. Mission

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**White Earth Tribal and Community College mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.**

The Anishinaabe Teachings are the foundation of White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC). The mission grew out of the hearts of the cultural realities that thrive in spite of the historical features that continue to haunt our communities. The mission clearly states who we are and what we do as we are guided by our cultural traditions. The mission reflects our passion for carrying on what we have been given.

**Core Component 1A. White Earth Tribal and Community College mission is broadly understood within the College 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.

The WETCC Council of Trustees (hereinafter referred to as the Council) adopted the following revised mission statement on March 2, 1999 and amended the mission statement on December 11, 2001 to include the words "Anishinaabe controlled liberal arts" to make it clear that the WETCC is chartered by the Anishinaabe Tribe with a foundation in liberal arts.

### **WETCC Mission Statement**

#### **Gaawaabaabiganikaag Gabegikendaasowigamig**

The mission of the White Earth Tribal and Community College, an Anishinaabe controlled liberal arts institution of higher education, is dedicated to educational excellence through provision of a culturally relevant curriculum in partnership with students, staff, community, and industry.

Refinement of the mission statement has occurred throughout the life of WETCC. In February 2006, the Council of Trustees, faculty, staff, and student representatives met and reviewed the mission, vision, teachings, and purposes of the College. Changes were made in all areas except the mission statement, which has remained intact since December 11, 2001.

A review of the mission statement was conducted at the White Earth Tribal and Community College's Board of Trustees regular meeting on September 11, 2012, at which time the Council of Trustees reaffirmed the statement in its whole and entirety.

Staff and faculty were given the opportunity to review the mission statement in May 2014. Proposed mission statements were presented to the COT and to the faculty and staff. From those conversations and meetings, it was determined that the current mission statement reflected who we are as an institution. Subsequently, the WETCC Council of Trustees reaffirmed the College mission/vision/purpose/value statements at its June 10, 2014 regular meeting. All trustees were in agreement that these statements fit our

institution well, reflecting the balance of liberal arts, emphasis, and response to our community. ([Mission, Vision, Teachings, and Purposes](#))

2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

The strength of a mission statement is reflected in how it is lived, where that mission is manifested in the lived experiences of those it serves. WETCC's mission is woven into all academic programs driven by purpose statements that support the mission, vision, and values of the College. The following purpose statements were established in collaboration with community, students, faculty, and staff:

1. The College will present learning as a life-long process of discovery of knowledge embedded in the intellectual disciplines and the traditions of the Anishinaabe people.
2. The College will support self-determination of the Anishinaabe through the promotion and preservation of their history, culture, and language.
3. The College will seek to address the social, political, and economic needs of the greater White Earth Indian Reservation through programs that encourage service to the community.
4. The College will promote a philosophy based on the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabeg.

The mission affirms the vision and the goal that WETCC is an institution of higher education grounded in the Anishinaabe culture, values, and heritage, which are woven into all educational programs. The purposes convey the commitment to bring program options to a diverse student body that reflect the commitment to the communities in which they reside.

While all the College's Anishinaabeg values demonstrate a commitment to high academic standards, two are particularly relevant to WETCC's commitment to excellence to higher education. *Gwayakwaadiziwin* requires an individual to hold oneself and others to high standards of integrity and to seek truth. *Nibwaakaawin* is an abundance of wisdom. It requires an individual to go beyond amassing knowledge by reflecting upon that knowledge and applying it to life so as to be a better person and community member.

The mission documents state goals for the learning to be achieved by its students. Together with faculty, staff, and community members, WETCC developed overall learning outcomes for its students. These outcomes reflect the essential skills needed to be life-long learners capable of living and working in a diverse society:

1. Okwiinogamigwewin nitam (The Community First)
  - a. Exercise critical/creative thinking
  - b. Demonstrate civic/social responsibility
2. Mikigaadeg enendaagozing (Finding Purpose)
  - a. Identify and develop gifts/talents
  - b. Identify and develop interests/goals

3. Ogimaawin (Leadership)
  - a. Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully
  - b. Take responsibility
4. Naanaagadawenim miinawaa zhawenim ongow omaa akiing (Holistic in a Way that Honors all Things)
  - a. Committed to the development of the whole person
  - b. Honor interrelatedness of all things
5. Mino Bimaadiziwin (The Good Life)
  - a. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history
  - b. Take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe Way

In addition to the WETCC developed Learning Outcomes, WETCC uses the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) as a guide for its General Education offerings. A strong General Education/Minnesota Transfer Curriculum component adds to the documentation of goals for student learning. General Education is highly valued at WETCC because it challenges students to develop and nurture certain habits of mind.

By requiring a strong core of common learning, WETCC demonstrates its commitment to providing a broad-based education to all degree recipients, which includes essential skills, knowledge, and experiences to support a variety of lifelong endeavors. To this end, WETCC maintains a substantial program of General Education/Minnesota Transfer Curriculum to be included in all degree programs.

### **General Education/Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Competencies**

In 1995, the public higher education colleges and universities in Minnesota began a common liberal education curriculum called the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC). The MnTC requires at least 40 semester credits to be completed, and consists of lower division General Education requirements. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum is transferable to any state college and university in Minnesota. Requirements of the MnTC are arranged around ten specific goal areas. Courses listed in each goal area address the intent of a particular goal area. Semester credit values are listed in the parentheses after each course.

WETCC furthers the goals of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum by requiring each area to include and address the topic from an Anishinaabe perspective while meeting all the standards of the MnTC (a complete list of WETCC courses that fulfill Minnesota Transfer Curriculum can be found on pgs. 8-11 of the *Student Academic Handbook*).

The General Education/Minnesota Transfer Curriculum credits offered at WETCC are:

1. Consistent with the mission of the College in that the curriculum lies at the core of a quality education and is culturally relevant to the particular needs of the White Earth

community. It instills in the students the concept that learning is a life-long endeavor, and it prepares them to be contributing members of their community.

2. Designed to ensure breadth of knowledge by including several academic goal areas dealing with all aspects of human life, as outlined above, and
3. Designed to promote intellectual inquiry in that each of the goal areas includes courses touching on some aspect of human life and meaning. The minimum requirement of 60 semester credits for an Associate of Arts degree means that students will have ample opportunity for inquiry into the relatedness of the goal areas and the disciplines significant to them. This mode of inquiry prepares students to seek answers to questions posed by life experiences. WETCC faculty strives to incorporate this mode of inquiry into their course syllabi, and to include activities that reinforce and enrich the learning experience.

The College's Student Services programs are built upon and reflect the various aspects of the mission, vision and teachings. Student Services takes pride in supporting students as they move through an Anishinaabe controlled liberal arts institution of higher education. Student Services uses the faculty developed learner outcomes as a guide for planning to demonstrate the relevancy of cultural grounding and the importance of a solid foundation. Consistency is also demonstrated by role-modeling the mission, vision and teachings in interactions, openly posting all of them throughout student services and in most documents, and referring to the strengths we gain as a community when we adhere to them.

The college's enrollment profile is consistent with the mission and data patterns indicate where goals can be developed. The data gathered from 2008 to 2014 demonstrate that the College's enrollment has fluctuated from 106 to 57 students. The majority of our students enroll full time (60%), are first-time freshman (76%), typically come from towns within a 50 mile radius, have a high school diploma (63%), are female (64%), are older than average, and are Native American (77%). The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan addresses the college's enrollment profile and the goals associated with improvement in some areas.

Consistent with WETCC's Mission Statement, Community Engagement is supported *"through provision of a culturally relevant curriculum, in partnership with students, staff, community, and industry"*. Extension Service activities are based on feedback obtained from the community and are open to all. Anishinaabeg culture and tradition is woven into teaching and learning for both Native and non-Native students, while also celebrating the cultural diversity of the community. Partnerships are sought to foster a common vision and strengthen outreach and public education efforts in order to be 'agents of positive change' in our communities. Community knowledge and expertise are valued resources and are incorporated into learning experiences as guest speakers, workshop instructors, and through local field trips.

3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. This subcomponent is addressed at Criterion 5.C.1.

**Core Component 1B. The mission is articulated publicly.**

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents such as statement 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 and cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services that institution provides.

**WETCC Mission Statement**

**Gaawaabaabiganikaag Gabegikendaasowigamig**

The mission of the White Earth Tribal and Community College, an Anishinaabe controlled liberal arts institution of higher education, is dedicated to educational excellence through provision of a culturally relevant curriculum in partnership with students, staff, community, and industry.

As reported in the WETCC 2012 Self-Study Report, the mission statement defines the basic character of the institution. The language that describes the institution's primary educational program(s) and purposes includes:

1. The terms "Tribal and Community College" and "liberal arts institution" which describe WETCC's primary educational identity and primary focus. The goals and intentions statement approved by the Council of Trustees as part of the mission documents outlines more specifically the primary programs and foci: General Education and University Transfer, Associate of Arts, and Associate of Applied Science.
2. The phrase in the mission statement which indicates that the students whom the programs are intended to serve include the words "Tribal and Community College"; those "students" who wish to attain a "liberal arts" education in "partnership with staff, community, and industry".
3. The geographic area served by the institution and/or the particular constituency it serves.
4. The words "White Earth Tribal and Community College" in the mission statement living on or near the White Earth Indian Reservation. On March 9, 2004 the Council of Trustees approved a more specific definition of the geographic area the college serves:
  - SERVICE AREA ONE: White Earth Tribal members, White Earth Tribal descendants, and non-Indians living on or near the White Earth Indian Reservation, primarily in Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnommen counties.

- SERVICE AREA TWO: White Earth Tribal members and Tribal descendants in other parts of Minnesota, Tribal employees, other Native and non-Natives in the state of Minnesota.
- SERVICE AREA THREE: American Indians, Canadian Indians, and non-Natives in the United States and Canada.

The institutions' place within the broader higher education community," . . . A Tribally-controlled community college." Further clarification supporting the mission statement is found within the vision statement, the purpose statement, and through its values statements. The vision of WETCC is expressed as follows:

### **Vision Statement**

**Gaawaabaabiganikaag Gabegikendaasowigamig Waasa Inaabidaa**

Gibimiwidoomin gidinwewininaan nigaanekeya

"We are carrying along into the future the way that we were given."

The WETCC core Anishinaabe values describe for our students and community the ways in which we as an educational institution have chosen to serve our internal and external constituents. These ways are based on the Anishinaabe Seven Teachings, comprised of the following:

#### **Debwewin**

The literal translation of this word is the sound of your heart. Each of us holds the truth in his/her heart and when we live the value of debwewin, we express that truth in everything we do.

- To speak the most honestly one can, according to his/her perceptions
- To be loyal in all our relationships, avoiding hypocrisy

#### **Zoongide'win**

The literal translation of the word is strong heart. When we have a strong heart, we are able to face challenges with courage and integrity. A person living the value of zoongide'win acknowledges his/her own weaknesses and faces them with a strong heart.

- To face difficult situations with bravery
- To acknowledge one's personal weaknesses and develop the strength to combat them
- To demonstrate the ability to take initiative and to speak forthrightly

#### **Gwayakwaadiziwin**

The literal translation of this word is to be correct or straight in everything that we do. If an individual lives the value of gwayakwaadiziwin, he/she must do what is right for the group and hold himself/herself and others to high standards of integrity.

- To maintain truthfulness, sincerity, and fairness in all one's actions
- To possess the ability to manage confidential information

- To communicate with others and transmit information fairly and truthfully

### **Manaaji'idiwin**

When we live the value of manaaji'idiwin we give respect to each other. In the Anishinaabe worldview, everything has a spirit and therefore deserves respect. This concept is included in this word.

- To accept cultural, religious and gender differences
- To maintain high standards of conduct at all times
- To safeguard the dignity, individuality, and rights of others

### **Zaagi'idiwin**

If we act out of love for each other and ourselves in everything we do, we are living the value of zaagi'idiwin.

- To work cooperatively and harmoniously with others
- To show kindness and compassion
- To demonstrate acceptance and the empowerment of others
- To offer hope, encouragement and inspiration

### **Nibwaakaawin**

The literal translation of this word is an abundance of wisdom. When we live the value of nibwaakaawin, we seek to learn all that we can in a respectful manner and take the time to reflect upon our teachings.

- To take time to reflect on all our experiences
- To acknowledge the opportunity to learn from others
- To persist in acquiring knowledge and improving skills
- To strive for the accomplishment of goals and dreams
- To practice ethical behavior at all times
- To seek guidance from elders and qualified advisors

### **Dabasendizowin**

When we live the values of debwewin, zoongide'win, manaaji'idiwin, gwayakwaadiziwin, zaagi'idiwin, and nibwaakaawin, we can hold ourselves in low regard as this word indicates, without having low self-esteem. We understand that we are humble beings and conduct ourselves accordingly.

- To be modest in one's actions
- To demonstrate sensitivity to others
- To be respectful of the thought and ideas of others
- To recognize one's strengths and weaknesses and acknowledge the capacity for self-growth and change
- To recognize oneself as a sacred and equal part of Creation

The bulleted characteristics of the Anishinaabe Teachings clarify the uniqueness of what is meant in the Anishinaabe language. Serving our constituents based on these values

creates an educational environment and learning atmosphere that is conducive to learning, exploring, debating, thinking, observing, pondering, and reflecting.

The purpose of higher learning at WETCC is described in its purpose statements. The purpose statements support the mission statement, vision statement, and values of the College. The following purpose statements were established in collaboration with the community, students, staff, and faculty:

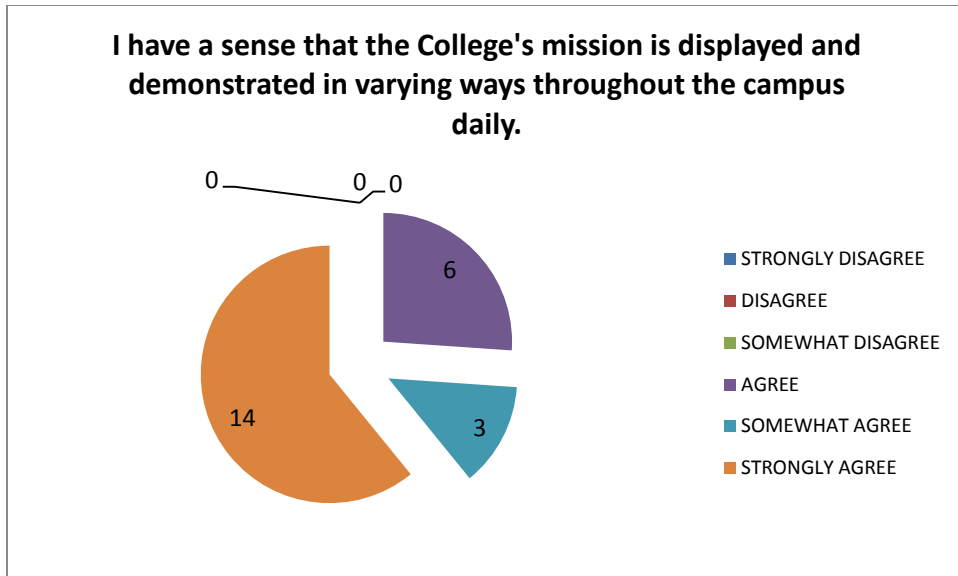
#### **White Earth Tribal and Community College Purpose Statements**

1. The College will present learning as a life-long process of discovery of knowledge embedded in the intellectual disciplines and the traditions of the Anishinaabe people.
2. The College will support self-determination of the Anishinaabe through the promotion and preservation of their history, culture, and language.
3. The College will seek to address the social, political, and economic needs of the greater White Earth Indian Reservation through programs that encourage service to the community.
4. The College will promote a philosophy based on the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabeg.

The vision is affirmed by the mission to serve as a higher education institution that bases educational programs on Anishinaabe culture, values, and heritage. The purposes convey the commitment to bring a variety of program options to a diverse student body.

While all the College's Anishinaabeg Teachings demonstrate a commitment to high academic standards, two are particularly relevant to WETCC's commitment to excellence to higher learning. Gwayakwaadiziwin requires an individual to hold oneself and others to high standards of integrity and to seek truth. Nibwaakaawin is an abundance of wisdom. It requires learners to go beyond amassing knowledge by acquiring skills that encourage them to reflect on that knowledge, apply it to their lives, and encourages them to become a person with a broader perspective and a strong connection to community.

The 2014 WETCC Employee Satisfaction Survey, sent to 39 employees, 23 responded for a 59% response rate, revealed the importance of WETCC's mission to their positions and work for the College. Constancy of purpose as defined by the College's mission was strongly agreed upon; that employees, "have a sense that the College's mission is displayed and demonstrated in varying ways throughout the campus daily". Employees believe that the College as a whole is committed to helping students, as is evident with regard to Constancy of Purpose and our mission.



*Figure 3: Responses from the 2014 Employee Satisfaction Survey on Constancy of Purpose as it relates to the College's mission.*

Our mission is articulated consistently in our Academic Catalog, Student and Employee Handbooks, our website, the syllabus template, and can be found on the wall of the entrance to our Drum Hall, as well as posted in each building. The mission statement is framed and posted in the Extension Office. Presently the Extension staff is working on the incorporation of WETCC's mission statement into public program websites, media, and literature.

We also inform the public of our mission and goals through outreach and marketing. It is on all of our mailings. The mission is on all of our materials and is frequently discussed with the public during outreach events such as high school visits, tabling and conference attendance. We also make it a point of discussion during on-campus activities via tours with particular attention paid to the Seven Teachings.

Throughout student services documents and student services offices, the mission statement is posted. It is stated on most orientation materials, discussed during orientation and is on our official registration document. It is the rare document that does not have our mission on it.

**Core Component 1C. 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.

Respect for the diversity of our world is inherent in the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabeg. These values are publicly stated in WETCC mission documents and are embedded in all that we do at WETCC.

**WETCC Statement on the Value of Diversity**

When we live the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabeg, we understand and embrace the diversity of Turtle Island. We understand that we live within the circle of life—the land, the rocks, the trees, the plant beings, the animals, the birds, the insects, and all the peoples of the world—and all of us are equally important. Manaaji’idig. WETCC encourages and embraces the diversity of all that is.

WETCC has an open admissions policy, [Policy 5.607 - WETCC Admissions Policy](#), which states, “WETCC admits students in a manner that ensures the best opportunity for educational success. This includes training and education for students from a wide range of ability levels and interests”. As stated in the WETCC Charter, Governance of the Institution, Article V. Purposes and Powers:

The College is organized exclusively for educational purposes. Such purposes include establishing, maintaining, and operating an institution of higher education on the White Earth Reservation. The College will provide curricula and programs leading to degrees, diplomas, and certificates. The College will promote scholarly research, preserving Anishinaabe language, history, and culture, and other educational activities to serve the people of the White Earth Reservation and surrounding communities.

The majority of our students are Native American and most of them are White Earth enrolled members or descendants of the White Earth Nation. There appears to be a misunderstanding about “the College” in the surrounding communities implying that it is only available to Native students. The Enrollment and Marketing Committee has developed a plan involving a consistent message in marketing and branding materials that educates community members about the College’s Open Door Admissions Policy. Community members are being informed that White Earth Tribal and Community College is available to Natives and non-Natives. Although most of our students are Native, the figure below indicates some diversity.

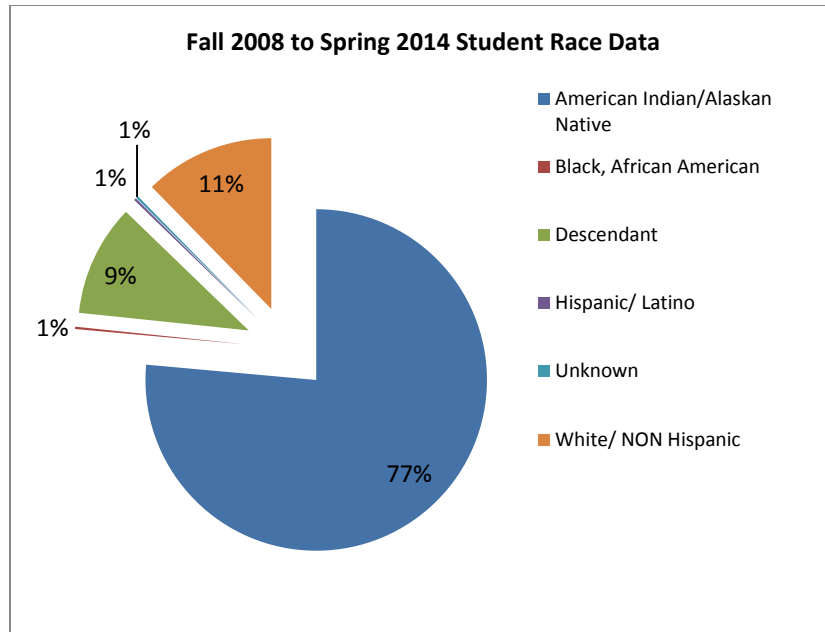


Figure 4: Race of Students Fall 2008-2014. Generated by the Registrar's Office for the purpose of this plan.

Diversity includes age and WETCC has a large proportion of “older than average” students.

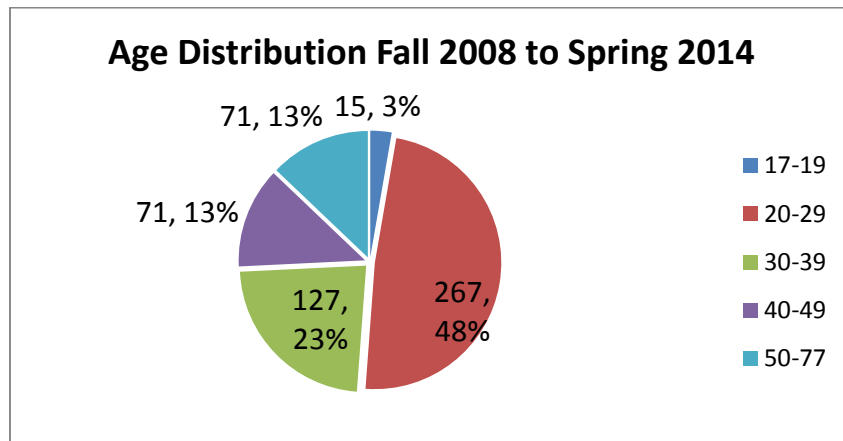


Figure 5: Age Distribution, Fall 2008 to Spring 2014. Generated by the Registrar's Office for the Purpose of this Report.

The ratio of female to male students between Fall, 2008 and Spring, 2014 is approximately 64% to 36%. More women than men matriculate to the college, are retained, and complete their educations.

White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) also provides reasonable accommodations for enrolled or admitted students who have documented disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Student Services provides students with information about the types of accommodations provided free of charge and those that will not be provided. Students

must provide documentation of their disability to help the college determine the type(s) of accommodations possible.

The following is included in the WETCC syllabus template distributed to all faculty:

“I invite any of you who have or may have a disability, either permanent or temporary, or any other special circumstances which might affect your ability to perform in this class to inform me. Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact the Student Services Counselor, at (218)-935-0417 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Information regarding disability services is available with the Student Services Counselor, the Student Liaison, and at the Student Services building.”

WETCC Extension Services offers both Native and non-Native traditional skills-learning opportunities, with accommodations made, where possible, for those who have disabilities or other health challenges. Community and regional partners are actively sought to share resources and complement programming.

WETCC Extension programming is offered based on area needs voiced by the community, with grants then sought to fund activities to meet the identified areas of interest. To maximize resources, meetings are held with community members and regional partners to collaboratively plan program activities. By listening to stakeholders and drawing upon the strengths and resources of the community, Extension’s programming is inter-woven into the culture and traditions of the area.

WETCC’s personnel are also diverse as is demonstrated by the following table.

| Ethnic Acad. Year | Administrators |            | Staff  |            | Faculty Full-Time |            | Faculty Adjunct |            | Total  |            |
|-------------------|----------------|------------|--------|------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|--------|------------|
|                   | Indian         | Non-Indian | Indian | Non-Indian | Indian            | Non-Indian | Indian          | Non-Indian | Indian | Non-Indian |
| 2012-2013         | 9              | 2          | 6      | 5          | 5                 | 5          | 6               | 3          | 26     | 15         |
| 2013-2014         | 10             | 3          | 7      | 4          | 3                 | 4          | 4               | 4          | 24     | 15         |

Table 1: Ethnic Background of Personnel 2012-2014

**Core Component 1D. 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.

The very existence of White Earth Tribal and Community College serves the public good and is an active component of all of our programs and activities.

Our academic programs lead in this response with an open admissions policy that provides educational opportunities for all students with a priority on residents of the White Earth Reservation which is made up of a majority non-Native population. Please see Criteria 1.C.2. for a complete description of our open enrollment policy.

WETCC Extension is extremely active in the community with public service at the core of their programming. The WETCC Extension Office is the bridge between college and community. Its goal is to promote self-reliance built upon "*our traditions*". A variety of workshops are open to the public. Examples include "Become a Wild Food Gourmet", "Food Preservation", "Preserving and Drying Food", "Salve Making", "Cook-off and Seed Saving and Dehydration Day", "Deer Canning" and many more. In addition, WETCC and the WETCC Extension Office actively support the White Earth Community Farmer's Market, in collaboration with the White Earth Health Education Program, MC4QL Project, and the City of Mahanomen. This is held the second Thursday of the month at the WETCC Drum Hall.

The Aazhoogaan Consortium also reflects WETCC's commitment to the public good. It is collaboration between WETCC, all tribal colleges in Northern Minnesota, Bemidji State University, and Northwest Technical College designed to partner with health and hospitality industry in each of our communities and offer a range of degree and certification programs. Our initial funding effort was to pursue a TAACCT grant from the Department of Labor. Although we were not successful in that grant application, our partnership is very much alive and we continue to pursue funding opportunities. One tangible outcome is a strong relationship with the White Earth Nation Human Services programs with which we are developing training and degree programs that will begin in the spring, 2015.

Our facility at WETCC is another example of how we serve the public. Our facility is regularly used by the public as a meeting and gathering place ([WETCC Campus Facility Usage Record](#)). Workshops, trainings, meetings, seminars, and educational events of various local and regional organizations, programs, and services have used the space because of its location, amenities, technology and available space.

WETCC Student Services also plays an active role in our service to the public. Student Services is actively pursuing Post-Secondary Education Options (PSEO) opportunities with K-12 institutions across the Reservation and have initiated our first program with the Anishinaabe Academy located in White Earth, MN. This program represents a dynamic opportunity for upper level students at WETCC to work with faculty to educate juniors and seniors in the PSEO program. Also important to the community engagement of WETCC Student Services, is active information sharing and outreach to all schools across the Reservation on educational opportunities. These outreach programs are designed to work with school counselors to inform and encourage students to define and pursue their educational goals after high school.

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 support external interests.

WETCC is chartered by the White Earth Tribe and has no obligations to investors or other 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.

As stated previously, the words "White Earth Tribal and Community College" in the mission statement living on or near the White Earth Indian Reservation was defined further on March 9, 2004, when the Council of Trustees approved a more specific definition of the geographic area the college serves:

- SERVICE AREA ONE: White Earth Tribal members, White Earth Tribal descendants, and non-Indians living on or near the White Earth Indian Reservation, primarily in Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnommen counties.
- SERVICE AREA TWO: White Earth Tribal members and Tribal descendants in other parts of Minnesota, Tribal employees, other Native and non-Natives in the state of Minnesota.
- SERVICE AREA THREE: American Indians, Canadian Indians, and non-Natives in the United States and Canada.

When engaging in outreach practices, we discuss the positive impact of education on people's lives and the community. Outreach is meant to educate the community about education attainment, financial aid, and other opportunities at all colleges in the region. Although we inform community members about the unique strengths and affordability of the WETCC, we encourage people to attend any college that fits their needs in the best ways possible. WETCC also offers testing services and tutoring to community members who are attending other colleges and universities.

Although strides have been made in developing additional planning/communication tools, such as the addition of a Student Enrollment Management Plan, 'Building Usage Request Form', and the creation of a 'Facilities Committee', WETCC is in the process of developing a formalized, written plan for evaluation of services. One of our strengths is opening the campus to other entities, such as the White Earth Police Department for training and the White Earth Investment Initiative, which offers tax preparation services for the community.

One of our weaknesses is that deliberate planning to address community outreach has only recently been developed. Consistent with the priority in the Assurance Section on page 23 of our 2012 HLC Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit report, we believe that the development of a plan will assist us in improving the services we provide and informing areas of need, thus "ensuring continuity of services." Our comprehensive assessment, evaluation, and planning strategy at Criterion 5.C describes how we are meeting this goal.

## Summary

### Strengths:

- Mission, Anishinaabe Teachings, Vision Statement, Purposes all strengths of WETCC
- Learner Outcomes and all subsequent assessment and evaluation processes are based on the mission, teachings, vision and purpose
- Public service, diversity and public good met in multiple ways by all departments of the College

### Challenges:

- Improving public awareness
- Getting more consistent feedback from all constituencies
- Verbiage of mission statement needs to be refined to serve marketing and communications objectives

## CRITERION TWO. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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### **Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct. White Earth Tribal and Community College acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.**

WETCC has established policies that are formally presented in published and publically available documents in all areas that impact students, faculty, and staff. This documentation is available on the WETCC website, in hard copy through the Academic Dean and Student Services Offices, and in training and orientation opportunities offered for all students, faculty and staff.

WETCC's governing board is the Council of Trustees (COT). The COT makes all appropriate policy and strategic level decisions for WETCC, operates independently from external influence and is in full compliance with its Charter and By-laws. Key aspects of relevant internal and external constituencies and operations are understood by the COT through regular reports from the President and all Department Directors and via the COT membership structure that requires key constancies be represented by COT membership positions. The day-to-day operation and management of WETCC is left up to the President, faculty, administration, and staff.

### **Core Component 2A. WETCC operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.**

WETCC is in the process of transitioning from the Personnel Policy Manual, Faculty Handbook, and Fiscal Policy Manual system to a formal collection of WETCC Policies. The transition began in the summer 2014 with the intention to complete the formal collection of institutional policies by spring 2015.

WETCC's institutional policy and procedure manuals were just that, a combination of both policies and procedures. Not seeming to be the best way to promote operational efficiency, the administration initiated this process in order to continue to advance WETCC's mission, become more efficient in its operations, and maintain compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

The Finance Director prepares monthly financial statements on a Cash Basis presentation. WETCC has acquired the necessary software and training to move to an Accrual Accounting system and will move to that system in 2015. The financial statements include monthly and YTD expenses compared to a monthly and annual budget format. The financial statements, cash report, and budget narrative is presented at the monthly COT meetings. The Finance Director attends monthly COT meetings and presents the Financial Statements. Large or unusual expenditures are discussed as is best business practice in order to settle in a financially prudent manner.

WETCC undergoes an annual audit performed by a public accounting firm. The audit encompasses a financial statement audit and A-133 Single Audit. The financial statement audit tests compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The A-133 Single Audit tests compliance with Government Auditing Standards found in OMB Circular A-133. When completed, the annual audit is presented to the Council of Trustees by the public accounting firm and the Finance Director. The Finance Director is responsible for implementing corrective actions on all findings found during the audit.

A salary/wage analysis was completed during the summer of 2014. The analysis compared comparable positions for the region WETCC is located in on DEED website (<https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/oes/OccSelect.aspx>). From the data, a proposed Employee Pay Scale with different scenarios was developed. During the same time a Faculty Pay Scale was also developed based on a percentage of MnSCU's Salary Schedule. The pay scales were used during the budgeting process. The final pay scales used to prepare the 2015 budget took into account regional competitiveness and WETCC financial resources.

An Employee Performance Evaluation has been completed for all staff. The evaluation contained sections for Supervisor's Comments; Employee Comments; and an attachment for Goals & Objectives. The evaluation performed is the first step in developing a standard evaluation process with set dates. The process will encompass the previous year's comments and goals and objectives.

WETCC's Conflict of Interest Policy and Whistleblower Policy were approved at the November 2014 Council of Trustee regular meeting. A Complaint and Grievance process has been established and maintained for both students and staff/faculty. The student process includes a Complaint and Grievance form to file a complaint or grievance that is available both online and hard copy in public and visible places. We have established a Complaint and Grievance Committee to hear all complaints with clear process for investigating and hearing the complaints as well as appealing the decision. The Dean of Student Services researched written student complaints and grievances for the past three years. Logs were created and student complaints and grievances were entered for each year.

Students learn about the complaint and grievance process during orientation from the Student Liaison. A flowchart of the process has been developed and is on display through the main campus building, in student services, and in the Human Resources office. The process, in its entirety is also available in the Academic Catalog which is available online and is reviewed thoroughly in the student orientation process.

The Complaint and Grievance process for staff and faculty includes a separate Complaint and Grievance form available online and in public and visible places. The staff and faculty process incorporates both an informal conflict resolution process and a formal process if the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complaining party. The informal process

incorporates an initial investigation by the HR officer and a facilitated form of conflict resolution between the parties and the HR officer or her designee. The formal process involves a Complaint and Grievance Committee with specifically identified timelines for information sharing in writing, a hearing in which both parties are given structured time to present their case, and a specific timeline for a decision by the Committee. An appeals process is also identified with formal appeal going to the President of WETCC and a final appeal going to the COT.

The staff and faculty Complaint and Grievance process and all relevant forms are available online and in hard copy. The process is also reviewed with each staff and faculty upon initial hire through the orientation process. All amendments and updates to the process are shared with all staff and faculty by email and in their annual performance review.

Within the Student Service offices there is a variety of examples of integrity and ethical conduct. The Admissions Office ensures knowledge of FERPA when students complete documents for admittance to the college. The Registrar's Office presents FERPA information to students during orientation and acts within those guidelines on a daily basis. The Financial Aid Coordinator and Financial Aid Specialist consistently inform colleagues, students and faculty about ethical behavior and financial aid responsibility.

**Core Component 2B. 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.**

WETCC presents itself clearly and completely to the public. WETCC is a non-profit, Anishinaabe tribally controlled college chartered by the White Earth Tribe. Statements and information made in documents such as the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog, semester schedules, the WETCC website, and other publications present the college clearly and truthfully. Any changes or revisions to publications are fully disclosed via student email accounts and posted at [www.wetcc.edu](http://www.wetcc.edu). Faculty is listed and their credentials are presented correctly in the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog. WETCC complies with the new government regulations for the net cost of attendance. Student costs are itemized on pages 33-34 in the college catalog and the net price calculator is available on WETCC's website under the link, "Paying for College." WETCC relationship with the Higher Learning Commission is presented correctly and stated on the WETCC website under the link, "About Us."

WETCC has been actively addressing its compliance with the Higher Education Act (HEA) "Consumerism" as identified in the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative publication, "Information Required to be Disclosed Under the Higher Education Act of 1965." A compliance worksheet/checklist has been developed which identifies the responsible department and/or position for each of the consumerism items. Each consumerism item is further identified by mode of delivery and by the HEA reference number (HEA Disclosure Information Guide).

Every WETCC academic program is required to establish expectations for student learning. Articulated expectations of student learning are required from all faculty. The WETCC Syllabus Template demonstrates the methodology for creating measurable course learner outcomes and objectives. The WETCC Institutional Learner Outcomes, based on Higher Education norms and Anishinaabe teachings, provide a framework for programming, curriculum, and course assignments.

WETCC has a syllabus template that all instructors are expected to use. This template includes the above five Overall Learner Outcomes along with a section for the instructor to articulate course level outcomes. This section also includes guidelines and best practices to assist adjuncts, in particular, in developing these outcomes.

**Core Component 2C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.**

The Council of Trustees (COT) and the leadership of WETCC are aware that this has been a legitimate area of concern to the Higher Learning Commission. We believe that the actions WETCC has taken to affirm our organic documents, educate and inform key institutions, and improve practices have resolved these issues. The COT is the official body responsible for determining the primary policies and procedures that govern the operation of WETCC. This is required for effective governance, administration, implementation and evaluation of programs, resources, faculty, staff, budget, services and other operations of White Earth Tribal and Community College. We show below that the WETCC Council of Trustees has sufficient autonomy and makes decisions in the best interest of WETCC and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. The COT is completely committed to strengthening and growing the College. Their meeting minutes show attention to the mission of the College, its strategic direction and focus on detail at the policy level. Another example of this priority can be seen in how the Trustees led the college through WETCC Presidential transitions in 2013 and 2014. Although it was a difficult time for our college community, the Council of Trustees asserted clear leadership and decision-making authority, and provided leadership to the College stabilizing the College community. Please reference January 14, 2014, letter from Interim President Steve Dahlberg and January 15, 2014, and the letter from Council of Trustees Chairperson, Joan LaVoy to HLC President Sylvia Manning.

Equally important are the practical and sustained practices that are imbedded in WETCC By-laws and policies. WETCC Bylaws establish that the Council of Trustees be made up of an important mixture of community members, tribal members, elders, educators, and students. The WETCC Council of Trustees is in full compliance with the Bylaws. The By-laws also set the standard for frequency of meetings (minimum quarterly) and establishment of a quorum (majority of seven voting members). Because of the urgency for establishing clear leadership and supporting the accreditation needs of the college,

the WETCC's COT has established a monthly meeting schedule throughout 2014. At every meeting in 2014 the COT has successfully established a quorum and has maintained compliance with the WETCC By-laws.

A final key to understanding the deliberations of the Council of Trustees can be seen in the following COT Committees established to help manage their work: Fundraising Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, Policy and Human Resources Committee, Marketing and Public Relations Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and the Social and Cultural Committee. One Trustee member heads each of these COT committees. Given the focus of our accreditation efforts the Finance and Audit Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Policy and Human Resources Committee have been their primary focus.

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.

The By-laws that govern the make-up of the COT requires that its membership include representation of individuals from critical external constituencies (WETCC Alumni, Elders, WETCC Student body, Indian Education experts, higher degree holders and two members of the White Earth Tribal Council). The WETCC Student Senate Chairperson is a full voting member of the COT and the two representatives from the White Earth Tribal Council are non-voting, Ex. Officio members of the COT. Each member of the COT knows the constituencies they represent and present those viewpoints in their deliberations and utilize their knowledge and networks to advance the mission of the College.

All meetings of the COT are open to the public and all Trustees are accessible by the public through the WETCC Office of the President as well as through their own constituency base. For example, the WETCC Student Senate meets monthly during the academic year. The WETCC Student Senate President regularly brings the issues identified and discussed by students to the COT. Finally, each member of the WETCC Leadership Team writes reports for the COT meeting and they are summarized in a single unified report. At every COT meeting the Trustees are updated on academic, programmatic, financial and critical staff issues.

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.

There are several policies and organic governing documents that ensure the COT preserves its independence. First, the Charter that establishes WETCC is very specific in establishing the sole and independent authority of the WETCC Council of Trustees. The WETCC Charter gives the WETCC Council of Trustees sole authority:

- To "establish all rules and regulations..." (Article IV),
- To dissolve the College (Article VIII),
- To establish or amend the College's By-Laws (Article IX), and
- To amend the Charter (Article XI).

Secondly, the independent nature of the Tribal College and the sole governing authority of its Council of Trustees was affirmed on May 30, 2003 when the White Earth Tribal Court overturned an attempt by the Tribal Council to terminate the WETCC President.

In its findings, the White Earth Tribal Court held that, “The White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) is a separate, independently chartered educational organization...” and that, “The White Earth Tribal Council possesses no authority to terminate the employment of the President of WETCC.” White Earth Tribal Council v. The Board of Trustees of the White Earth Tribal and Community College, File No. CV03-306, White Earth Tribal Court, 5-30-03.

Finally, the WETCC COT and WETCC Administration have taken the following steps to ensure that it is sufficiently autonomous to assure the integrity of WETCC and to allow the Board of Trustees to make decisions in the best interest of the college:

- Establishment of full slate of Trustees consistent with WETCC By-laws.
- White Earth Tribal and Community College COT are required to sign a statement annually that affirm he/she:
  - Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
  - Has read and understands the policy,
  - Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
  - Understands that the college is a 501 (c)(3) organization.
- Regularly scheduled orientation and training for the Council of Trustees on a bi-annual basis and as needed for new members with most recent trainings conducted on December 2, 2013, and August 12, 2014, for the entire Council of Trustees and November 18, 2014, for new Trustees.
- Establishment of Trustees’ Committee structure to fulfill Trustee obligations related to finance and budgeting, policy review, strategic planning, development and fund-raising, communications and public relations, and Anishinaabe culture.
- Maintenance of regular orientation and information-sharing schedule between WETCC President and White Earth Tribal Council to affirm the boundaries of the relationship and to advance mutual objectives in education.

4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Under the By-laws of the COT, Article I. Powers and Authorities of the Council of Trustees, the COT has the authority to employ, provide overall direction and to evaluate the performance of, and/or terminate the employment of the President, who shall have the power and authority, through established policy and procedure, to manage the day-to-day affairs and operations of WETCC.

The COT is responsible for policies and procedures required for effective governance, administration, implementation and evaluation of programs, resources, faculty, staff, budget, services and other operations of the WETCC.

With regard to the issue of shared governance, WETCC faculty participation in the governance at WETCC is critical. Because the faculty is significantly smaller than other institutions of higher education, all faculty members are strongly encouraged to be part of the participatory decision-making process and have a responsibility to develop educational policies that best serve the WETCC learner. WETCC recognizes the critical role of all faculty in the College's life and mission.

Participatory decision-making is aligned with the WETCC Mission, Vision, and Values and faculty governance has been significantly strengthened through the participatory process. Evidence of this includes, but is not limited to the following: actively participating in developing the academic budget; program development, assessment, and revision; development of the 4-semester course calendar; academic policy development, review, and implementation; development and implementation of the WETCC Institutional Assessment Plan; participation in developing institutional documents such as the Faculty Handbook, the Adjunct Faculty Contract, and the WETCC Course Syllabus Template; development of individual professional development plans; development of the WETCC Learner Outcomes which is utilized as a foundational tool for strategic planning and numerous others.

Faculty participation is essential to the everyday operations of the College and shared governance is more than a set of boundaries and rules that govern. Faculty has moved towards a shared responsibility responsible for identifying sustainable strategic directions in a participatory environment where open communication is encouraged and faculty members, administrators, and board members are collaborating to align and implement strategic priorities.

**Core Component 2D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.**

WETCC applies academic freedom according to WETCC [Policy 5.101 – WETCC Academic Freedom Policy](#) states, “Academic freedom aligns with the WETCC Vision and Values. These principles contribute to a climate in which debate is encouraged about complex, challenging subjects and issues about which reasonable people may disagree.” This policy informs the nature of faculty engagement in student learning, scholarship, WETCC citizenship, and community service.

This policy protects the rights and recognizes the responsibilities of faculty and allows them to teach in an environment that supports student centered learning where students acquire knowledge and the critical thinking skills necessary to address the challenges and complexities of society.

Additionally, WETCC prohibits plagiarism as described in [Part 6. of the WETCC Code of Student Conduct](#), Academic Honesty and Classroom Conduct; page 72 of the WETCC 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog.

WETCC has an established standard syllabus for all its courses. This template includes the 5 WETCC Learner Outcomes along with a section for the instructor to articulate the course level outcomes. This section also includes guidelines and best practices to assist adjuncts, in particular, in developing these outcomes. As of this report, there have been no reports of complaints with regard to interference in academic freedom.

Students are encouraged and expected to express themselves freely and openly with no negative repercussions on the part of the faculty, staff or administration. A clear student complaint policy is shared with students to help support this process.

**Core Component 2E. 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.

Responsible scholarship: At this time WETCC does not have an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to oversee research involving human or animal subjects. As a result, we have not initiated or participated in any such projects to date. It is likely that such opportunities may be found in the future; therefore, WETCC has begun discussions on the form and function of an IRB. The goal is to develop this as a collaborative activity with the White Earth Tribal Council. As such, negotiations with that body will be required before such an IRB could be implemented here.

To date all research activities sponsored by WETCC have been funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, the National Science Foundation, or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. These agencies and/or partner institutions that served as principal investigators on the project have served as the oversight body to insure the quality and integrity of all research activities through the grant proposal and reporting processes.

The WETCC COT approved [Policy 5.501 – WETCC Copyright and Intellectual Property Policy](#) that identifies Intellectual Property and Ownership. This policy applies to all WETCC employees and students. The policy also applies to non-employees who may be authorized to use any WETCC resources. The principles of this policy extend to, and include, any use of College resources, regardless of its location. Access to information resources, the sharing of information, and the security of the intellectual products of the community all require that each and every user accept responsibility to protect the rights of the community.

2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

WETCC requires lawful use of technology among members of the campus community (employees, students, visitors). As stated in [Policy 8.101 – WETCC Technology Use Policy](#), “Access to information systems, computer systems, and computer networks at WETCC is granted to authorized users with legitimate educational and operational need to access electronic files may do so as part of the duties or assignments”.

The librarian offers one-on-one guidance in the library and in individual courses on documentation, citation, and plagiarism. She has available upon request a handout covering appropriate copyright use as typical to most student needs. Workshops covering research techniques, documentation and citations, and avoiding plagiarism are given to classes at the instructor's request. The librarian is the go-to person who determines if a student has been unethical in his use of borrowed quotations.

Administration, staff and faculty serve as role models for ethical use of information resources. Students are exposed to this type of role modeling from during their first experiences with the college. As part of student orientation, students are informed about FERPA and ethical use of information. Furthermore, there is a “responsibilities of all users” procedure in the catalog on pages 59 to 61 that outlines the College expectations of students in relation to technology use.

3. The institution has and enforced policies on academic honesty and integrity.

WETCC prohibits plagiarism as described in Part 6. of the WETCC Code of Student Conduct, Academic Honesty and Classroom Conduct; page 72 of the WETCC 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog.

In addition, the syllabus template given to all faculty includes the following about academic honesty:

“STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to maintain scholastic honesty. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. When an infraction occurs, instructors have the authority to act personally. Instructors will report action to the Director of Academic Programs. A Student has the right to appeal the instructor’s action in accordance with the student appeal policy.”

## Summary

### Strengths:

- COT and WETCC Presidential transitions in 2013 and 2014
- Policy review for all aspects of WETCC. Ex. Complaint and Grievance Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Plagiarism Policy, etc.
- WETCC -lowest tuition of any higher education institution in the State of Minnesota
- Departmental and leadership structure that creates a more level leadership structure

- Annual audit- consistently produced and findings, issues, if any, are immediately addressed
- Campus-wide salary review, staff performance evaluation and Department organization structure completed

Challenges:

- COT and WETCC Presidential transitions in 2012 and 2013 showed COT action in violation with WETCC By-laws; WETCC and COT currently in process of resolving these issues
- Policy implementation is a process; will take significant education and training to be effective

## CRITERION THREE. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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**Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support. White Earth Tribal and Community College provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.**

**Core Component 3A. 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.

WETCC offers mission, vision, and value driven programs designed to provide all learners access to a high quality education culturally grounded in the 7 Anishinaabe Teachings. Those teachings are foundational and are embedded in the curriculum with the goal of providing a transformative education that empowers learners to be active in a global community.

WETCC supports the vision where students: *"Carry into the future the way that we were given."* Since the beginning, WETCC has had an open enrollment admission process; therefore, students come to WETCC with a variety of educational backgrounds and experiences. Many struggled to complete high school coursework. According to institutional data, 37% of all WETCC students completed high school by obtaining a GED and Accuplacer testing indicates that learners are often lacking the skills necessary to be ready for college level coursework. The open enrollment policy means that some students begin their education at WETCC with low levels of proficiency in reading comprehension, writing, and mathematics. Additionally, according to data from 2010-2014, 52% of all students will take at least one of the developmental courses in English or Math. This is an area that is currently under review and alternative approaches are being explored to better serve the WETCC learner.

Other factors can also drastically impact the educational goals of WETCC students. Data indicates that 64% are female and many are beginning their post-secondary education while raising children and working to support their families. According to [The White Earth Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) released in 2013, 52.4% of female-headed households with children under 18 live below the poverty level. Most of our student population drives significant distances (some over 50 miles one way) from the outlying villages and local communities making transportation an obstacle as well. Transportation, childcare, addiction, and poverty are very real obstacles for our students, but also for faculty, staff, and administration as we continually seek ways to break down barriers that hinder student success and retention.

WETCC takes a holistic approach to learners with the goal of maximizing their academic potential. Developmental courses emphasize the importance of setting goals, time management, study skills, and self-evaluation, in addition to basic skill building and strategies for learning. WETCC is continually focused on new ways to enhance learning experiences. This is done in a number of ways such as: experiential learning, service learning, tutoring, active advising with faculty and the student

liaison, through collaborative measures with Student Services, and through additional resources such as computer software, audiovisual media, and library resources.

We strive for continuous improvement in all instructional programs. Instructor course evaluations, annual faculty reviews, program reviews, and course reviews utilize data to identify areas of strength and weakness, and create improvement plans. However, our probationary status with the HLC and the resulting self-study process has helped to formalize procedures for documenting and publicizing this work.

Currently, WETCC offers Associates of Arts Degrees, aligned with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC), based on 40+ semester credits of General Education Courses with 6 emphasis areas providing the additional 20+ credits to fulfill the AA requirements. These emphasis areas are:

- Business
- Early Childhood Education/Education
- Environmental Science
- Humanities
- Human Services
- Native American Studies

Because WETCC is a transfer institution, it is critical that all degree programs are aligned with state-wide standards for ease of transferability. Each program of study was developed based on the first two years of similar educational plans from our primary transfer institutions: Minnesota State University, Moorhead; University of Minnesota, Crookston; University of Minnesota, Morris; University of Minnesota, Duluth; Rasmussen Business College; and Bemidji State University. Furthermore, each of these institutions currently accepts all of our degree plans, which serves as an important assessment data point and a strong indicator of WETCC's commitment to a high quality education.

2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduates, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

The development of the WETCC Learner Outcomes began in 2005 where faculty initiated the process of articulating what the learner outcomes were, what assessment measures would be utilized in data collection, what criteria determined student success, and what the assessment cycle looked like.

At that point in time, the faculty identified four general education learner outcomes; 1) critical and creative thinking, 2) problem solving, 3) communication, and 4) the ability to incorporate Anishinaabe culture into modern context. In addition, to the general education learning goals, faculty members developed the WETCC Learner Outcomes which are woven into both program, curriculum, and course outcomes and objectives. These have undergone an intense refinement process over the last nine years. Currently, the WETCC Learner Outcomes, as our general education outcomes are now called, are based on Higher Education norms and Anishinaabe teachings. They provide a framework for programming, curriculum, and course assignments. They are:

1. Okwiinogamigwewin nitam (The Community First)
  - a. Exercise critical/creative thinking
  - b. Demonstrate civic/social responsibility
2. Mikigaadeg enendaagozing (Finding Purpose)
  - a. Identify and develop gifts/talents
  - b. Identify and develop interests/goals
3. Ogimaawin (Leadership)
  - a. Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully
  - b. Take responsibility
4. Naanaagadawenim miinawaa zhawenim ongow omaa akiing (Holistic in a Way that Honors all Things)
  - a. Committed to the development of the whole person
  - b. Honor interrelatedness of all things
5. Mino Bimaadiziwin (The Good Life)
  - a. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history
  - b. Take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe Way

The *WETCC Learner Outcome Rubric* shown below provides benchmarks that illustrate a variety of skill levels ranging from a benchmark of 1 to a capstone of 4. Learner's skill levels increase through their educational journey with the goal of attaining the capstone level prior to graduation.

| <b>WETCC Learner Outcomes Rubric</b>  |   |  |  |   |  |               |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|---------------|
| Performance Dimensions  | Requirements *  | Capstone 4   | Milestones 3 2   |   | In Progress 1  | Points Earned |
| <b>Okwiinogamigwewin nitam</b> (Community)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise critical/creative thinking</li> <li>• Demonstrate civic/social responsibility</li> </ul>  | Application of thinking skills in a variety of civic and social contexts   | Mastery of thinking skills and civic engagement  | Building critical/creative thinking skills and sense of responsibility  | Awareness of civic and social needs in their community               |               |
| <b>Mikigaadeg enendaagozing</b> (Finding Purpose)                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and develop gifts/talents</li> <li>• Identify and develop interests/goals</li> </ul>  | Application of these in a variety of contexts  | Mastery of these   | Refine gifts, talents, interest, and goals                              | Limited awareness of individual gifts, talents, interests, and goals |               |
| <b>Ogimaawin</b> (Leadership)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully</li> <li>• Take responsibility</li> </ul>  | Ability to actively listen to other perspectives. Asks clarifying questions. Seeks to understand other perspectives without judgment. Driving the agenda on some cause or issue. | Actively committed to a cause or issue   | Occasional engagement with a cause or issue.                            | Not engaged.   |               |
| <b>Naanaagadawenim miinawaa zhawenim ongow omaa akiing</b> (Holistic Perspective) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to the development of the whole person</li> <li>• Honor interrelatedness of all things</li> </ul>  | Readily integrate knowledge and tools from various disciplines in any context  | Integrating knowledge and tools from various disciplines to challenges outside the classroom | Integrating knowledge and tools from various disciplines                | Cannot make connections between different disciplines                |               |
| <b>Mino-Bimaadiziwin</b> (The Good Life)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history</li> <li>• Take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe Way</li> </ul> | Integrate and implement worldview in a variety of contexts   | Refining worldview   | Developing their own worldview based on the Anishinaabe history and Way | Aware of Anishinaabe history and Way                                 |               |

Table 2 *WETCC Learner Outcomes Rubric*

Using the WETCC Learner Outcomes and the Rubric as a foundation, faculty members can then identify learning goals relevant to their program or discipline with measurable goals and/or objectives for the courses they teach. Thus all outcomes, goals, and objectives align and support the college Mission.

3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations.

Consistency across instructional methods is important to WETCC faculty and Academic Affairs members responsible for coordination of curricular activities. Course standards are the primary method utilized to ensure consistency across curricula. These standards outline course outcomes and competencies associated with each course. Course syllabi provide additional levels of consistency across curricula. Syllabi for all general education courses are written on a standard template that is used by all faculty members. Included in the template are tools to assist faculty in the development of measurable course goals and objectives. This template also includes policies and information established throughout the college.

Each semester, faculty submits a syllabus for each course to the Academic Dean and the Registrar. All syllabi are reviewed by Faculty Senate to ensure that course content aligns with the general education requirement for that course. Furthermore, objectives are reviewed to determine if course goals are measurable. Both direct and indirect measures of assessment are defined and instructors are encouraged to utilize both in grade determination. Courses are then evaluated to determine where they fit into the WETCC Learner Outcomes.

The WETCC Learner Outcomes emphasize those motivators that are most relevant to our students. Whereas other pedagogical approaches may be somewhat successful for some WETCC Learners, a curriculum that will be successful in the broadest sense must take into consideration the realities of reservation life and the cultural norms of Native people.

For many individuals in Higher Education there is a social stigma attached to failure; therefore, there is pressure on the learner to succeed. However, for WETCC students there are often experience extenuating issues such as poverty, lack of housing, and/or transportation, which are greater concerns than the fear of academic failure. The curricula must provide learning opportunities that address some of these issues if it is relevant and sustainable.

Currently, WETCC is not accredited to offer online course instruction; however, we are beginning to explore that realm. This modality presents both opportunities and challenges as WETCC learners often struggle in the online world. The Faculty Senate recognizes the need to define strategies and explore models that might work in in our experientially focused atmosphere. The University of Minnesota, Crookston is currently exploring opportunities to provide online courses to WETCC graduates and community members that are supported with resources from both of our institutions in order to

insure student success. To introduce students to the online elements, one WETCC course (Introduction to Humanities) is currently being offered using a hybrid model. This offering is allowing us to determine what elements of the online modality are most successful in our context. Data is being collected through attendance, participation, course evaluation data, and quality of submitted work. Once the evaluative process is done, we can determine what steps are necessary to assure student success.

In spring 2014, WETCC was approved to offer dual credit course offerings for PSEO (Post-Secondary Education Option) courses.

Beginning spring 2015, the college will offer Multicultural Literature as a concurrent enrolled course at the Circle of Life Academy, our local Bureau of Indian Education School. A college faculty in conjunction with a high school teacher will teach the course. The course will be taught at the high school to help students make smoother transitions to college.

**Core Component 3B. 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.

As a two-year liberal arts institution, WETCC primarily focused on teaching the general education requirements. The foundation for these is the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC), the general education requirements adopted by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), the state-wide body guiding higher education. By adopting this standard we ensure the widest number of transfer options for our students. This is key to our mission. Beyond that, the specific courses that have been created to meet the MnTC standards also include culturally relevant components such as Anishinaabeg history, culture, language, values, and traditional ecological knowledge. This is also in service to our mission, goals, and values. Many courses have experiential learning components relevant to our students' daily lives and experiences. Our goal is that every class period students have the opportunity to develop/refine skills that they can apply day to day in their journey of lifelong learning.

Goal areas of the MnTC include the following: Communications, Critical Thinking, Natural Sciences, Math and Logic, Social Sciences, the Humanities, Human Diversity, Global Perspectives, Ethical/Civic Responsibility, and People and Environment. All of these courses are grounded in the Anishinaabeg culture, where community is emphasized and the focus is on the process of learning and the outcome, emphasizing a holistic way of understanding.

At WETCC the General Education courses comprise 40+ semester credits and provide a program of study that:

- Reveals to students the ways that scholars in the arts, humanities, sciences, and

social sciences create and evaluate new knowledge.

- Introduces learners to relevant ideas and themes related to human culture.
- Encourages an appreciation for alternative perspectives and the diverse voices echoed through society.
- Develops critical thinking skills focused on self-improvement by utilizing skills and standards appropriate for assessing thinking and using them as tools and resources to function in an ever-changing world.

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.

As stated above the MnTC is the established framework for the WETCC General Education Program. This provides the learning standards for each course. The contexts that these standards are housed in are the culturally relevant themes, stories, and topics that form the philosophical basis for the curriculum. Finally, there are learning outcomes for most courses that focus on the skills and attitudes required for life-long learning in a diverse and complex society. The WETCC Overall Learner Outcomes are included in the syllabus template utilized by all faculty members. This template also includes a section for course level learner outcomes that faculty members are expected to develop. The Faculty Senate reviews the syllabi of full time instructors annually to assure these latter are measurable, and consistent with the mission. The faculty is also encouraged to seek community input in these when appropriate.

The Overall Learner Outcomes state that students should:

1. Exercise critical/creative thinking and be able to demonstrate civic/social responsibility.
2. Identify and develop individual gifts/talents and identify and develop individual interests and goals.
3. Value diversity by listening and community respectfully and take responsibility.
4. Committed to the development of the whole person honoring the interrelatedness of all things.
5. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounding in Anishinaabe history where learners take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe way.

Each requirement of the learner outcome is linked to a performance dimension. Faculty have assessed previous learner outcomes and spent an extensive amount of time determining what skills the WETCC Learner needed to better serve the communities in which they reside. Because most students will continue to live on and work on the reservation, culturally relevant skills that are community focused are critical.

Students that feel a strong connection to their communities will find purpose in their own lives as a part of the larger community. Once they determine their own gifts and talents, they serve as leaders that are able to listen, communicate, and take responsibility for not

only their own life's path, but also for the communities in which they exist. As the commitment to the community grows, and they become leaders in those arenas, where they gain a holistic perspective honoring the interrelatedness of all things. Only then are they able to take their knowledge and skills and determine the path to the good life.

This learning model emphasizes critical differences between Native learners and many in the surrounding culture, namely:

- Native learners are first and foremost members of families and communities. Secondary are their individual goals and aspirations; therefore, as part of a collectivist culture, it is paramount that outcomes and goals recognize this as a critical facet of learning.
- These families and communities share in the sacrifices and struggles of each student's education. Thus, service to the family and community must be a fundamental outcome of education.
- Native students are uniquely required to integrate. They must integrate knowledge, skills, and understandings of their culture with those of Western cultures even when these appear to be in direct conflict with one another. They must be able to weave these into a coherent whole to effectively "walk gracefully in both worlds." If WETCC is to achieve its mission, it must support students in this integration process.
- Indigenous cultures tend to be more balanced in terms of the right brain skills of synthesis; the oral and pictorial, and holism as compared to the left brain skills of analysis, the literary, and reductionism. The WETCC curriculum and learner outcomes strive to maintain that balance.

In addition to developing the Overall Learner Outcomes, faculty collaborated to develop tools to assist all faculty members in writing measurable course learner outcomes that include the higher order thinking skills. These are the outcomes that a student can demonstrate after a learning experience and should provide evidence of the student's ability to integrate, synthesize, evaluate, and use the knowledge, skills, and values learned and developed through a course of study.

Poorly written learner outcomes are not only difficult to assess, they do not provide clear messages to students or others about the learning results in a program of study. Good learner outcomes are learner centered, meaningful for faculty and students, represent a range of critical thinking skills, and are measurable. They must be written in terms of what the student will be able to do at the end of the course, use active verbs, reflect measurable standards, illustrate the knowledge and skills the student is accountable for, and reflect a combination of higher order thinking skills.

Because general education is at the core of the academic curriculum for all degree-seeking students, it is critical that all faculty members teach skills and knowledge that aligns with the general education goals as defined by WETCC and the MnTC. Students who know what is expected of them have the opportunity to be more successful. Faculty

who have a clear idea of what they want their student to learn are better able to objectively evaluate their students and the effectiveness of their curricular design.

Outcome assessment allows us to systematically examine alignment between student learning, instructional and institutional expectations, and instructional activities. Every course should utilize the WETCC Learner Outcomes as a foundation for student learning. This defines what a student who passes the course should take away from it.

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.

The institutional culture of WETCC recognizes that Native students, as most other student populations, learn best when material is presented in an applied context, especially one that is relevant to their immediate lives and needs. As a result, there is a universal expectation of and among the faculty that active learning modules are a critical component of all courses. The nature of these models varies depending on the goals and content of each course.

For instance, nearly all of the science courses are field-based natural science. Students are expected to make observations of the organisms and phenomenon that are the focal points of the course. These observations are recorded in field journals and various analysis activities are assigned both in and out of class. The analyses and conclusions may be presented in the journals, turned in as specific assignments, and/or presented to the class with the support of PowerPoint or related tools. Students may also participate in and report the results of controlled experiments as appropriate.

The mathematics courses are also built around the collection and manipulation of data. Students have several major projects each semester where they collect data such as the height, age, shoe size, and six other variables. They input these data in to Excel and perform statistical analyses, generate histograms and scatter plots, and compare their data to those from another regional institution. They also used web-based tools to simulate data and perform analyses on these data as well.

Art courses all involve the generation of original work and the formal critique of their own work and that of others. Language courses require reflective journaling, translation of everyday events and experience such as the daily weather, and other active high order thinking activities. In short, these forms of inquiry are deeply imbedded in the curriculum at WETCC and are a strength of the institution.

One of the strengths of WETCC students is their determination and adaptability. Most of our students have life experiences that would have discouraged many from even attempting college; however, they have reached a point in their lives where they know that they must make a positive change in order to survive in today's world, and this gives them the strength to overcome incredible circumstances.

The WETCC curriculum is built on active, inclusive pedagogies that embrace the indigenous way of knowing. Educational knowledge focuses on the study of the natural world and reconnecting learners with it. There is also a focus on the Anishinaabeg language, culture and values, fostering the respect for the land, the people, and the natural resources that is the foundation of Anishinaabeg culture. The Anishinaabeg language is where individuals turn for philosophy, history, medicines, stories and spirituality that are all part of the University for Cultural Survival.

WETCC believes in those skills that native people have valued and utilized for generations with the goal of discovering the dependable way things worked in their culture. Knowledge is deeply rooted in place and tied to culture including: beliefs, values, and practices, which were often passed on orally through the generations. In the Anishinaabeg culture, community is emphasized and the focus is on the process of learning rather than the outcome, creating a holistic way of understanding both the communities of which they are a part and global society.

4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

WETCC has a diverse learning population that includes single parents, low-income families, enrolled members and descendants of White Earth Anishinaabeg and other tribes, rural citizens, students non-traditional in age (i.e., outside the 18-22 range), those who are under-prepared for college-level classes, etc. The college promotes and provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring to the institution. Diversity amongst students and staff in all its forms adds fullness and vibrancy to the teaching and learning processes. WETCC promulgates the value of respecting one another in its mission documents. WETCC's commitment is to promote and respect the diversity and individuality among all people and maintain a safe, respectful, and courteous environment and welcoming learning community.

Some of the programs and initiatives that demonstrate WETCC's level of respect and support for the diversity of our learners include: 1) a vibrant Extension program teaching a variety of traditional skills from all the cultures represented on White Earth; 2) FERPA training for faculty and staff, 3) presence of a security guard on campus, 4) release of annual crime report, 5) White Earth Child Care, 6) Stepping Stones Program, 7) Adult Education /GED preparation through a partner program, 8) work with White Earth Transit, 9) the presence of a satellite library site to accommodate those with transportation limitations, 10) inclusion of guest speakers from the community, and 11) an annual Historical Trauma workshop.

There is also a *Statement of Diversity* included in the syllabus template shared with all faculty that says:

“When we live the seven teachings of the Anishinaabeg, we understand and embrace the diversity of Turtle Island. We understand that we all live within the circle of life – the land, the rocks, the trees, the plant beings, the animals, the birds, the insects, all the peoples of the world, and all of us are equally important. Manaaji’idig. Therefore, WETCC encourages and embraces the diversity of all that is.”

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.

As a two-year college, WETCC is primarily focused on teaching and learning. However, our faculty and students still participate in and produce scholarship. Some examples of this include the Indigenous Crops Research Program, a NASA-funded geospatial research collaboration, a Thriving Earth Exchange collaboration with the American Geophysical Union (AGU), a Native students writing anthology, an Anishinaabeg-designed digital archive, and Anishinaabeg language research and teaching videos.

The Indigenous Crops Research Program, in its eighth year, is currently a collaboration between WETCC and North Dakota State University focused on evaluating at risk indigenous bean varieties for a regional seed-saving and breeding program. Past projects have evaluated hybrid hazelnut varieties, tested native plants for economically useful phytochemicals, and designed locally appropriate prairie restoration seed mixes. Specifically, WETCC Environmental Science students have participated in 4 different 2-year projects. The first involved evaluating growth rates and nut production/quality for several thousand hybrid hazelnuts from 12 breeding lines developed by the Badgersett Research Farm. Two students also collected a wide range of indigenous plant material to be tested for valuable phytochemicals with anti-microbial, antioxidant, or anti-inflammatory properties that could be included in natural personal care products. Two other students worked with a regional prairie restoration professional to evaluate native prairie sites, collect seed from locally-adapted populations, design planting mixes, and establish 4 acres of native prairie on the WETCC campus. Currently, one student is growing and evaluating 21 indigenous bean varieties primarily from the upper Midwest. He is also supervising a number of local volunteer gardeners assisting with the grow-out. Collaborators on this project are growing and evaluating seeds of interest to their communities and teaching seed saving techniques to interested participants to increase local capacity for this work.

The NASA geospatial collaboration is an effort to train students in the use of Geospatial technologies and the application of those tools to important projects on their local Reservation. Four WETCC students have participated over the last four years. Their projects have addressed issues related to the water and wild rice resources. The Thriving Earth Exchange project is a similar project that is leveraging AGU resources to expand our water quality monitoring efforts.

WETCC is developing an Anishinaabeg-designed digital archive of historical documents

significant to White Earth and other Anishinaabeg communities in Minnesota in collaboration with Pennsylvania State University and Itasca Community College. The archive is being designed to be used as a curriculum development tool and Anishinaabegmowin (Anishinaabeg language) learning resource.

**Core Component 3C. 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.

WETCC experienced significant trauma when the previous president dismissed all of the Native faculty members in spring of 2013, leaving only two of the original six full-time faculty members. At that time he also eliminated our three most popular programs leaving a sizable hole in the institution that has dramatically affected enrollment and other critical issues. In the fall of 2013, WETCC hired two new faculty members to replace two of the eliminated positions, but the remaining courses and content areas have been taught by adjuncts as part of our good faith effort to allow students to complete degrees of study in the eliminated programs.

After the departure of the above-mentioned president in September of 2013, and the installation of his replacement in April 2014, the College undertook a study to determine the need for and feasibility of reinstating the lost programs. In particular, meetings were held with the directors of the Education and Human Services Departments of the White Earth Tribal Council. Their input was that "...if you (WETCC) don't provide these programs for our staff, we'll find someone else to do it..." As a result, the Business, Human Services, and Education programs were all reinstated as programs of study in the summer of 2014.

The Faculty Senate undertook a limited program review and budgeting process and updated each program based comparable examples in the region. The resulting draft programs were added to the relevant institutional documents and are awaiting a complete, professional review by the appropriate new faculty members. Two new full-time faculty positions, Education/Early Childhood and Human Services have been approved by the Council of Trustees and are currently advertised for the spring of 2015. Students that were interested in taking coursework in these programs were advised to enroll immediately and take general education courses until they are fully implemented next semester.

The above-mentioned work and additional accreditation-related tasks was performed by the full-time faculty throughout the summer of 2014. The College made the investment of extending the typical nine-month faculty contracts to 12 months for this purpose. Some of the additional outcomes of this work include: the creation of measurable, culturally relevant learner outcomes for all courses and programs currently taught by full time

faculty, designing of assessment rubrics, assessment planning, and the drafting and revising of the academic policies.

The addition of two new full time faculty members will return us to historic norms. At that point, all programs will be headed by full time instructors with the expertise to guide program reviews, create meaningful course and program goals, design and implement an assessment plan that meets institutional standards and support overall assessment work, teach program courses, and properly advise students. These individuals will continue to be supported, as needed, by adjunct instructors and, when appropriate, community members or elders with unique expertise. The Faculty Senate vets these latter individuals before being employed to teach indigenous topics and/or approach that are vital to the College’s role to support the Anishinaabeg culture. The Anishinaabeg people are not traditionally organized in a hierarchical structure, and the culture of the college reflects that. Faculty plays a large role in all curricular decision making at WETCC. Most of the decisions are brought to the group and decided upon using a consensus model.

The college has key staff members in student services covering all of our major departments: one Admissions Coordinator, two financial aid staff (one Financial Aid Coordinator and one Financial Aid Specialist), one Registrar, one Student Liaison and one Student Counselor. We are developing plans for increasing the number of staff to better serve students. In particular we need one Registrar’s Assistant, another Financial Aid Specialist, and an assistant to the Student Liaison and Student Counselor.

2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

All WETCC full-time and adjunct faculty are qualified to teach the courses to which they are assigned. The following table lists WETCC faculty and their qualifications. Because the adjunct faculty pool changes, only current adjunct faculty are listed.

| Classification    | First Name | Last Name   | Course(s) Fall 2014   | Education   |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|---|---|
| Adjunct           | Carol      | Follingstad | General Psychology  | Psy. D Clinical Psych, Argosy University, Twin Cities<br>M.S. Psychology, MSUM<br>B.A. Psychology, MSUM |
| Adjunct           | David      | DeGroat     | History of the US to 1877<br>Introduction to Law  | Juris Doctor<br>M.A. History (In progress)<br>B.S .Criminal Justice                                     |
| Full-time Faculty | Errol      | Geniusz     | Ojibwe I and II<br>Multicultural Education<br>Skills for Success<br>Contemporary Native Am Issues | M.A. History, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire<br>B.A .American Multicultural Studies, MSUM           |
| Adjunct           | Janet      | Oshkinowe   | Anishinaabe Art/<br>Beadwork  | Community Member  |

|                                  |          |              |   |   |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------------|---|---|
| Adjunct                          | Joseph   | Allen        | Digital Photography   | Community Member<br>MPLS Community and Technical College (no degree)<br>22 years practice as an exhibiting artist<br>8 years experience as a Native American Community Newspaper Editor<br>14 years experience as a Freelance Media Arts professional.<br>20 years working experience with industry standard photo editing, video editing, and graphic design software. |
| Adjunct                          | Jennifer | Bakken-Brees | Intro to Computers<br>College Writing I and II<br>Creative Writing                | M.F.A Minnesota State University Moorhead<br>Certificate Publishing, MSUM<br>B.A. Speech Communications, MSUM   |
| Adjunct                          | Judy     | Fairbanks    | Indigenous Women's Studies/Karen Branden  | Tribal Elder  |
| Adjunct/Dean of Student Services | Karen    | Branden      | Ethics<br>Indigenous Women's Studies  | Ph.D. Sociology, South Dakota State University<br>M.S. North Dakota University<br>B.A. Minnesota State University Moorhead  |
| Adjunct                          | Patti    | DeGroat      | Stepping Stones Math I and II   | B.A. Social Studies, MSUM<br>Math instructor, Circle of Life Academy, 2002-Present  |
| Full-time Faculty                | Patty    | Heath-Gordon | English Stepping Stones I & II<br>Office Procedures<br>Introduction to Humanities | M.A. Liberal Arts, MSUM<br>B.A. General Studies, MSUM   |
| Adjunct                          | Peggy    | Miller       | Introduction to Sociology   | M.S Sociology, UND<br>B.A. Sociology, UND   |
| Academic Dean/Faculty            | Sheila   | Michaels     | College Writing I and II<br>Multicultural Literature                              | M.A. English Literature, California State University<br>Divinity Education, PLTS and Luther Seminary-Ordained<br>B.A .English/Psychology Excelsior College  |
| Extension Director/Faculty       | Steven   | Dahlberg     | Field Biology of Plants<br>Geosciences Today<br>Contemporary Math                 | Ph.D. Meteorology, Texas A&M University<br>M.S. Natural Resource Management, North Dakota State University  |

3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

WETCC has a policy and procedure for annual evaluation of each faculty member. There are separate procedures for full time and adjunct instructors mirroring their different institutional roles. This task is the duty of the Academic Dean and will be concluded no later than March 1 of each year.

Evaluating faculty performance is consistent with the objectives and culture of the White Earth Tribal and Community College. Faculty evaluations determine strengths and challenges of the instructional staff. Evaluation of individual faculty members is based on each one's Professional Development Plan, Activity Report, and classroom observations. The process is as follows:

- I. Full-time Faculty Evaluation:
  - a. At the start of each academic year, each faculty member completes a Professional Development Plan (PDP) that addresses the five areas of an instructor's job duties: teaching, research, assessment, service, and student advising. In the PDP, s/he details a plan for the academic year and how s/he will provide evidence how s/he is complete his/her plan. The PDP is submitted to the Academic Dean who reviews it and suggests changes, if any.
  - b. At the beginning of the Ziigwan (spring) semester, faculty members write Activity Reports detailing progress and areas for improvement on their PDPs.
  - c. The Academic Dean conducts classroom observations using criteria established by the Faculty Senate. The Dean and Instructor jointly review and dialogue about the results of the observation.
  - d. Some faculty members solicit student feedback on their teaching. Students often spontaneously offer feedback to/about faculty members as well. This information is then shared with the faculty member in question in an informal mentoring system that helps guide and encourages them. Instructors may also use data from course evaluations as part of their own independent feedback and improvement process.
- II. Part-time or adjunct faculty will be evaluated at the end of each semester based on student evaluations, timely submission of attendance, midterm, and final grades, and classroom evaluations done by the Academic Dean.

Evidence towards, but not limited to:

1. Instruction: -Adequacy of course proposals and syllabus, utilization of CAMS for attendance and course specific data, student assessment, timely distribution of course papers, tests, and daily work, submission of mid-term grades, student course evaluations, peer evaluations, professional development plans, and/or student retention rates.
2. Contributions to the institution and community: -Service on college committees, academic advising, assessment, representation of the institution and professional meetings and conferences, advising student groups or organizations, development of new courses, providing assistance to other group focus areas and/or educational institutions within or serving the tribal community.

Excellence in teaching is the primary criteria for evaluation. Results of the evaluation shall be presented to each faculty member in written form. This report may be summarized on a standardized form, but must also include a written narrative.

The Academic Dean shall discuss with faculty individually the results of their evaluation. Faculty shall have the right to file a written response within two weeks after receiving their evaluation document. The evaluation document becomes a part of the faculty member's permanent personnel file.

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.

Throughout the academic year, the Academic Dean and the Dean of Student Services assess the needs of faculty and staff for professional development. This assessment is done through informal observation, discussion, and formal evaluations. Faculty and staff are also asked to identify their own professional development needs. The College has instituted a professional Development Request form and processes that encourages and supports opportunities for all functions of the institution ([WETCC Professional Development Request Form](#), [WETCC Professional Development Budget for 2014/2015](#), [WETCC Professional Development Request Procedures](#)). The College's General Fund, Title III funds, and private foundation funds have been used to support faculty/staff in completing advanced degrees/attending workshops, trainings, and/or educational travel.

Ten to twelve days per semester are devoted to faculty/staff workshops and in-services. Sample topics include: student advising, professional ethics, White Earth Tribal History, use of technology in the classroom, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Anishinaabeg culture to name a few. In addition, administrators, faculty and staff are given release time to attend professional development seminars and/or discipline-specific workshops at the regional and national levels. WETCC provides funding for these workshops as the budget allows.

Some professional development activities faculty and staff have attended include:

- Higher Learning Commission Commitment vs. Compliance Workshop & Assessment Workshops
- Higher Learning Commission, Annual Conference
- Tribal College Library Institute
- Ojibwe Language Teaching Immersion
- National Science Foundation Grant Writing Training
- Administration for Native Americans Grant Writing Training
- Multiple Financial Aid workshops and trainings
- Community and Economic Development
- Title III Trainings
- Writers conferences
- Human Rights Training
- CAMS Training
- Safety in the Workplace

- OSHA Compliance Training
- Tracking Curriculum Development Workshop
- Minnesota Historical Society Workshops
- Humanities Teachers Workshops
- Major Gift Campaign Seminar
- Somatic Experience Certificate Program
- Certificate, Instructional Technology
- Student Disabilities training
- MN/American Indian Mental Health workshops
- Tax Credit training, Policies and Procedures training
- Payroll Certification
- Serv Safe Certification

WETCC distributes announcements about professional development opportunities. Faculty members are expected to increase their competency within their disciplines and limited funds are available for travel to professional meetings. Similarly, announcements of student opportunities such as scholarships and internships are distributed throughout the college. Funds have been provided to support student travel to:

- The American Indian Higher Education Consortium Annual Conference
- The First Americans Land Grant Consortium Annual Conference
- The Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) Conference

#### 5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Because WETCC utilizes a student-centered approach to all learning, it is critical that all faculty are assessable for student's inquiries regardless of course or programming. Communication for our student base is crucial if they are to remain engaged as life presents adversities that are often difficult to overcome. Strong modes of communication allow instructors to remain connected to their students. If there is a breakdown in the communication loop, the likelihood of completion significantly decreases.

Faculty contact information and availability are listed on course syllabi. Full-time faculty members are available to meet with students one-on-one during posted office hours and/or by appointment. There is also an expectation that full time faculty members are usually available on campus during regular business hours. Adjunct faculty make themselves available prior to or after class. In addition, all faculty members provide cell numbers, home phone numbers, and email addresses.

WETCC students will often connect with instructors whenever they see that they are free. Spontaneous conversations about life situations, missing course work, course requirements, all help to maintain a personal connection. This is a strength of the institution.

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.

All of the student services staff has appropriate credentials related to their positions. Continual training in their fields is developed in line with their professional development goals. Professional development goals are identified by the staff and supervisor and included in the budgets of each student service division. Staff is encouraged to attend courses at the WETCC to help continue their education as well. As described above in 3.C-4, staff in all areas of the College are supported in their professional development.

### **Core Component 3D. 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.

Student services provide a variety of support for our various student populations. The Student Liaison helps students maintain their attendance and determine types of other support students may need. The student liaison provides students with gas cards when needed, and is in the process of growing an Angel Fund to help students with more substantial emergencies that prevent them from attending school such as purchasing a car battery. The student liaison contacts students missing two classes in a row (our early warning system), develops academic progress plans with financial aid, and meets weekly with students who have struggled to succeed in the past.

The Financial Aid Office determines the level of financial need for students and assists students in gaining scholarships, work-study, and other types of financial support. The Financial Aid Office educates students during orientation about how financial aid works and how best to use financial aid. Financial aid meets individually with students frequently to discuss their particular situation and offer any support in additional scholarship monies available. Financial aid contacts students to let them know they are eligible for various programs and how to apply for funding.

The Admissions Office provide students with guidance on getting admitted to the school. This includes helping students with Accuplacer and initial advising into courses for registration. The Registrar assists students with their email and other services provided by our student information system such as how to access and print transcripts.

The Counselor for student services will provide support for students who are having personal troubles that impact their education in a negative way, will provide disability services, assists veterans, and offer career and job placement counseling. The Counselor will also implement our comprehensive Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program.

Student Services staff trains faculty about student service processes to help faculty better serve students. Training on the admissions process, Accuplacer, financial aid awards and

funding, attendance requirements, early warning systems, registration, transcripts retrieval for advising, education plan requirements and counseling services are all part of the training.

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.

As part of our admissions process students are required to take the Accuplacer. This helps direct students into the appropriate course for the skill level.

3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students. Admissions and the registrar assist with initial advising when students first enter WETCC. The registrar and the Dean of Student Services work closely with the Dean of Academics and faculty advisors to assist in advising that best meets the needs of our 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).

Library Services and Support:

Because of space issues, the library at WETCC is actually composed of two separate collections. The smaller of the two is located at Wadiswan, the main campus building. The larger library, formerly located on the Main Street of Mahnommen, is now located at Waadookoodaading, the Student Services building. We currently do not have the large space necessary to house the entire library in one location. To make the most of our holdings, the small library houses books and non-print media to support the current semester's curriculum. By noting the course offerings and communicating with professors, the librarian is able to identify the materials most likely to be needed by each class. Books are moved back and forth between the two libraries. Some books and multi-media are considered core items and are consistently housed at Wadiswan.

On occasion an instructor's course changes direction, they need additional resources, or students do research on tangential subjects. In that case, the librarian brings in additional materials. Books provided for recreational reading are changed every few weeks, and requests are provided within 24 hours. Some instructors put books on reserve for students, and they are accessible on a rolling bookcase that can be delivered to any classroom in Wadiswan.

### Technology Infrastructure, Management and Support:

1. Telecommunications Capacity – WETCC currently has a fiber connection for our Internet service as well as fiber connections between buildings. It is our mission to provide the best connections possible to aid in delivery of data to students, faculty, and staff.
2. Equipment Access for Instruction – The internet-connected computer to student ratio is 1:2. We plan to increase the ratio to 1:1 by the end of this planning period if we have the space. Our teacher to Internet connected computer ratio is 1:1. We plan to maintain that ratio. All of student accessible computers are in labs or open areas .
3. Average Age of Equipment – The average age of equipment available for student use in the labs is 2 years.
4. Replacement Schedule – We do not have a specific replacement schedule for technology. Challenges we foresee in maintaining and upgrading our technology infrastructure include finding the funding to replace equipment in a timely manner, providing for technology staff support, and funding the costs of Internet and other telecommunications services. Tentative planning forecasts a four-year replacement cycle.
5. Interactive Whiteboards and other devices – WETCC owns 6 Smart Boards which are now permanently mounted in our new facility. Some members of the staff have both a laptop and a desktop computer. Each staff member has a 2 gigabyte or larger USB drive to help keep information organized, as well as a Microsoft online account to share documents and calendars, etc.
6. Technology Platform – Our technology platform is predominately PC based. However, we do use Apple computers for one of our servers and for many of our new staff computers. Students primarily use PC's and many staff members have Apples.
7. Level of Technology Staff Support – The level of technology staff support is sufficient to manage the infrastructure and network as well as to facilitate day-to-day needs. Those needs include troubleshooting software, printers, student needs, and staff assistance, however with the growing needs we need to consider adding a support technician in the near future. A goal of WETCC is to have a stable student population of 250 students within 2-5 years, and at that point we will need support exclusively for students.
8. Assistive Technology – Our technology support staff is aware of several options of assistive technology, and has the knowledge to implement as needed.
9. Challenges – Our greatest challenges are space and money. There is always a need for more room and additional technology as we grow. Phase III of our building plan will provide a unified library with archive area, which will be readily accessible to students. As the College's services grow, so must the technology budget to support additional staffing, equipment, and media.
10. Keeping Current with Technology Trends – Staff is encouraged to read professional journals (both print and electronic) and to attend workshops and

classes in order to stay aware of the trends and the availability of cutting-edge technology that would help us become more effective educators.

5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

The librarian provides classroom instruction on research skills several times each semester by instructor invitation. These workshops, typically one class period in duration, generally provide hands-on training in locating information using the databases linked to the library's home page. The students follow the librarian as she goes through the process on the Smart Board, and then they try to locate articles for their topics on their own. They also learn about research ethics (intellectual honesty) and how to use documentation to avoid plagiarism. Recognizing that the Internet, though an incredible resource can be a research obstacle if learners cannot identify source credibility. This is another important piece of research knowledge the student gains in the workshop. Students learn how to identify articles that are reliable and how to double-check for veracity.

Some students need information on how to use our library in general. In that case the librarian teaches basic library skills: how to look up books by subject, author, or title in the online catalog, how to locate a book on the shelf using the call number, how to check out a book, and how to be a responsible book borrower. In other words, the librarian teaches the skills the instructor has identified as needs in his students.

Finally, there are many teachable moments in the daily interactions the librarian has with students. Some students just drop in to visit the library and may have a question about a book, author, or ask for quick information on a topic. The librarian uses these moments to do a quick tutorial about these subjects. In any case, the librarian is successful in all of these informative endeavors only if there is a warm and accepting atmosphere in the library. All are welcome, and the librarian strives to meet the reference needs of the college community.

**Core Component 3E. 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.

WETCC offers student's unique opportunities to help them grow in ways the classroom cannot offer. One example involves students attending the Minnesota State University at Moorhead (MSUM) Student Academic Conference and presenting posters along-side juniors and seniors.

A Student Ambassador program is in the experimental stages. The WETCC Ambassadors are official student representatives of the University with specific responsibilities to Student Services. They strengthen communication with various groups internally and externally by serving as visible,

informed representatives to the guests of the college. Ambassadors fill the role for positive public relations and provide positive energy on and off campus.

We seek out the best and most enthusiastic students to represent the college. The qualities we look for in successful candidates include: friendliness, knowledge of the WETCC campus and the surrounding communities, highly developed listening and oral communication skills, and good organizational and time management skills. Excellent presentation skills and ability to speak comfortably in front of both small and large groups is a must. Punctuality and dependability are crucial. Ambassadors need to be in good academic standing with the college and must have a minimum cumulative GPA 2.5. Ambassadors must be current WETCC students, involved within the college and have knowledge of activities and opportunities for students on WETCC's campus and the surrounding communities.

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.

Students are encouraged to learn about the Anishinaabe culture. Ojibwe I is a required course for all students introducing learners to the language of the Anishinaabe people. Either Ojibwe II or Anishinaabe Philosophy is also a WETCC requirement. Additional courses such as: Indigenous Studies, Anishinaabe Culture, Tribal-Federal Law, Native American Literature, Multicultural Literature, and Multicultural Studies further encourage connection by broadening learner perspectives with regards to richness of culture.

As with other mainstream institutions that were founded by particular religions, but that do not insist on a canon of religious observance or beliefs, we do not require our students to adhere to a particular belief system. However, the College is committed to the revitalization and growth of the language, culture, arts, spirituality and traditions of the Anishinaabe People. All students are invited to participate where and when appropriate to do so.

## Summary

### Strengths:

- There are two full-time and some adjuncts who have been teaching at the college for many years. This demonstrates longevity, institutional memory and dedication.
- Faculty senate process has improved and faculty have a strong voice in teaching and learning.

### Challenges:

- We have three programs (Business, Human Services, Education/Early Childhood) that were removed from our offerings. These programs are in the process of being revitalized.
- Two out of the four full-time faculty members have excessive workloads that will eventually create burn out.
- There is no support staff for faculty.

## CRITERION FOUR. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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**Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement.** White Earth Tribal and Community College demonstrates responsibility for 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.

**Core Component 4A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.**

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

The WETCC mission, vision, teachings, and institutional commitments all are interwoven with the Anishinaabe culture which provides the context for institutional assessment, planning, data analysis, and data reporting that is required at every level to maintain educational excellence. The value of academic assessment data is that it creates connection points where clearly defined learner outcomes that originate in classrooms are linked to program and institutional student learning goals.

It is critical to the quality of WETCC degree programs that each be reviewed to determine program effectiveness by assessing fulfillment of program goals while continuing to support the mission of the College. Because this was identified as an area of weakness in the 2012 HLC site visit, an Assessment Committee was formally developed in May of 2014 with the goal of determining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for WETCC programs and courses. Furthermore, this committee was charged with identifying data collection points within courses and programming, to determine when data will be analyzed, and then a communication timeline to disseminate that information. This was a collaborative effort between the Academic Dean, Faculty Senate, the Assessment Committee, the Programs and Instruction Committee, and numerous other individuals' college wide given the challenge of providing data that would give insight into course and program development, review, and improvement. These data show the following results:

I. Strengths:

- a. The Academic Dean oversees that courses and program planning are consistent with the mission of the college, recognizes the critical nature of assessment efforts, and collaborates with faculty and staff to ensure that data yields meaningful results used for ongoing planning. Faculty, the Leadership Team, and the College President support assessment efforts.
- b. 100% participation in the assessment process by all full-time faculty.
- c. New focus on data collection which is used in the decision making process.
- d. Assessment of learning is accomplished through a variety of assessment techniques including both direct and indirect approaches.
- e. Portfolio assessment data has been developed with efforts focused on general education competencies.

- f. Collaborative efforts with Student Services and instructional faculty have created opportunities to interface where efforts are combined and synergistic effects are exerted on student learning and development maximizing the impact and quality of the college experience.
- g. Faculty members are responsive to the need to develop and assess outcomes for their students in ways that are more systematic, consistent, collaborative, and documentable than individual efforts may have been in the past.
- h. Faculty members were engaged in developing the WETCC Learner Outcomes and the rubric which have become the foundation for all other institutional documents such as: the WETCC Strategic Plan, the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, the Institutional Assessment Plan and the Academic Handbook to name a few.
- i. WETCC has always been a learner-centered institution of higher education focused on Indigenous knowledge based on community responsibility and connectedness, altering the way that learners look at the world and their relationship in it, creating a full scope of understanding.

II. Weaknesses:

- a. Because of changes in presidential leadership, where all programming was removed with the exception of the AA Degree, the Environmental Science program, and the Native American Studies program, there is a deficit as we move forward with reimplementation of previous programs that were highly successful.
- b. There is a need for continuity and stability in leadership.
- c. Because previous faculty members did not see the critical need for assessment, there is limited evaluative data, policies were not updated, and there was limited accountability for compliance that would have utilized data in the decision making process.
- d. Policies need to be written and approved, course assessment reporting needs to be standardized, and stronger efforts need to be made to tighten the reporting process for uniformity.
- e. The assessment process needs to be further developed, implemented, strategies identified, and the continuous improvement loop closed to be in compliance with the Higher Learning Commission.
- f. More progress needs to be made in the participation of adjunct faculty in the assessment process experience such as, the newly added First Year Experience Course which encompasses all departments that students have contact with, gives them tools and resources, and provides a solid foundation for their education.
- g. The developmental tract needs to be reevaluated and is at a point of considerable discussion as we collaborate to determine alternative points of access that would decrease the number of students on the developmental tract.
- h. Small student population makes quantitative data collection extremely difficult and inaccurate.

### III. Opportunities:

- a. Utilizing assessment data in the academic decision making process could provide significant resources to courses and programs.
- b. WETCC embraces a diversified pedagogy that embraces the indigenous way of knowing where educational knowledge focuses on studying the natural world and reconnecting learners with it.
- c. This unique approach is learner centered and could be developed as a paradigm for other institutions of higher learning.
- d. As a WETCC faculty, administration, and staff that is focused on both our students and the communities that we serve, we recognize that there are many opportunities for us to collaborate our efforts with community organizations, schools, and local programs to better support our community of learners.
- e. Understanding the needs of our students helps us to identify access points that offer opportunities to help WETCC students to achieve academic success.

### IV. Threats:

- a. Assessment has not yet made sufficient progress in the utilization of data to drive the decision making process.
- b. The Higher Learning Commission in its previous report identified this as a weakness and policies and processes need to be woven into the foundational structure of the College.

From this information, the foundation began to evolve utilizing the WETCC Learner Outcomes as a foundation for program review. Once the outcomes were finalized and approved, a rubric was designed that could be used, not only for course evaluation, but also for program review and assessment.

The purpose of program review is to allow faculty to analyze the quality of academic programs with the goal of developing an evidence-based understanding of learner effectiveness that will assist in the decision-making process. Program reviews are a critical component of the continuous improvement loop because they help to identify areas of growth and development. It is an opportunity to determine how we are preparing students to engage in their communities, which degree programs are innovative and current, and the state of well-being, productivity, and the adequacy of academic support and institutional resources for faculty. The review process is an opportunity to learn and to share those discoveries across the College system.

#### I. Process:

At WETCC the review process involves two forms of review:

1. An annual update and report
2. A 3 year comprehensive program review

II. The Annual Report:

The annual report is written by program faculty and reflects the ongoing assessment of student learning relative to program goals. Its focus is on what students are learning and how that determination is made. The annual reports are more formative than summative and shaping program adjustments are based on learning. The annual report also provides an update with regards to programming, and/or campus or community plans for which the program is involved. The annual report is an internal campus document submitted to the Academic Dean. It will be shared with the WETCC Leadership team.

III. Implementation of 3-Year Comprehensive Program Review:

White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) will provide oversight for the program review process through the establishment of a three-year review cycle for all programming. In the inaugural years (2014-2017), all programs will participate in the program review process. This review process will consist of internal and external alignment of programs and of review and correction of all program academic data. After 2017, one-third of all programs will participate in review each year. The Faculty Senate will review each report, provide timely feedback through the review cycle, and support implementation of program improvement goals.

The Academic Dean in collaboration with the faculty in charge of programming will establish a review team composed of faculty senate, students, an external community member, and the Academic Dean.

In the program's self-study, the program's faculty is responsible for assessing the program strengths, weaknesses, and to make recommendations for program improvement. The WETCC Program Review Form must be a part of the evaluative process.

Regular reviews provide valuable feedback to college leadership closing the feedback loop where academic decisions related to degree programs are determined by substantive data and activities. It is WETCC's goal to strive for academic excellence in programs that support effective teaching and learning.

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.

It is the policy of WETCC to give credit for college-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential setting. WETCC policy defines the requirements for evaluating and granting credit to admitted students.

**CREDIT FOR MILITARY EXPERIENCE**

Students having served in the military may request to have credit awarded for experiences gained while serving in the military, in accordance with Minnesota Statue 197.775, Sub. 2. Requests will be evaluated based on the WETCC program of study. A copy of the veteran's DD-214 and any other transcribed records of education must be on file

in the Registrar's Office.

Students can be awarded four (4) credits for their basic military training and they will be listed as general elective credits. These credits may or may not transfer to other institutions. Additional credit may be awarded depending on the type of training/education received. Evaluation of these credits will utilize the "Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces" and credits will be awarded as recommended by the American Council on Education. This information can be found at the following website: <http://www2.acenet.edu/militaryguide/OccupationSearch.cfm>

### **CREDIT FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

Students may earn academic credit in certain college courses applicable to their program of study if they have gained skills and knowledge from previous education, job training, self-study, or occupational experiences. In some programs, students may be permitted to start at a more advanced level if they can demonstrate college-level competency similar in nature and quality to the competency they would acquire in courses offered at WETCC. Examination, proficiency demonstration, and/or college-level experiential learning as documented by portfolio assessment may determine this competency. Students may be charged applicable fees. A maximum of 6 experiential learning credits will be awarded if competency is determined.

### **CLEP TESTING**

College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations are offered by the College Board. They afford students the opportunity to obtain recognition for college-level achievement in five general areas, as well as numerous subject areas. The General Examinations measure material usually covered in the first two years of college and often referred to as general education requirements. The Subject Examinations measure achievement in specific college courses and are used to grant exemption from and credit for these courses.

A CLEP Subject Examination may not be taken to establish credit for a course in which a student has already earned credit in a higher-level sequential course. A Subject Examination may not be used to establish credit in a subject that the student has previously failed.

### **TEST OUT**

A currently enrolled student in good standing may petition to challenge a college level course at WETCC. A challenge may be granted with the approval of the instructor and academic dean. A student may initiate the process by completing a Credit by Examination form available from the Student Services office. A committee will review the form and decide whether to approve such an examination. Test out options may not be available for all courses. A fee based on the lecture/lab content of the course will be assessed for the examination.

If the student passes the test, it is recorded as a CR (Credit by Exam) on the student's transcript in the transfer section of the transcript. If the student fails the test, the attempt is not recorded on the student's transcript.

Credit by Examination (Test-out credits) will not be counted in the student's GPA, nor will they factor in the determination of financial aid, but they will be listed on the transcript. There will be no limit on the number of courses of which a student may test-out, except that the student must meet the College requirement for credits taken on campus. Credits earned through this process may not transfer to other institutions.

A student may not test-out of a course that appears on the student's record. A student may not repeat an unsuccessful attempt at testing out (credit by exam).

### **EVALUATION OF CREDITS**

All credits that are received for courses taken at WETCC are recorded on the official transcripts to document the completion of coursework. The evaluation of credit is based on faculty assessment of student work. Grades are submitted and verified by the Registrar. Other grading criteria include a student withdrawal (W), an incomplete (I), and/or audit (AU), etc. These criteria follow the same process for transcription.

Course titles, credit hours, semester/year, and grades are recorded in the CAMS System. Faculty submits their grades into the CAMS system at the end of each semester. The Registrar is responsible for entering the grades into the system at the end of the term. The official college transcript is a complete academic record for all WETCC students.

3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts as transfer. WETCC accepts transfer credits earned from institutions that are fully accredited by one of the six U.S. regional associations. Students must submit official transcripts from all previous institutions attended. The student must also apply for admission.

After a transfer student has been admitted to WETCC, official transcripts will be evaluated for transfer credits according to [Policy 5.611 – WETCC Transfer of Credit Policy](#). The following criteria ([WETCC Transfer of Credits, page 27-28](#)) in the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog will be considered when evaluating transcripts for transfer:

1. Transfer courses that have the same course objectives as defined by the WETCC syllabi.
2. Only college level courses with a "D" or better will be accepted.
3. Most vocational courses will not transfer to WETCC degree programs and will not be considered free electives.
4. Some transfer courses may substitute for required degree core courses or required general education courses by means of a substitution form. Substitution forms are available at Student Services submitted to the registrar, and will be reviewed by the Faculty Senate for approval/denial.
5. Quarter credit hours are transferred in at 0.667 semester credits.

How courses meet specific degree requirements, on occasion, may not be determined until after registration. Questions regarding transfer credit evaluations should be directed to the Academic Dean. If a student is not satisfied with the transfer credit evaluation and explanation, they can appeal with the following process:

1. The student completes and submits an Academic Appeal Form, which is available at Student Services.
2. Supporting materials such as course syllabus, course description, course reading list, etc. must be included.
3. The information is turned into the Academic Dean.
4. The Academic dean will review the appeal the Faculty Senate, the Registrar, and issue a written decision to the student.

Transfer students must take a minimum of 20 semester hours at WETCC in order to graduate from WETCC.

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 qualification 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.

The exercise of authority over courses, student learner outcomes, learning resources, and faculty qualifications resides with WETCC in accordance with the expectations of the HLC. The Faculty Senate and the Curriculum Committee have the authority to review and approve curriculum of all programs. Furthermore, they are also responsible for the development, review, revision, and approval of academic and curriculum policies.

Within the context of WETCC policy and guidelines, the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, and expectations for student learning are all set by campus academic program leaders and are reviewed by Faculty Senate. In all cases, faculty plays a critical role in both the development and the oversight of curriculum.

The WETCC Curriculum Standards Policy is currently under review by the Faculty Senate. Once it has been approved, it will be submitted for review from the WETCC Leadership Team, and final approval from the Council of Trustees. WETCC maintains high standards of excellence for all academic programs. Academic excellence is aligned with the mission, vision, and values of WETCC. The responsibility for establishing and maintaining curriculum standards rests with the faculty in collaboration with the Academic Dean and the campus curriculum committee.

Evidence that WETCC faculty exercise over its curriculum, and that faculty is responsible for those standards, is demonstrated by their active role in the development of the Curriculum Standards Policy along with numerous others that apply to assessment and evaluation is documented in Faculty Senate meeting minutes.

The Academic Handbook contains approved academic policy and curriculum. Course information is programmed into the CAMS information system to automate policy compliance. For example, the CAMS registration system will only allow a student to register for a class if any prerequisites are met. Exceptions are rare and must be approved by the Academic Dean. In addition, students can audit their own degrees by comparing coursework against those in the Academic Handbook by listing the requirements that have been met and those necessary for program completion.

Every WETCC academic program is required to establish expectations for student learning. Whereas the process for review is just through the approval stages, programs will be reviewed on a regular basis as required by the Program Review Policy. Through evaluation, improvement strategies linked to assessment data determines evidence of student learning appropriate to degree and program levels. Articulated expectations of student learning are required from all faculty. The WETCC Syllabus Template demonstrates the methodology for creating measurable course learner outcomes and objectives.

The most important resource for student learning are the seven Anishinaabe Teachings which are embedded in college learning. The college drum provides a heartbeat for the College and is a pathway for all connections, relationships, ceremonies, education, and learning processes. Students are immediately introduced to the drum at student orientation. Seasonal feasts and change of season's ceremonies provide opportunities for cultural foundations and community building. The Spirit or Prayer Pole is a place for all to gather, to honor, to offer prayers and leave tobacco. This ceremony builds the foundation of the Anishinaabe Culture where through experience, there is learning about connection, reconnection, and maintaining of cultural values and how they relate to the community and self.

The college uses a variety of learning resources common to other institutions that enhance student learning. We have three libraries, including one collection donated by Gerald Vizenor and it is very unique, offering resources for students in a variety of capacities. Students have continual access to computer labs with free printing, tutors to assist them with struggles in their coursework, strong academic advisors who spend ample time with individual students, and a student counselor to help them find their purpose and goals.

In order for students to remain engaged in learning, they must have financial support and resources. Student Services provides assistance in submitting FAFSA documents, scholarship applications, and other services related to funding opportunities.

The Student Liaison provides guidance and support directly linked to student learning. This individual is the first contact from faculty who assist with identifying student learner needs. High-risk students, such as those on Academic Probation or those on Student Academic Process, both report to the liaison to develop plans, track progress, and work with faculty to assure student success.

There are services for students with disabilities assuring that a qualified individual with a disability will not be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the programs, services, or activities, nor will the individual be subjected to discrimination in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Part of its commitment to valuing and supporting effective teaching and learning, and consistent with its accrediting body and MnSCU (Minnesota State College and University) standards, WETCC assures that faculty members are appropriately qualified in their disciplines relative to their responsibilities in teaching effectiveness, assessment, academic advising, scholarship, and service.

A part of that assurance includes the verification that faculty hold the degrees appropriate to their disciplines or fields of study. This verification process has been updated and put into rigorous enforcement in the fall of 2014 and is conducted by the HR Office in collaboration with the Academic Dean. For new hires, both original transcripts and criminal background checks are required. The Academic Dean reviews all assurance materials. Adjunct faculty whose original transcripts are not obtained by the end of the first term of teaching are not rehired. In some circumstances, traditional artists or elders with Anishinaabe knowledge or skills are hired to fulfill instructor roles adding to the cultural richness of experiential learning.

Currently, WETCC is just in the infancy stages of dual credit for high school students. In 2015, concurrent enrollment will take place with the Circle of Life Academy (a Bureau of Indian Education school) in White Earth, Minnesota. As this relationship matures, the college will accumulate data, evaluate course offerings, and explore additional high school opportunities for those students interested in concurrent enrollment.

WETCC Extension is also an integral part of student support in the fabric of student learning in all aspects of the Learner Outcomes such as; " leadership' by Extensions offering opportunities for students to teach traditional skill classes and co-lead extension community workshops; through embodying the "good life" through all aspects of programming with community and families, "finding purpose" in culturally relevant family based seasonal day camps like wild ricing and berry picking and maple sugaring and through day to day relationship and "community first" building with our students in their daily classes and in supporting student senate and campus wide activities.

5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Not applicable at this time.

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).

This has been a weakness of the college. During spring semester 2015, a committee led by the Dean of Student Services will develop a plan for gathering and using appropriate data related to our mission such as employment rates, admission rates to other degree programs, participation in fellowships, internship, and special programs.

**Core Component 4B. 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.

The Faculty Senate developed strategies to assess the quality of learning at WETCC at three levels: individual courses, discipline/program, and overall. At every level, the plan encourages faculty to continually ask questions about student learning.

Instructors assess students regularly and use those results to make decisions about their curricula and pedagogies. Needed changes that are identified in this process may be instructional or they may necessitate support from the college. The assessment plans are designed to make this process more transparent and data driven. Rather than imposing specific assessment strategies on faculty, it provides them with a consistent and coherent framework that encourages and supports initiatives that improve student learning. The plan is faculty-driven where the goal is transformative improvements to instruction and curriculum.

**Overall Learner Outcomes**

Work began on the development of Overall Learning Outcomes in 2006. At this time the WETCC faculty identified four general education learning goals (critical and creative thinking, problem solving, communication, and the ability to incorporate Anishinaabe culture into modern global context). A plan was developed to collect examples of student work, surveys, and an exit interview into portfolios, which would serve as the data for demonstrating student achievement of these outcomes. The Environmental Science Programs also developed Program level learner outcomes and a portfolio-based assessment plan to support them. This plan was generalized and presented to the Faculty Senate as a template for other program level assessment plans. However, there is no clear evidence that any additional such plans were created at that time.

Since 2006, the Overall Learner Outcomes have been revised on several occasions as it became clear that they were not adequate and/or appropriate for our needs. The most obvious case was after it was found through a student survey that nearly all of those surveyed did not have a clear idea what the learner outcomes meant and could not give examples of how they had met them. The end result of this process is the following list of WETCC Learner Outcomes that are based on Higher Education norms and Anishinaabeg

teachings and provide a framework for programming, curriculum, and course assignments ([WETCC Learner Outcomes and Rubric](#)).

Since current student numbers at WETCC are relatively low, statistical analysis of achievement data is of limited value. The anecdotal data available through portfolios of student work remain a manageable system for our institution. Each student portfolio will contain the following items:

- Results of their math and reading placement tests
- Four assignments that are normal parts of specific courses, but that have been designed to address the educational goals of the college. These are copies of:
  - The first paper from College Writing I
  - The final paper from College Writing II
  - Portions of their journal project from Ojibwe I
  - Their final presentation in a science course
- An exit interview with the College counselor
- Follow up surveys one year after graduation to determine student perceptions of the value or their education relative to their current situation

This set of materials provides both direct and indirect measures of student achievement and multiple measures of each WETCC Learner Outcome. The WETCC Learner Outcome Rubric is the evaluative tool for determining levels of achievement and from there identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement within the curriculum. The Faculty Senate will evaluate these items on a cyclical basis. They will analyze the portfolios of graduating students and will focus on two of the learner outcomes each year. Results will be reported to the Leadership Team, the President, and Council of Trustees in an annual assessment report along with an action plan for the following academic year.

### **Course Level Assessment**

Using the WETCC Learner Outcomes and the Rubric as a foundation, full time faculty members have identified learning goals relevant to their courses and/or program along with measurable objectives for each. Thus, all outcomes, goals, and objectives align and support the college mission and vision.

At the course level, the instructor's primary focus is the articulation of outcomes with often very discipline-specific. There are a number of terms that are used to describe that focus such as: goals, objectives, and learner outcomes. In the past, these terms have sometimes been used interchangeably; however, distinguishing them from one another ultimately helps instructors better understand course level assessment. The differences between goals, objectives, and tools how to write measurable learner outcomes are identified in both the WETCC Institutional Assessment Plan and the WETCC Syllabus Template.

At the course-level, the process includes the following design:

***Planning***

- Conduct assessment training.
- For each course, Faculty develops 3-5 Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).
- For each course, Faculty identifies how to assess the SLOs.
- For each course, Faculty identifies performance standards for each outcome.

***Part 1 – Throughout the Semester***

- Implement assessments during class as scheduled.

***Part 2 – End of the Semester***

- Record assessment results, ***analyze*** results, and ***develop*** action plans.

***Part 3 – Throughout Subsequent Semesters***

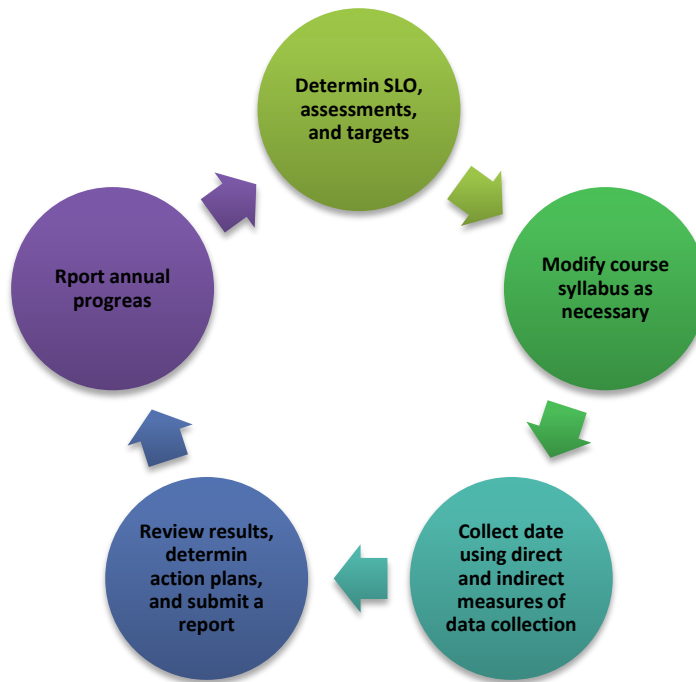
- Implement action plans and assessments during class.

***Part 4 – End of Each Semester***

- Record progress of action plans.
- Make necessary changes to curriculum, assessments, teaching strategies, etc.

This process will document assessment results, propose improvements, and a plan for implementation. This process is iterative, allowing for continuous process of course improvement and for the implementation of changes in direction or focus. The final step of this process will be an annual assessment workshop where faculty members will share their course-level assessment results. The resulting dialogue will allow for the collaboration of best practices and foster the sharing of ideas among colleagues.

## Process Flow



### Program Level Assessment

The final level of assessment occurs at the program level. Program assessment focuses on what and how an academic program is contributing to the learning, growth, and development of students majoring in that discipline. An effective plan includes specific program goals, measurable student learning outcomes, and a well-articulated plan for timely implementation of strategic data collection and analysis. Findings are then used to inform, confirm, and support program level change and facilitate continuous program level improvement.

This plan allow faculty to:

- Assess student achievement of program learner outcomes
- Identify learner gaps
- Inform teaching pedagogy by aligning best practices with learner’s needs
- Make informed decisions about program curriculum, course action, and revision

Program assessment takes into account not only the academic components of the department/program but also support services such as advising. It is an opportunity for faculty to engage in an ongoing conversation about how their courses relate holistically to the program goals.

Like course-level assessment, program-level assessment is an iterative or repetitive process that provides faculty with a framework to examine present and future educational offerings. The process itself is similar to that of course-level assessment—identifying program learning goals, aligning goals with the curriculum, gathering evidence of student learning, interpreting the evidence, and using the evidence for improvement.

A key distinction between the two processes is that program-level assessment requires the collective engagement of faculty during all steps in the process. The process is as follows:

### **Planning**

- Determine the responsible faculty member for each WETCC program.
- Identify those individuals responsible for the assessment process.
- Develop and articulate the programs mission, goals, and outcomes.
- During the planning phase outcome targets and the assessment methods to measure the outcomes are selected.
- For each program, Faculty develops 5-7 Program Learning Goals and Objectives.

### **Program Learner Goals-**

- Program goals focus on the general outcomes for graduates relevant to the program itself. For example:
  - Students should develop a critical understanding of . . .
  - Students who complete this program should see the importance of ethical communication with others;
  - Students will develop and understanding of important methods and concepts in the sciences;
  - Students will obtain a mastery of higher-order objectives such as problem solving in relation to their discipline.
  - It is generally a good idea to identify between three and five instructional goals for programs.

### **Program Objectives -**

- Program objectives transform the general program goals into specific student performance and behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skills.
- The following questions should be answered:
  - For each of the goals, what are the specific behaviors, skills, and/or abilities that would determine that this goal was achieved?
  - What evidence or behavior illustrates that achievement?
  - What evidence tells you that students have met those goals?
  - Utilization of *Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs* and the *Task Oriented Construction Wheel Based on Bloom's Taxonomy* are both helpful tools in the development process.

### ***Part 1 – Throughout the Semester***

- Implement assessments during class as scheduled.

### ***Part 2 – End of the Semester***

- Record assessment results, **analyze** results, and **develop** action plans.

### ***Part 3 – Throughout Subsequent Semesters***

- Implement action plans and assessments during class.

#### **Part 4 – End of Each Semester**

- Record progress of action plans.
- Make necessary changes to program goals, objectives, curriculum, assessments, teaching strategies, etc.

This process is also iterative and allows for continuous course improvement and implementation of changes in direction or focus. Program assessment results will also be reported out in the annual assessment workshop along with course level assessment.

2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Program assessment is critical because it focuses in how academic programming contributes to the learning, growth, and development of students. Each program must have specific program goals, differentiated measurable student learner outcomes, and an articulated plan for implementation, data collection, and analysis. Data should then be used to inform, confirm, and support program level changes and to facilitate continued program level improvement.

Currently, the most robust program level assessment occurs within the Environmental Science program. It has a mission to prepare students for work in a natural resource related fields or continued study of natural resource or natural sciences. This preparation will serve as a bridge between the place-based and participatory Native science of the Anishinaabeg people and the leading edge of Western science. In particular the goals of this program are to produce students who:

1. Have a direct and detailed knowledge of the living communities of northern Minnesota.
2. Are able to apply this knowledge to "reading the landscape", i.e. interpreting the meanings of what they observe.

The ES curriculum at WETCC is designed with these specific goals in mind. In order to measure our success in achieving these goals we have established the following student outcomes for program graduates. Graduates of the ES program will be able to:

- a) Identify wildlife species by physical form, tracks and other sign, and sounds (including, but not limited to, vocalizations);
- b) Identify plants, fungi, and geophysical objects or phenomena by their physical characteristics;
- c) Describe the community dynamics and interactions/interdependencies between the inhabitants of the three main biomes of White Earth
- d) Interpret some of the stories that the above observations tell.

These outcomes are assessed through classroom and field observations and student portfolios that include examples of projects and excerpts from field journals. These data are the only effective tool for assessing the above outcomes because most involve the students' ability to identify and interpret observations made in the field. Assessment

results and the planning that flow for them are reported annual to the Dean and Faculty Senate.

The other programs of study at WETCC are at different stages of developing assessment plans. Some require the hiring of full time instructors with the credentials to do this work. This is planned for the spring semester of 2015. The plans for Arts/Humanities, Native Studies, and Business are being designed with a similar structure to ES. All the program level assessment plans will be reviewed as part of the program review process and revised as needed. Such a system is flexible in that any changes in the goals or mission of the program and/or college can be reflected in similar changes in the learner outcomes and benchmarks used to assess learning. It will provide data for ongoing improvements in teaching and learning at the college. It will provide rapid feedback if problems should arise so corrective measures can be taken. Finally, it will not be unduly burdensome on the faculty. This is an important point since the faculty already have a multitude of responsibilities and additional workloads must have a clear high benefit relative to the effort needed.

The portfolios used in program assessment represent student work over their entire tenure at WETCC. They enable faculty to:

- Assess complex tasks and objectives utilizing many different examples of student work, including interdisciplinary learning and capabilities.
- Assess more rigorous and higher order thinking skills such as application, synthesis and evaluation.
- Assess student work over a specified time.
- Examine the process including drafting, revision, and final submission of student projects.
- Place responsibility for demonstrating competence or mastery upon the student.
- Help students reflect on learning and their own educational journey, and in the process, to understand what they have and have not yet learned
- Provide students with documentation for job applications or applications for continued education.

Instructors can then determine the following:

- How those assignments collected in the portfolio contributed to higher-order learning.
- What the student learned from the process of generating the work.
- How the work fits into a larger framework of life-long learning, which goes beyond simple completion of graded assignments.
- Why the work was valuable in the student's overall cognitive development?

In the past, program assessment was not an area of strength for WETCC. However, it is the goal of faculty, administration, and staff to integrate assessment into all learning activities. Program instructors are focused on closing the continuous improvement loop

and everyone values the culture of assessment. WETCC will assess student learning on a continual basis: at the course level, in both summative and formative assessments, at specific program stages, and through the utilization of portfolios. Data will be used to assess individual student achievement and improve educational offerings.

3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning. The goal of assessment is to provide evidence that demonstrates that WETCC programs use assessment data for program improvement. Assessment data will be presented and improvement recommendations noted. Although this process is currently at the implementation stage, it is essential that there are established mechanisms for the program review process. That said, more work needs to be done to make explicit, systematic links between the collection and analysis of assessment data and to illustrate how that information will be linked to curricular change.

We understand that the purpose of program review is to allow faculty to analyze the quality of academic programs with the goal of developing an evidence-based understanding of learner effectiveness that will assist in the decision-making process. Program reviews are a critical component of the continuous improvement loop because they help to identify areas of growth and development. It is an opportunity to determine how we are preparing students to engage in their communities, which degree programs are innovative and current, and the state of well-being, productivity, and the adequacy of academic support and institutional resources for faculty. The review process is an opportunity to learn and to share those discoveries across the College system. The following is the assessment process that will be utilized for program review:

**I. Process—**

At WETCC the review process involves two forms of review:

1. An annual update and report
2. A 3 year comprehensive program review

**II. The Annual Report—**

The annual report is written by program faculty and reflects the ongoing assessment of student learning relative to program goals. Its focus is on what students are learning and how that determination is made. The annual reports are more formative than summative and shaping program adjustments are based on learning. The annual report also provides an update with regards to programming and/or campus or community plans for which the program is involved. The annual report is an internal campus document submitted to the Academic Dean. It will be shared with the WETCC Leadership team.

### III. Implementation of 3-Year Comprehensive Program Review—

White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) will provide oversight for the program review process through the establishment of a three-year review cycle for all programming. In the inaugural years (2014-2017), all programs will participate in the program review process. This review process will consist of internal and external alignment of programs and of review and correction of all program academic data. After 2017, one-third of all programs will participate in review each year. The Faculty Senate will review each report, provide timely feedback through the review cycle, and support implementation of program improvement goals.

The Academic Dean in collaboration with the faculty in charge of programming will establish a review team composed of faculty senate, students, an external community member, and the Academic Dean. In the program's self-study, the program's faculty is responsible for assessing the program strengths, weaknesses, and to make recommendations for program improvement. The WETCC Program Review Form must be a part of the evaluative process. The purpose of the review process is to improve the quality and effectiveness of academic programs across the College system. Upon conclusion of the review, the program self-study, the team report, and their responses will be compiled and a summary report will be presented to the WETCC Leadership team.

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.

According to the Higher Learning Commissions Site Visit Report from December 2012, the evaluation team reported that WETCC's approach to assessment did not adequately meet the criteria necessary for full accreditation. In their report on pg. 18 section 3a, they state: "The development of the assessment of student learning plan is neither inclusive nor integrated into the infrastructure of the College to ensure coherent assessment of student learning throughout the institution." The HLC team identified the urgency to provide all degree programs with "Identified Program Learner Outcomes" as the process of "differentiating learner outcomes across course, program, general education, and institutional levels" had not been completed. This section also stressed the need for assessment to be "conducted routinely at multiple levels, such as course, program, and institutional. Thus limited **evidence** of student learning has been collected." Therefore, "with limited **data** generated" it is incredibly difficult to report for "accountability" with regards to advantageous changes in instruction and curriculum.

The WETCC Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes has the following purpose:

1. To meet the Higher Learning Commission and states level accreditation requirements;
2. To ensure that faculty has control over the student outcomes assessment process.
3. To collect data which serves as evidence of student learning;
4. To evaluate data to improve program and course effectiveness;

5. To annually review Program and Course objectives for clarity, consistency, and relevance.

An essential component of any assessment plan is to state clearly what students are learning and how the College knows they have learned it. Accrediting bodies require that faculty is clear and direct about what they want students to learn, and those expectations are communicated in the form of learning goals and objectives. Therefore, learner goals and objectives are the core of the assessment plan. Those learner outcomes evolved over time, but are woven into every facet of the college and student learning. We want our students to “carry into the future the way they have been given.” We want the college to be in the community to serve the next generation of learner. We have diligently worked to assure that assessment processes are woven into the fiber of who we are as an institution assuring an education for generations to come.

A significant reason for the progress in assessment is due to the substantial participation of faculty, administration, and all staff on campus. Every individual recognizes that in some way, shape, or form, they contribute to the WETCC learner. The WETCC learner Outcomes evolved from asking the question: “What does the WETCC learner look like as they walk across the graduation stage?” Piles of post it notes were compiled into data that was then given to faculty. From those conversations we worked collaboratively to take those concepts and weave them into the learner outcome and rubric document we have today. Those learner outcomes not only reflect the WETCC learner, they reflect history, challenges, trauma, joys, community, but more importantly, they reflect learning and the learner that walks across our graduation stage. The college acknowledges that assessment was once an area of weakness; however, from that seed of weakness grew something of incredible strength. We discovered who we are and we are determining a path of assessment that illustrates that to others.

**Core Component 4C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to education 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.

WETCC has found that setting goals for these areas is particularly complex and delicate. Unlike many mainstream institutions of higher education, tribal colleges for the most part, share a common characteristic with regard to the student population reflecting the contemporary realities of extreme poverty and continued negative educational experiences – all encompassed under the umbrella of historical trauma. These complex issues create unique features to goal development and implementation. Using Anishinaabe values to address these realities is the most appropriate way to develop goals related to retention, persistence and completion for WETCC. The five student learner outcomes (based on the seven Anishinaabe teachings) are used to frame the development and implementation of goals.

During the summer of 2014, the Marketing and Enrollment Management Committee began developing more informed and suitable goals for student retention, persistence and completion to be used in overall Strategic Enrollment Management as is demonstrated by the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP). A combination of national trends for Native American’s in Higher Education and WETCC student enrollment patterns from 2008 to 2014 were used to create more appropriate goals for the College. Charts of goals and objectives related to student retention (a specific definition and measure for persistence is in the process of being developed as part of the SEMP) and completion rates are included below. For the full explanation of goals and objectives see the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan with data and summary narrative of national trends.

**Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Goal #1 – Increase Overall Enrollment to 250 by 2019**

| Objective  | Activity   | Measurement (Expected Result)   | Responsible College Employee(s)  | Recommendations for change during implementation  |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Objective #1:</b><br/>Increase Enrollment by 40 students per year.</p> | <p>The Enrollment and Marketing Committee will perform the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number and frequency of high school visits.</li> <li>• Increase Outreach teams engagement with community members and activities.</li> <li>• Work closely with Marketing and Branding Committee to develop Outreach materials that contain consistent and informative messages.</li> <li>• Research the categories of community members that are under-represented College.</li> </ul> | <p>Increase number of High School Students, Transfer students and GED students who attend the college by 38. Counts will be taken each fall to determine whether objective has been reached.</p> <p>Increase the number of PSEO students by 2 every year.</p> | <p>All Campus<br/>Driven by the Enrollment and Marketing Committee and Outreach Team: Office of Admissions, the Financial Aid Office, the Registrar’s Office, the Student Counselor, the Student Liaison, a faculty representative and a student representative.</p> | <p>Implement Fall 2014 after Enrollment and Marketing and Student Retention and Support Committee complete their Higher Learning Commission Work.</p> |

**Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Goal #2 – Increase Retention Rates of All Students to 80% by 2019**

| Objective  | Activity  | Measurement (Expected Result)  | Responsible College Employee(s)   | Recommendations for change during implementation |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Determine best definitions and practices of student retention and persistence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Retention and Support Committee will develop a plan for increasing and defining retention and persistence during spring 2015.</li> <li>Enhance existing processes as needed.</li> <li>Develop new processes as appropriate.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase retention rates 3% per year.</li> <li>Measured every fall and spring using fall semester as the place for increase.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Campus driven by Student Retention and Support Committee.</li> </ul> |  |

**Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Goal #3 – Increase Completion Rates to 80% by 2019**

| Objective                                  | Activity  | Measurement (Expected Result)   | Responsible College Employee(s)  | Recommendations for change during implementation |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Increase completion rates of all students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Retention and Support Committee will develop an understanding of the College's completion rates.</li> <li>Develop appropriate completion rates model specific to WETCC.</li> <li>Enhance existing processes as needed.</li> <li>Develop new processes as appropriate.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase completion rates 10% per year.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Campus driven by Student Retention and Support</li> </ul> |  |

2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

The College consistently collects information on Student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs for submission to yearly reports such as IPEDS and AIMS. During Fall 2014 a large amount of data, some of which dated back 10 years, was collected and sent to the American Indian College Fund. For the purpose of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, the Registrar collected and analyzed information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs from 2008 to 2014. These data were analyzed for patterns and used to create many of the goals associated with the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

The information gathered on student retention, persistence, and completion rates is used to assist the College in making improvements. Short term and long term goals based on the data can be found in the WETCC Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

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).

The College uses the most commonly used definitions of student retention, persistence and completion. This has predominantly been the result of submission requirements. The College is currently investigating other definitions that might be more appropriate to our student realities. These other definition will be additions to IPEDS and AIMS, which will still be maintained for reporting and comparison purposes.

## **Summary**

### **Strengths:**

- The college's five learning outcomes
- The College's Assessment Plan, particularly for curriculum and programs
- Faculty Senate process is strong and has developed the learner outcomes, assessment plan and processes

### **Challenges:**

- Adjuncts do not participate in course level assessment as often as they should.
- There are programs on the books with no faculty in charge of developing them (Business, Human Services, Education/Early Childhood).
- There is very little data utilization and planning. It is just in the beginning stages.

## CRITERION FIVE. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

**Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. White Earth Tribal and Community College resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. WETCC plans for the future.**

During the past two years, WETCC has faced challenges. By staying true to the mission, WETCC has moved into a new journey focusing on the future. This section will demonstrate that WETCC is grounded by the institution’s mission, vision, and values. Evidence presented in the core components of this section will support WETCC has sufficient institutional resources, structures and processes to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

### **Core Component 5A. 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.

WETCC receives the largest portion of Revenue from Federal sources. Tribal contributions are also a major funding source. Tuition and fees have had fluctuations over the past few years. The fluctuation is due to temporary funding of particular degree/consortium programs such as Nursing and Teacher Education. With the current Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) in place, WETCC is anticipating steadily increasing Tuition and Fees.

| Revenues                          | 2010      |     | 2011      |     | 2012      |     | 2013      |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|
| Tuition and Fees                  | 199,914   | 4%  | 4,651     | 0%  | 8,392     | 0%  | 63,529    | 3%  |
| Federal Intergovernmental Revenue | 3,597,352 | 76% | 3,391,061 | 70% | 3,179,142 | 75% | 1,422,756 | 61% |
| Other Intergovernmental Revenue   | 87,231    | 2%  | 82,069    | 2%  | 57,127    | 1%  | 59,620    | 3%  |
| Private Foundations               | 180,207   | 4%  | 632,221   | 13% | 236,497   | 6%  | 133,301   | 6%  |
| Miscellaneous                     | 148,025   | 3%  | 114,410   | 2%  | 180,623   | 4%  | 90,984    | 4%  |
| Tribal Contribution               | 541,439   | 11% | 594,000   | 12% | 600,000   | 14% | 575,000   | 25% |
|                                   |           |     |           |     |           |     |           |     |
| Total Revenue                     | 4,754,168 |     | 4,818,412 |     | 4,261,781 |     | 2,345,190 |     |

Table 3: WETCC Total Revenues, 2010-2013

WETCC receives direct funding from:

- Department of Education - Title III
- Department of Interior -Bureau of Indian Education
- USDA

- White Earth Nation contributions
- State of MN – specific grant based
- Foundations – specific grant based

WETCC receives indirect funding through financial aid. A majority of revenue generated from tuition and fees is received from student’s financial aid. WETCC is authorized to process financial aid from:

- Title IV (Pell and FESOG)
- State of MN ( MN Grants, MN Indian Scholarships, and MN Child Care)
- Scholarship (Tribal scholarships – White Earth, Mille Lacs, Red Lake, etc.; American Indian College Fund; and other private funds)

Congress enacted PL 95-471 “Tribally Controlled Community College Act.” Congress passed the Act to provide operational support to Tribally Controlled Colleges. The operational support is based on student FTE at an approved rate per FTE. Over the past several years, WETCC has regularly received this funding.

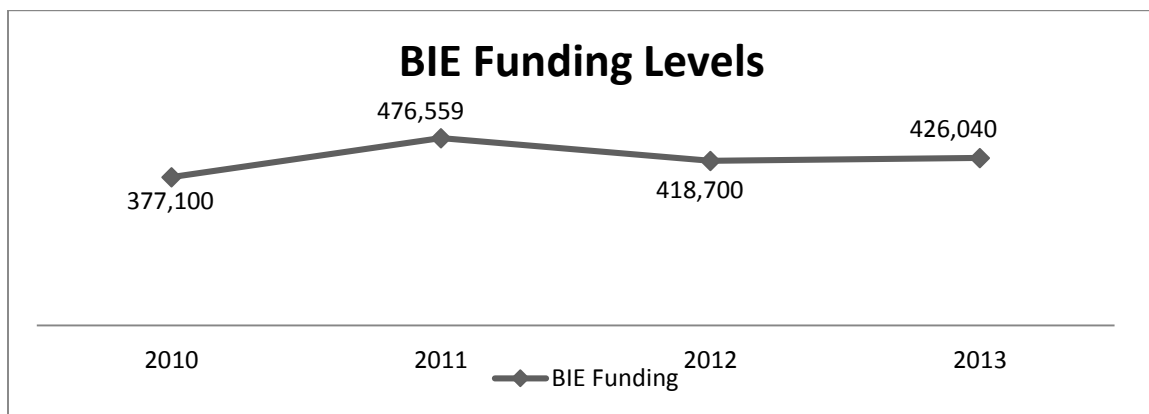


Figure 6: Bureau of Indian Education Funding Levels, 2010-2013

Recently, the State of Minnesota enacted statute 136A.1796 “Tribal College Supplemental Grant Assistance” (TCSGA) which is similar to the federal PL 95-471 “Tribally Controlled Community College Act.” The objective of the program is “To provide financial assistance to tribally controlled colleges to support the education of students enrolled at the colleges who are Minnesota resident students but not enrolled members of a federally recognized Indian tribe.” This is new funding for WETCC. The 2013-14 TCSGA payment was \$45,209 (8.53 FTE non-beneficiary students @ \$5,300 per annual FTE).

Public Law 103-382 (“Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994”) stipulates tribal colleges, designated as “1994 Institutions” are entitled to receive certain benefits. WETCC has received the designation of “1994 Institution” as a Land Grant college. With this designation, WETCC receives funding from the USDA.

WETCC is designated as a Land Grant college. With this designation, WETCC receives funding from the USDA. The WETCC Extension program is fully funded through USDA and Private Foundation funding. WETCC has never had to contribute Unrestricted Revenue.

One of the requirements of the “Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994” was for the Secretary of Treasury to establish an endowment. The interest from the endowment fund is distributed to “1994 Institutions” accorded to an established formula. WETCC receives an annual interest payment from the endowment fund which can be used for supporting:

- Curricula design and instructional materials
- Faculty Development and preparation for teaching
- Instruction delivery systems
- Student experiential learning
- Student Experiential learning
- Equipment & instrumentation for teaching
- Student recruitment and retention

The White Earth Nation is very supportive of WETCC. The support is demonstrated through White Earth Nation’s substantial appropriation to WETCC. The appropriation is used for administrative and overhead costs not allowable under federal and state awards. The contributions have been consistent, in approval and amount, over the past several years.

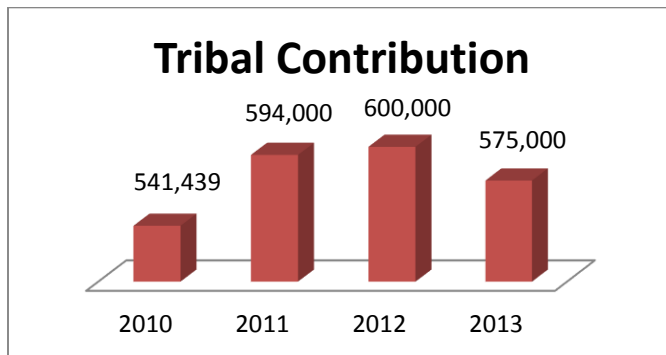


Figure 7: *White Earth Tribal Council Appropriations, 2010-2013*

In reviewing the WETCC Total Revenues Chart, 2010-2014, (Figure 5-A), it appears WETCC funding has been unstable. Total Revenues decreased from 2010 to 2014 by \$2.4 million but the revenue chart alone does not explain the operations. The Net Assets over the same period (2010 to 2014) increased by \$2.5 million (\$1.985 million increase in Invested Capital; \$78,420 decrease in Restricted Assets; and \$720,000 increase in Unrestricted Assets). This reflects a major revenue decrease which was from special funding received for a capital project that was complete 10/01/12. This also reflects normal operations which had a total profit of \$660,202 over the period from 2010 to 2014.

| Net Assets - Change over 4 years                | 2010      | 2013      | Change 2010-2013 |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| Invested in capital assets, net of related debt | 2,549,629 | 4,534,909 | 1,985,280        |
| Unrestricted                                    | 217,564   | 877,766   | 660,202          |
| Restricted                                      | 78,868    | 448       | (78,420)         |
|   |           |           |                  |
| Total Net Assets                                | 2,846,061 | 5,413,123 | 2,567,062        |

Table 4: WETCC Net Assets – Change over 4 Years, 2010-2013

Although governmental appropriations may be volatile, WETCC’s primary funding sources (BIE, Title III, USDA, Tribal Appropriations, etc.) have been stable for several years. This is demonstrated by the increase in Unrestricted Net Assets. WETCC does not anticipate any major reductions or disruptions in the primary funding sources.

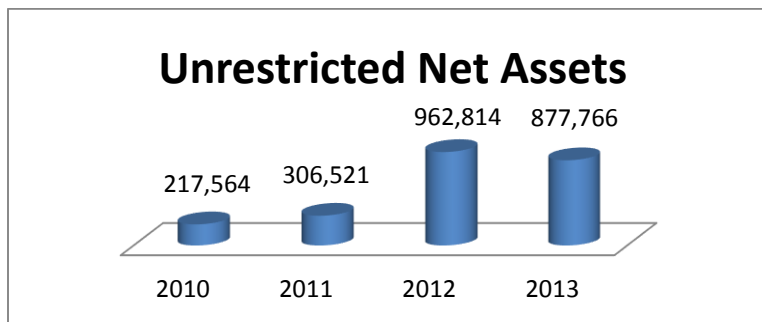


Figure 8: WETCC Unrestricted Net Assets, 2010-2013

WETCC has maintained adequate cash on hand to meet its obligations. The excess cash on hand for FY2012 was related to construction of the main campus.

| Audit Report              | FY 2010   | FY 2011   | FY 2012   | FY 2013   |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$399,011 | \$427,862 | \$938,422 | \$498,001 |

Table 5: Cash and Cash Equivalents, 2010-2013

WETCC has sufficient human resources to support operations. This can be demonstrated by the budgeted amount dedicated to Human Resource expense and “Student-to-Faculty Ratio.”

WETCC has continued to increase the amount budgeted for human resources. Over a four year period, WETCC increased the percentage of expenses for human resource compared to total expenses by 10%.

| IPEDES Data                                  | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| % of Human Resource Expense to Total Expense | 45.8%   | 46.6%   | 56.4%   | 56.5%   |

Table 6: *IPEDES Data, Human Resource Expense to Total Expenses, 2009-2013*

WETCC’s “Student-to-Faculty-Ratio” for 2012-13 was 7.54 and for 2013-14 was 7.33.

WETCC’s physical and technological infrastructures are sufficient to support operations. WETCC has a Master Campus Plan ([WETCC Master Facility Plan](#)). Over the past few years, WETCC has been able to complete Phase I and II of the plan.

Phase I focused on WETCC’s mission “dedicated to educational excellence.” Phase I concentrated on the student and the delivery of programs. The construction included class rooms, computer lab, and small library. Technology is accessible throughout the campus. All the classrooms are connected to WETCC’s network and have the technology available for faculty to teach in multiply ways.

Phase II focused on WETCC’s mission “through provision of a culturally relevant curriculum.” Phase II concentrated on space for cultural identity. The construction included a “Drum Hall” and kitchen. The space allows WETCC to welcome students and community on the campus for traditional feasts, gatherings, celebrations, and ceremonies.

Administration and Student Service also have adequate technology to provide support to WETCC’s faculty and students. The remote locations (Student Service and Administration buildings) are connected to WETCC’s network by fiber optic lines. This allows access from the remote locations to WETCC’s accounting software; emails; and student automation system (CAMS Enterprise).

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.

WETCC is organized and guided by the seven teachings of the Anishinaabeg. The teachings translate to truth; courage; respect; right; love; wisdom and humility. The governing documents and structure of WETCC was created to ensure the institution is drawn to these values in managing and decision making. The teaching of Gwayakwaadiziwin drives the allocation of resources and distribution of revenues.

*The literal translation of “Gwayakwaadiziwin” is to be correct or straight in everything that we do. If an individual lives the value of gwayakwaadiziwin, she must do what is right for the group and hold herself and others to high standards of integrity.*

WETCC’s mission statement is the road map followed when making decisions. The mission statement defines what is right “educational excellence” for the group “students, staff, community and industry as partners.”

The teaching and mission is exhibited in WETCC’s Charter Article VI Limitations. Article VI Limitations specifically states that “No part of the net earnings of the college will inure to the benefits of, nor be distributed to, its members, trustees, officers of other private agencies...” Article VI prevents the Council of Trustees (COT), governing body; White Earth Tribal Council, chartering authority; or other entity from making legal claims on WETCC resources.

The Council of Trustees (COT) does not receive anything of value such as compensation, dividends, stipends, or other benefits for fulfilling their responsibilities as a member. COT members are only reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred when working on behalf of WETCC such as travel, meals, professional development, etc.

3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources, and opportunities.

WETCC strives to accomplish its mission, vision, goals, and teachings through a collaborative organizational structure, a strategic planning process, and an established budgeting process.

Staff and faculty were given the opportunity to review the mission statement in May 2014. Proposed mission statements were presented to the COT and to the faculty and staff. From those conversations and meetings, it was determined that the current mission statement reflected who we are as an institution. Subsequently, the WETCC Council of Trustees reaffirmed the College mission/vision/purpose/value statements at its June 10, 2014 regular meeting. All trustees were in agreement that these statements fit our institution well, reflecting the balance of liberal arts, emphasis, and response to our community. (1A.1)

WETCC has sufficient resources to advance the goals incorporated into the mission statement, vision, goals, and teachings. This is demonstrated by the steady increasing Unrestricted Net Assets, cash balances, and increasing funds dedicated to human resources. (5A.1)

As an example, WETCC has taken advantage of the opportunity to apply for the Title III strengthening institutions funding. Effective October 1, 2010, WETCC was awarded two grants under the authority of Title III the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Each grant is for a period of four years at a funding level of \$500,000 each.

The community WETCC serves is stricken with high unemployment and poverty. To sustain tuition and fee revenue, WETCC participates in Title IV funding, state, and tribal financial aid. A majority of our students are fully funded.

Recently the College has been in a phase of transformation, self-evaluation, and improvement. This has strengthened the College and better prepared it to meet the needs and expectations of its constituencies. As the College moves forward, it will be guided by an updated WETCC Strategic Plan (2015), an Institutional Assessment Plan (Ongoing), a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, the WETCC Technology Plan, a Professional Development Procedures Manual, the WETCC Emergency Response and Evacuation Plan, a Facilities and Maintenance, and a Master Campus Plan, all which to create a formalized roadmap for College operations. This transformation has been initiated in an inclusive manner allowing opportunities for feedback. These improvements are realistic in light of the College’s organization, resources, challenges, and opportunities.

4. The institution’s staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

All WETCC full-time and adjunct faculty are qualified to teach the courses to which they are assigned. See Table listing WETCC faculty and their qualifications (Criteria 3.C-2).

Each semester, before classes begin, the Academic Dean reviews the qualification for each instructor to ensure they are qualified to teach the assigned course(s). A list of course(s) assigned to each adjunct faculty or permanent full-time faculty is printed. The Academic Dean verifies each course assigned against the credentials in the employment file kept in the Human Resource Office. The Academic Dean signs the list confirming the credential were check and the faculty is qualified to teach the courses listed. The signed list is kept in the employment file of the adjunct faculty or permanent full-time faculty

WETCC President and Department Directors are all adequately qualified.

| Name    |          | Title  | Qualifications   |
|---------|----------|--|--|
| First   | Last     |  |  |
| Terry   | Janis    | President                                      | B.A. Macalester College<br>M.Ed. Harvard University<br>J.D. University of Arizona  |
| Deborah | McArthur | Special Projects / Acting Development Director | B.A. University of Alaska<br>M.Ed., University of MN-Duluth<br>Institute of Applied Management and Law, Inc. – Certificate in Business Management  |
| Landa   | Moore    | Director of Finance                            | Interstate Business College - 2 year Accounting Diploma<br>Continuing Education - University of MN-Crookston (111.67 credits toward 120 credits B.A. Accounting)<br>Accounting Experience - 26 years<br>Accounting / Financial Management - 15 years |

|               |                 |                              |   |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Karen</b>  | <b>Branden</b>  | Dean of Student Services     | Ph.D. Sociology, South Dakota State University<br>M.S. North Dakota University  |
| <b>Sheila</b> | <b>Michaels</b> | Academic Dean / Faculty      | B.A. Minnesota State University Moorhead<br>M.A. English Literature, California State University<br>Divinity Education, PLTS and Luther Seminary-Ordained |
| <b>Steven</b> | <b>Dahlberg</b> | Extension Director / Faculty | B.A. English/Psychology Excelsior College<br>Ph.D. Meteorology, Texas A&M University<br>M.S. Natural Resource Management, North Dakota State University   |

WETCC is committed to professional development for all employees. In the summer of 2014, all Directors discussed professional development with employees under their supervision. Professional development for each employee was documented on the Performance Evaluation form, "Goals & Objectives". Professional development is sustained by budgeting \$53,800 in FY 2014 for professional development/continuing education. WETCC has "Professional Development Request / Tracking Procedures" to ensure all employees have access to the professional development.

5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

WETCC operating budget is made up of unrestricted funds and Title III funding. WETCC has broad budget policies/procedures in the "Fiscal Policy Manual." WETCC is transitioning from a Manual/Handbook style policies to an indexed policy system. When the budget process is transitioned to a formalize policy, it will result in a comprehensive budget policy with detailed procedures. The Finance Committee will be addressing the budget policy/procedures before the FY2016 budget process starts.

Due to the dysfunction in last few years and no active Finance committee, the budget process was led primarily by the Director of Special Projects. The process followed has been comprehensive in regards to obtaining input; adhering to chain of command; attaining approval, and realistic to WETCC economic conditions. The Director of Finance and Finance committee will be actively involved in the process for FY 2016 budget.

The budget process begins an initial budget meeting between the Director of Special Projects and Department Directors as well as with their department staff. The WETCC employee can range from a department director to a person responsible for a specific segment of a department such as Librarian. The segmented budgets do not included payroll, utilities, or overhead costs.

During the initial meeting, the budget format is distributed to the employee along with documentation regarding previous year's budget / expenditure comparison. Discussion are held regarding any overall budget reductions; line item budget increases/decreases;

organizational goals and specific department goals relating to fulfilling the WETCC mission, etc.

The employee leaves the initial budget meeting with the information and begins to formulate their budget. During the process of formulating the budget, the employee makes specific plans attaching costs. During the whole process of making plans and formulating the budget, the employee is free to gather information and/or resources from department directors, coworkers, other colleges, professional organization, etc. The end result is a segment budget completed in the budget format.

During the time the segment budgets are being developed, the Director of Special Projects meets with each department director to discuss anticipated increases/decreases to staffing levels. The Director of Special Projects also meets with Director of Finance to establish costs for overhead and utility, and expected revenue from tuition/fees; grants; tribal appropriations; and private organizations.

Six to eight weeks after the initial budget process, the Director of Special Projects gathers all the information and creates department and organizational budgets. This process usually involves additional meetings before the organizational budget is ready to be presented to WETCC President. Once the President gives approval, the budget is presented to the COT Finance and Audit Committee. After the budget passes the COT Finance and Audit Committee, it is presented to the entire COT for approval. The final step is approval by the COT. The entire process has several levels of approval which may require budget revisions.

Periodically, The Director of Special Projects manually prepares segment reports comparing actual to amount budgeted for each line item. The Director of Special Projects reviews the reports for irregularities and then distributes to the employee responsible for the segment budget. Depending on the amount of irregularities, a meeting may be requested.

The manual reporting process comparing expenses to budget was cumbersome so it was not always done on a regular basis. To help improve reporting, the fund structure for FY 2015 was revised. The new structure gives the Finance Department the ability to print reports directly from the accounting software for segments, departments, funding source or all in one.

The Director of Finance prepares a monthly report for the Council of Trustees (COT). The report compares the amount budgeted per month and YTD with actual monthly and YTD expenditures. The Director of Finance also attends all COT meetings to give a direct verbal report and to answer questions.

**Core Component 5B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.**

President, Terry L. Janis, M.Ed., J.D., was hired and began his tenure as President on April 21, 2014. The establishment of a clear and stable leadership structure has been a priority for President Janis. A new organizational chart ([WETCC Organizational Chart](#)) was developed and approved by the Council of Trustees with Departments and Department Directors in Finance, Development, Academic Services, Student Services, and Extension. Department Directors were appointed and hired with clear lines of authority over programs, budget and staff. This new organizational structure has, in short order, provided our College community with structure and assurance of sound planning, adherence to policies and procedures, and effective teaching and learning. It also has the added benefit of more people being involved in the leadership process.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

We have noted earlier in this report that the Charter establishing the College vests full authority over the College in the Council of Trustees. Under the By-laws of the Council of Trustees, Article I. Powers and Authorities of the Council of Trustees, the Council has the authority to employ, provide overall direction and to evaluate the performance of, and/or terminate the employment of the President, who shall have the power and authority, through established policy and procedure, to manage the day-to-day affairs and operations of the College.

The Council of Trustees is responsible for policies and procedures required for effective governance, administration, implementation and evaluation of programs, resources, faculty, staff, budget, services and other operations of the WETCC. The information and data needed by the COT to carry out these responsibilities is collected and reported through the President on a monthly basis via the following Departments:

- The Finance Director prepares monthly reports for the Trustees and attends all meetings to give a direct verbal report and to answer questions.
- The Academic Dean, Dean of Students and Director of Extension provide monthly reports that detail student counts, academic progress and programmatic results.
- The Special Projects/ interim Development Director provides monthly reports that detail grants management, development opportunities, communications initiatives and facilities management.
- The Leadership Committee/Team, consisting of all department directors (Finance, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Extension, Information Technology, and Development) meets with the President on a weekly basis to review all issues on campus and with a particular focus this last year on completing a comprehensive policy review. New policies are developed at the Committee level and brought first to the Leadership Committee for review and edit. Edits are referred to the

relevant Department for conferral. The Leadership Committee provides a final review and approval before it is referred to the COT Policy Committee. The Policy Committee reviews and edits the policy statements and are then reviewed again by the Leadership Committee before being conferred to the COT. COT then reviews, edits and makes a final determination to approve or reject the policy.

The COT has formed several oversight committees: Fundraising Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, Policy and Human Resources Committee, Marketing and Public Relations Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and the Social and Cultural Committee. Each of these COT committees is headed by one Trustee member. Given the focus of our accreditation efforts the Finance and Audit Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Policy and Human Resources Committee have been their primary focus.

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.

WETCC is an institution founded and guided by inclusion each and every one. WETCC clearly demonstrates its commitment to involve each and every one through the words included in the mission statement “...in partnership with students, staff, community, and industry.” WETCC’s ensure its mission statement is visible throughout the campus and community.

As one of the first tasks undertaken as WETCC President, President Janis evaluated the organizational structure. The evaluation was done through the following mechanisms:

- Reviewing WETCC’s governance documents –
  - Charter
  - Bylaws
  - COT minutes
- Gathering and studying WETCC current operational documents –
  - Organizational Chart
  - Personnel Policy and Producer Manual
  - Academic Catalog
  - Other pertinent policies and procedures
- Obtaining WETCC Faculty and Staff input
  - Conversations with staff responsible for different functions regarding the actual processes and procedures followed during the daily function of WETCC
  - Holding all staff meetings
- Networking and attending meetings in the community
  - White Earth Nation quarterly meetings

The evaluation resulted in several changes and/or reaffirmations in WETCC processes, policies, and operational structures to ensure WETCC stakeholders have the ability to give input.

- Revised Organizational Chart with clearer structure of responsibilities and authority lines approved by COT on May 13, 2014. A clear organizational chart establishes a distinct chain of command and enables efficient flow of information to/from governance.
- Reaffirmation of Committee structure to engage all WETCC administration, faculty, and staff participation in policies and procedures governing WETCC. At an All Staff meeting was held on May 20, 2014, President Janis presented the committee structure explaining their purpose and expectations. All employees were asked to volunteer for at least one committee of their interest. Committee members are inclusive, not exclusive.
- The Leadership Team (consists of department directors, IT, Special Projects and President) has been delegated as the mechanism for review and evaluation of the effects of policy and/or procedure brought forward through committees regarding operations of WETCC before presented to COT.
- The President's report to COT includes input from Department directors through monthly Department Director reports.

Established policies and procedures used to obtain input and evaluate WETCC governance:

- Approved "By-laws of the Council" explaining each COT members responsibility in the governance of WETCC
- "By-laws of the Council" require membership of a Student representative appointed by the Student Senate.

COT meetings are open to the public and notices of meetings are posted throughout the WETCC campus.

3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

WETCC has reaffirmed a college Committee structure. Committee meetings date/time were distributed to all staff and membership is open. The committee structure allows involvement from all employees.

Through the Committee structure a system has been developed to create or revise policy/procedure and bring forward committee identified ideas, concerns or noteworthy events. The structure involves input from all authority levels and departments. Below is an example of the effective structure for contribution and collaboration for policies/procedures:

WETCC is in the process of transitioning from Manual/Handbook style policies to an indexed policy system (As an example, [WETCC Policy 3.404 – Financial Aid Code of Ethical Conduct](#)). The transition is needed but a huge undertaking involving all areas of operation. To accomplish this, committees have been assigned relevant areas.

Committees or faculty senate meet on a regular basis. During their meeting policy/procedure are discussed. The committee determines if a policy should be created, revised, or in need of further clarification. The outcome (new, revised or unclarified policy) is put on the Leadership Team meeting agenda. At the Leadership Team meeting, the outcome is presented by a designated person and/or through documentation. A discussion is held. The outcome is either sent to the COT for approval or returned to the committee. Outcomes not approved by the COT are returned to the Leadership Team for clarification and/or edits. The Leadership Team either makes them or returns to the committee. Any outcome returned to a committee for review can be amended and begin the process again.

Both WETCC Student and Faculty Senates are incredibly active and meet on a weekly basis. Each is responsible for articulating a clearly defined line of authority, the development and implementation of bylaws that define roles and responsibilities of member while reflecting a governing structure aligned to mission, vision, and teachings, to establish policies and procedures utilizing institutional processes for proper implementation, and are supported by channels of communication that assure shared governance for both faculty and student. Meeting minutes are recorded with the appropriate individual and serve as evidence based documentation.

Other established methods for involving stakeholders input for setting academic requirements, policy, and processes:

- Annual Student, Employee and Community surveys
- All staff meetings
- Monthly COT meetings open to the public with meeting dates and times posted
- Membership for student representative on COT

#### **Core Component 5C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.**

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

In alignment with WETCC's mission, the College's planning process is linked directly to the budgeting process, through the Finance Committee. The College has developed a process by which direct input is sought from all functions of the College, from the maintenance staff to our faculty to student services. A Calendar of Financial Events has been established that is used as a guide for conducting various tasks that relate to the budgeting process, to enrollment realization, to staffing issues, among other related and significant planning events.

As described in the 2014 Employee Satisfaction Survey, findings were generally positive about the College's financial resources and satisfaction in its management.

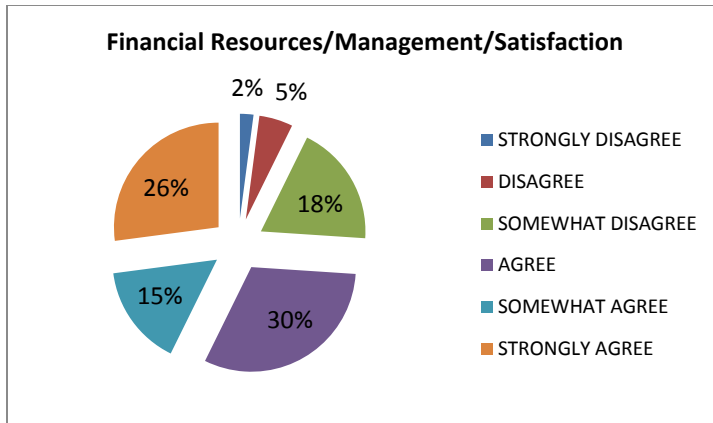


Figure 9: 2014 Employee Satisfaction Survey-Financial Mgmt Satisfactiion

As revealed in the 2014 Employee Satisfaction Survey, findings were generally positive with regard to participation in the budgeting process for their respective positions and departments.

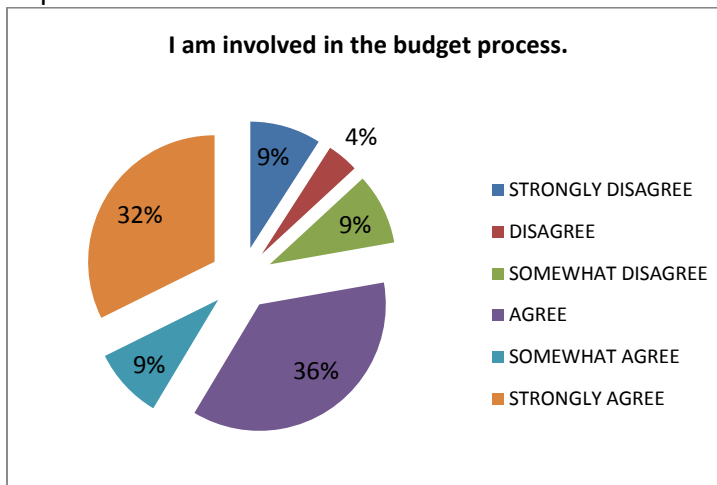


Figure 10: 2014 Employee Satisfaction Survey-Budget Process

2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

We have noted earlier how defining our student learner outcomes has framed and driven our assessment, evaluation, planning and budgeting processes. The WETCC Learner Outcomes is the mechanism by which we link these processes. The detail presented infra on our Assessment Plan, our Enrollment Management Plan and our Budgeting Process show the Learner Outcomes imbedded in each process. Also key to integrating these processes of assessment, evaluation, planning and budgeting is the coordinating role of our Leadership Committee and the utilization of a calendaring system that coordinates all these activities into a coherent process with clear assignment of deadlines and responsibility.

The WETCC Leadership Committee consists of the Directors of the five WETCC Departments (Finance, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Extension, and Development) IT and the President. Each of these Department Directors have responsibility within their departments, to manage human resources and staffing issues, program management, financial expenditure, grant management, assessment, evaluation, planning and development. At the base of their success is the establishment of sound staffing relationships where each staff knows their job responsibilities, performance review schedule and wage scale position. In support of the success of our staff, WETCC completed a campus-wide wage scale policy for each position, established a campus-wide job description review and established a campus-wide performance review calendar.

Each Director completed a performance review with each of their staff over the summer of 2014. Adjunct faculty performance reviews are completed as part of their academic assessment process. These performance reviews refined and clarified job descriptions with detailed list of responsibilities, negotiated and agreed to any wage adjustments, and came to common understanding of performance and capacity building objectives for the 2014-15 year. An important outcome of this process is the implementation of a coordinated assessment, evaluation, planning and budgeting process at the staff and departmental level. Equally important is a significant increase in communications and coordination capacity and a growing unity and cohesion amongst all staff and faculty.

These lines of communication and coordination come together at our weekly Leadership Committee meetings. The WETCC Leadership Committee is the primary coordinating body for assessment, evaluation, planning and budgeting.

An additional tool for management and linkage of our assessment, evaluation, planning and budgeting processes is our AEP (Assessment Evaluation Planning) Calendar by which we coordinate an annual, integrated processes of continuous assessment, evaluation, and planning. In the AEP Calendar we identify specific dates for completion of these core activities with specific assigned responsibilities:

- Assessment is calendared on semester-based data collection requirements.
- Evaluation for academic learning and programmatic reviews are conducted at the end of each semester.
- Planning processes that take data and evaluations with program-level and institution-level community input and SWOT assessments are conducted preliminarily at the end of the fall semester and cumulatively at the end of the spring semester.
- Each of these processes informs our annual budgeting process that begins in April.
- All of these efforts culminate in an annual evaluation and update of our Strategic Plan.

3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

The recent history of planning at WETCC has consistently and actively sought out the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups. A 2010-2012 WETCC Institutional Plan had been developed based upon WETCC's institutional purpose statements (4) along with supporting goals and objectives. A progress report to the HLC in the areas of financial management, implementation of the strategic plan, collecting and analyzing student learning data, and aligning mission and goals, vision and values with outcomes were reviewed and accepted in July, 2011. The College subsequently conducted an UPDATED Institutional Plan 2010-2012 Progress Report Summary in July, 2012 and further aligned the strategies with related HLC Criteria. The July, 2012 reported findings showed that all strategies were either completed or making satisfactory progress.

We have noted earlier that in our current planning process our Student Learner Outcomes are the base for development of our Assessment Plan, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Annual Budgeting Process, Master Facility Plan and subsequently a Draft Strategic Plan. Each of these products was produced with intensive dialogue and debate. We received considerable input from faculty, staff, students and community at every stage. Combining these processes with a strategic planning community survey and external review of demographic, economic, employment and educational data we have produced a draft Strategic Plan 2015-2020 to guide our process moving forward.

We are aware that this is not a complete Strategic Plan, but it is a realistic representation of our internal debates. We will finalize our WETCC Strategic Plan no later than the spring of 2015 with a comprehensive environmental assessment, community input, and SWOT Analysis. We will then immediately follow up with an Institutional Development Plan that takes our strategic priorities and establishes clear and effective development and implementation strategies.

The planning process comes out of the institution as a whole. Our draft Strategic Plan emerges from our core focus on our students with a focus on assessment and evaluation. We will take the appropriate time to make sure this draft Strategic Plan is fully vetted by our external constituent groups and that it reflects the most current data and trends in employment, demographics, economy and educational factors.

4. The institution plans on the basis of 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.

WETCC planning starts with a budgeting process described in 5A.5. During the budgeting, the previous fiscal years data is evaluated. The evaluation is done by the Director of Special Projects in partnership with the Director of Finance with participation from Department Directors and employees responsible for budget segments. Example of items evaluated:

- Enrollment – Over / under budget with any known explanation and anticipated future enrollment.
- BIE FTE Count – Over / under budget with any known explanation along with calculation of expected funding for next fiscal year.
- Abnormal expenses when compared to budget with review of detail to determine the cause for the current fiscal year and expectation in the future.
- Staffing levels budgeted to actual – Identify position that were not filled or positions added that were not reflected in the budget.

To assist with ensuring resources are available to meet obligations, actual to budget comparison reports are distributed to COT, President, Department Directors, and employee responsible for segments. The reports reflect amounts over/under budget per line item and in total. The information is used to guide future expenditures.

Spending levels are regulated and controlled through the use of the Purchasing Policy utilizing the Purchase Requisition form and the hiring procedures utilizing the Personnel Action Form. Both Business Office forms require signature of the Department Director and Grant Project Director before any financial obligation can be made. The Department Director and Grant Project Director are both responsible to ensure the funds are available to meet the financial obligation before signing.

The Director of Special Projects and Director of Finance evaluate the budget for cross the board budget cuts due to enrollment; change in federal and/or state funding levels; large extraordinary expenses. The budget in the accounting software is changed to reflect any institutional budget cuts. This enables the Department Directors to better monitor their resources. All revisions of WETCC's operating budget require approval by the COT.

The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan describes enrollment potential and fluctuations based on demographic variables. This information is used to set goals for enrollment, student retention and completion. This will help stabilize tuition and fee revenues.

WETCC has controls in place to respond to fluctuations in sources of revenue.

5. Institutional planning anticipating emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

In the short time-frame that we have been engaging institutional planning we have appropriately focused on our primary mission – our students. We have done a fair amount of work to assess and anticipate emerging factors which we list below, but we are aware that we need to do more. Our plan is to complete this external review in February and March 2015 and complete a full final WETCC Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 in April 2015.

Our efforts at external reviews have consisted of the following activities:

- Contracted with a Professor Edward Minnema at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Ed Minnema is an assistant professor in the UMD Native American Masters in Governance program with extensive economic development planning experience with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. His report is included but it fails to give an adequate analysis of employment and market trends and does very little to assess trends in other similar educational institutions. This will be a focus for our efforts in February and March 2015.
- Development of a proposal to the Department of Labor for establishment of degree programs and technical training in the fields of health and hospitality has presented a thorough analysis of economic, employment, demographic and educational trends. This data has been very useful in supporting our draft Strategic Plan and will be a model of the types of data we will gather for the spring 2015.
- The 2014 Economic Plan for the White Earth Nation provides an excellent economic assessment of the White Earth reservation with data-based demographic, employment, economic and market trends that directly affect our strategic planning process.
- SWOT analysis by the WETCC Assessment committee that includes participation of committee members and a Business Services Specialist from MN DEED. This analysis is included in the text and conclusions of our draft Strategic Plan.
- Comprehensive committee reviews as shown in the minutes of our WETCC committees organized to our HLC self-study report. These minutes reflect our internal perspectives primarily, but they are inclusive of reviews and discussions of relevant external factors.
- A series of community events where we coordinated face-to-face conversation around a hand filled survey. The events included 10/29 Halloween party, 11/3 WETCC Student Senate meeting, 11/3 meeting with the White Earth Tribal Council, 11/4 meeting with WETCC Faculty Senate, 11/4 meeting with WETCC Veterans Organization, 11/5 Community Appreciation event, 11/7 Niibi/Mahnomen and Anishinaabe Studies planning meeting, and 11/10 meeting with all WETCC staff, faculty and students.
- An on-line survey hosted by Survey Monkey. The combined total of survey responses was 86 and are an important part of our draft Self Study.

**Core Component 5D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.**

As stated in the Introduction (page 8), the Anishinaabeg people of Northwestern Minnesota have historically lived a community-based culture whose traditional activities are seasonally determined. Education is a life-long process wherein all students become teachers as they move through the life cycle. The educational process begins with encouraged observation, starting very early in life (depending upon the activity), moving to an extended apprenticeship where questions and modeling are valued. Families reinforce learning through storytelling and illustrative query.

With this in mind, WETCC has historically not been strong in the actual documenting of evidence based decision making. WETCC has operated by the typical Anishinaabeg style. In a typical Anishinaabeg environment (home, work and school), decisions are made through group discussions where each member of the group shares their knowledge and experience regarding the subject matter. During the discussion, each member bases their knowledge and experience on evidence they have been exposed to but the evidence is not necessarily in writing or follows a formalized process.

WETCC is changing this historical pattern by emphasizing cultural and historical strengths of the group process and the seven Anishinaabe Teachings in the process of evaluating data gathered. From this, WETCC will develop an evidence based decision making process for each department and the institution as a whole.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

WETCC uses the following tools to gather information:

- Employee Performance Evaluations (includes staff, faculty and adjunct faculty)
- Employee Satisfaction Survey
- Community Survey
- Student Survey
- Course Level Assessment
- Program Level Assessment
- Annual and Three-Year Evaluation and Planning
- Salary/Wage Analysis

The Finance Director prepares monthly financial statements on a Cash Basis. The financial statements include monthly and YTD expenses compared to monthly and annual budgets. The financial statements, cash report and budget narrative is presented at the monthly COT meetings.

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.

A salary/wage analysis was completed during the summer of 2014. The analysis using the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) as the data tool, compared comparable positions for the region. From the data, a proposed Employee Pay Scale with different scenarios was developed. During the same time a Faculty Pay Scale was also developed based on a percentage of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU's) Salary Schedule. The pay scales were used during the budgeting process. The final Pay Scales used to prepare the 2015 budget took into account regional competitiveness and WETCC financial resources.

An Employee Performance Evaluation has been completed for all staff. The evaluation contained sections for Supervisor's Comments; Employee Comments; and an attachment

for Goals & Objectives. The evaluation performed was the first step in developing standard evaluation process with set dates. The process will encompass the previous year's Comments and Goals & Objectives. The HR Committee has been working on pieces of the process with a completion date of January 1<sup>st</sup>.

The results of the Employee Satisfaction Survey were distributed to the HR Committee on September, 30, 2014, and Leadership Team on October 22, 2014. In January 2015 the HR Committee will discuss and develop a plan to address areas of deficiency and improvement.

The Finance Director attends monthly COT meetings and presents the Financial Statements. Large or unusual expenditures are discussed regarding future needs and possible preventative solutions.

Upon completion, the annual audit is presented at a regular COT meeting by the public accounting firm and the Finance Director. The Finance Director is responsible for implementing corrective actions for all finding found during the audit. During an all staff meeting, the Finance Director gives a summary of audit findings along with any expected changes.

## **Summary**

### Strengths:

- Commitment to building intellectual capacity through Professional Development plan and budget
- Ability to meet all financial obligations and debt
- An organization chart and committee structure that engages communication and participation in policies and procedures governing WETCC

### Challenges:

- Strategic plan has not been implemented currently in draft form
- Effective process for collecting data and assessing, for evidence based decision making
- Absence of a WETCC development plan to guide stability for the future

### A. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

#### 1. Conflict of Interest Policy

White Earth Tribal and Community College has a conflict of interest policy that ensures that the Council of Trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff act in the best interest of the institution.

Trustees, faculty and staff are all bound by the same [Policy 4.604 - WETCC Conflict of Interest Policy](#) which states: “All decisions made in the course of their professional responsibilities by members of the Council of Trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff at WETCC are to be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interest of the College.”

The purpose of this policy is to provide a mechanism for:

- Identifying conflicting relationships.
- Informing those with a need to know about conflicting relationships through disclosure.
- Taking remedial steps to protect the interests of all concerned.

#### 2. Ethics Policies for Faculty and Staff

White Earth Tribal and Community College has ethics policies for faculty and staff regarding conflict of interest, nepotism, recruitment and admissions, financial aid, privacy of personal information, and contracting.

Besides the conflict of interest policy outlined above, WETCC’s hiring policies include [Policy 4.111 – WETCC Nepotism Policy](#). The open and ethical recruitment and admissions of students is covered by [Policy 5.607 – WETCC Student Admissions Policy](#) which states “It is the policy of WETCC that the submission of an application for admission to WETCC represents a voluntary decision on each student’s part to participate in the programs by WETCC pursuant to its policies, rules, and regulations. The College’s acceptance of the application represents the extension of a privilege to join the college community and to remain a part of it, as long as the required academic and conduct standards are met.”

As stated in the WETCC Personnel Policy Manual, the College’s Personnel Policy is based upon the seven teachings of the Anishinabeg and the values of the College. Every staff employee of WETCC has a part in the educational research and service effort of the institution. It is an effort, which can best be carried out within a harmonious employee relationship. As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the institution has adopted the policy of providing equal employment opportunities without discrimination to all applicants and employees regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, or marital status. This statement can be found in the 2008 WETCC Personnel Policy Manual, pages 1-2.

In complying with the above standards, in its hiring procedures, WETCC nevertheless gives preference to enrolled White Earth Tribal members and descendants, and other enrolled Indigenous peoples.

In addition, [Policy 3.404 - WETCC Financial Aid Code of Ethical Conduct](#) states “The Higher Education Opportunity Act, 20 U.S.C. §§1001 et seq. (HEOA) requires every institution participating in federal financial aid programs to adopt a code of conduct applicable to financial aid personnel. In addition, as members of the National Administrators (NASFAA), WETCC financial aid personnel adhere to the NASFAA Statement of Ethical Principles and principles specific to the financial aid profession. Consistent with the requirements of the HEOA and the NASFAA Statement, WETCC and its financial aid personnel are required to comply with this Financial Aid Code of Ethical Conduct. Financial aid personnel are also required to abide by other relevant policies. The underlying principles of ethical behavior in each of these policies are similar. The Code of Ethical Conduct for Financial Aid Personnel applies these common underlying principles of ethical behavior to the specific circumstances that may arrive in financial aid operations.

Student personal information is protected by adhering to FERPA guidelines that are affirmed by [Policy 6.122 – WETCC Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) Policy](#). In addition, WETCC follows established protocols for proper data storage. Ethical guidelines for contracts and purchasing are described in the [Policy 3.406 - WETCC Purchasing Policy](#).

### **3. Information for College Employees and Students on Their Rights and Responsibilities**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College provides its students, administrators, faculty, and staff with policies and procedures informing them of their rights and responsibilities within the institution.**

WETCC publishes [Policy 6.102 - Students Rights and Responsibilities](#) on its webpage and in its academic catalog for its students. The College also informs students of their rights under FERPA during orientation and will include this information in the First Year Experience course beginning spring 2015. The 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog ([WETCC Students with Disabilities, page 55](#)) states” “WETCC shall make reasonable accommodations to ensure access to programs, services, and activities as required by law. Access means that a qualified individual with a disability will not be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the programs, services, or activities, nor will the individual be subjected to discrimination.”

WETCC informs its administrators, faculty, and staff of their rights and responsibilities within the WETCC Personnel Policy Manual and their respective position descriptions. The College’s Personnel Policy Manual is based upon the Seven Teachings of the Anishinabeg and the values of the College. Every staff employee of WETCC has a part in the educational research and service effort of the institution. It is an effort, which can best be carried out within a harmonious employee relationship. As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the institution has adopted the policy of providing equal employment

opportunities without discrimination to all applicants and employees regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, or marital status.

#### **4. Information on Procedures for Complaints and Grievances**

White Earth Tribal and Community College provides clear information regarding its procedures for receiving complaints and grievances from students and other constituencies, responds to them in a timely manner, and analyzes them to improve its processes. Students have access to the Student Grievance Policy ([Policy 6.109 – Student Grievance Policy](#)) on the college’s website, [www.wetcc.edu](http://www.wetcc.edu), under Student Life, by clicking the Grievance Form tab.

Students are informed about the complaint and grievance process during student orientation by the Student Liaison. A flowchart of the complaint and grievance process is on display through the main campus building, in student services, and in the Human Resources office. The newly structured Student Complaints and Grievances Committee will address all student complaints and grievances, resolve them in a timely manner, track them anonymously in a student complaint log, and complete an annual review of all complaints and grievances to identify ongoing patterns or underlying issues that need to be addressed.

#### **5. Complete and Clear Information to the Public**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College makes readily available to students and to the general public clear and complete information including:**

##### **a. statements of mission, vision, values, purpose, and learner outcomes**

WETCC’s Mission documents including the Mission Statement, the Vision Statement, Seven Anishinaabe Teachings, Purpose Statements, and WETCC Learner Outcomes are readily available on the College website. This information is published in the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog (<http://www.wetcc.edu/academic-catalog.html>) and is posted throughout campus facilities. The mission, vision, and Anishinaabe teaching are also included on outreach materials distributed to community members during activities such as high school visits, college and career fairs, and community events.

##### **b full description of the requirements for its programs**

WETCC’s 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog ([WETCC Degree Programs, pages 11 - 16](#)) available for download through the website lists all programs offered and the courses required (<http://www.wetcc.edu/academic-catalog.html>). Faculty advisors and the Academic Dean are available to explain and field questions for students and community members related to program requirements.

##### **c. requirements for admission**

WETCC publishes its admission requirements and application procedures in the 2014/2015 Academic Year Services Catalog and on its website on the APPLY NOW! Tab. Student application packets and information are also available to students and the

general public at WETCC Student Services Building located at 701 East Jefferson Avenue in Mahanomen. Materials are also distributed during high school visits, college and career fairs, and community events.

**d. policies on acceptance of transfer credit, including how credit is applied to degree requirements**

[Policy 5.611 – WETCC Transfer of Credit Policy](#) defines the criteria that will be considered when evaluating transcripts for transfer, including transfer courses that have comparable course objectives to those defined in the WETCC syllabi, minimum grade necessary to be accepted, and consideration of transfer courses that may substitute for required degree core courses or required general education courses.

After a transfer student has been admitted to WETCC, official transcripts will be evaluated for transfer credits. The following criteria will be considered when evaluating transcripts for transfer:

- 1) Transfer courses that have comparable course objectives to those defined in the WETCC syllabi.
- 2) Only college level courses with a “D” or better will be accepted.
- 3) Most vocational courses will not transfer to WETCC degree programs 5.611 -
- 4) Some transfer courses may substitute for required degree core courses or required general education courses by means of a substitution form. Substitution forms are available at Student Services and should be submitted to the registrar. They will be reviewed by the Faculty Senate for approval/denial.
- 5) Quarter credit hours are transferred in at 0.667 semester credits.

This process may not be completed until after registration. Questions regarding transfer credit evaluations should be directed to the Academic Dean. If a student is not satisfied with the transfer credit evaluation and explanation, they can appeal with the following process:

- 1) The student completes and submits an Academic Appeal Form, which is available at Student Services.
- 2) Supporting materials such as course syllabus, course description, course reading list, etc. must be included.
- 3) The information and supporting documents shall be submitted to the Academic Dean.
- 4) The Academic Dean will review the appeal with the Faculty Senate and the Registrar. A final written decision will be issued to the student within ten (10) business days.
- 5) Transfer students must take a minimum of 20 semester hours at WETCC in order for students to graduate from WETCC.

**e. all student costs, including tuition, fees, training, and incidentals; its financial aid policies, practices, and requirements; and its policy on refunds**

Students and community members are informed about costs through the WETCC website by accessing or downloading the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog, pages 30-32; the College's [Tuition Refund Policy](#) is on pages 30-31, Financial Aid Policies on pages 34-46 and the refund policy on pages 31-32. This information will be addressed as part of the First Year Experience course beginning in spring 2015.

**f. policies regarding academic good standing, probation, and dismissal**

WETCC's policies on satisfactory academic progress, academic probation, and expulsion are disclosed in the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog, ([WETCC Academic Success, pages 47-48](#)).

**g. a full list of its instructors and their academic credentials**

WETCC posts a list of all full-time and adjunct faculty along with their credentials and courses taught on the WETCC website in the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog on pages 25-26.

**h. its relationship with any parent organization (corporation, hospital, or church, or other entity that owns the institution) and any external providers of its instruction.**

White Earth Tribal and Community College has no relationship with any parent organization.

**6. Accurate and Complete Public Data**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College assures that all data it makes public are accurate and complete, including those reporting on student achievement of learning and student persistence, retention, and completion.**

The College consistently collects information on Student retention, persistence, and completion for submission to yearly reports such as IPEDS and AIMS. During the fall of 2014 a large amount of data, some of which dated back 10 years, was collected and sent to the American Indian College Fund. For the purpose of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan the Registrar collected and analyzed information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs from 2008 to 2014. These data were analyzed for patterns and used to create many of the goals associated with the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

The College uses the most commonly used definitions of student retention, persistence and completion. This has predominantly been the result of submission requirements. The College is currently investigating other definitions that might be more appropriate to our student realities. These other definition will be additions to IPEDS and AIMS, which will still be maintained for reporting and comparison purposes.

To further address student learning and success indicators, assessment tools and data collection points are being identified, developed, implemented, and evaluated. Student

portfolio data is currently being collected with the goal of aligning student levels of learning with the WETCC Learner Outcome Rubric to identify skill levels from introduced to capstone on a 1-4 scale. As data is obtained and evaluated, the information becomes foundational in the continuous improvement cycle where student learning and success are the drivers for course and program improvement.

### **7. Accurate Descriptions of Relationships with the HLC and Other Accreditation Agencies**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College portrays clearly and accurately to the public its current status with the Higher Learning Commission and with specialized, national, and professional accreditation agencies.**

The College clearly and accurately represents its status with the Higher Learning Commission through its Public Disclosure Statements under the “ABOUT US” tab on its website. The Higher Learning Commission link is also clearly presented on the college’s home page at the bottom left.

WETCC currently has no programs eligible for specialized accreditation.

### **8. “Public Members” on Council of Trustees**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College Council of Trustees and its executive committee, if it has one, include some “public” members.**

The WETCC Council of Trustees is comprised of nine members, (7) voting members and (2) non-voting members (Two trustees appointed from the seated White Earth Reservation Tribal Council who hold non-voting membership advisory appointed membership positions on the WETCC Council of Trustees). All nine members are considered public members because the two non-voting members who are seated on the Tribal Council are elected. According to the Higher Learning Commissions description of public members in the *Assumed Practices within the Criteria for Accreditation Worksheet A* page 3. “All publicly-elected members or members appointed by publicly-elected individuals or bodies (governors, elected legislative bodies) are public members.”

The seven remaining voting members fulfill categories 2 through 7, which are delineated in the Council of Trustees By-laws under Article II. Membership of the Council of Trustees. According to the by-laws, at least five of the members are enrolled or lineal descendants of the White Earth Reservation.

### **9. Authority of the Council of Trustees**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College Council of Trustees has the authority to approve the annual budget and to engage and dismiss the chief executive officer.**

The WETCC Council of Trustees represents the collective voice of the community as it translates needs and expectations of these members into policies of the College. The Council is the final decision-making authority of and for the College.

Under the By-laws of the Council, Article I. Powers and Authorities of the Council of Trustees, the Council has the authority to approve the annual budget and financial management systems governing the College’s resources. As well, the Council has the

authority to employ, provide overall direction and to evaluate the performance of, and/or terminate the employment of the President, who shall have the power and authority, through established policy and procedure, to manage the day-to-day affairs and operations of the College.

#### **10. Documentation of Outsourcing Agreements**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College documents outsourcing of all services in written agreements, including agreements with parent or affiliated organizations.**

White Earth Tribal and Community College is independent and does not have any agreements with any parent or affiliated organizations.

#### **11. Taking Responsibility for the Ethical Behavior of Contractual Partners**

**White Earth Tribal and Community College takes responsibility for the ethical and responsible behavior of its contractual partners in relation to actions taken on its behalf.**

A process for developing appropriate contractual relationships has been developed and will be discussed at Leadership for approval

### **B. Teaching, and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

#### **1. Programs, Courses, and Credits**

**a. White Earth Tribal and Community College conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: 60 semester credits for associate degrees, 120 semester credits for bachelor's degrees, and 30 semester credits beyond the bachelor's or master's degree. Any variation from these minimal program length must be explained and justified.**

The college conforms to the commonly accepted minimum program length for semester credits for an associate's degree. Furthermore, the website (<http://www.wetcc.edu/degrees-offered.html>) and the current college catalog downloadable and accessed on the website (<http://www.wetcc.edu/academic-catalog.html>) state that associate degrees at WETCC require at least 60 credit hours. WETCC does not offer bachelor's or master's degrees.

**b. White Earth Tribal and Community College maintains structures or practices that ensure the coherence and quality of the programs for which they award a degree. Typically institutions will require that at a minimum 30 of the 120 credits eared for a bachelor's degree and 15 of the 60 credits for the associate degree be credited earned at the institution itself, through arrangements with other accredited institutions, or through contractual relationships approved by the Commission. Any variation from the typical minimal requirement must be explained and justified.**

The WETCC website and the current college catalog state that students must take a minimum of 20 semester hours/credits in order to graduate from WETCC. The reason for the 20 credit requirement instead of the minimum 15 is due to the ease of transfer into the MnSCU system and to be in line with MnSCU requirements. Most of our students transfer into a MnSCU institution.

**c. The institution’s policy and practice assure that at least 50 percent of courses applied to a graduate program are courses designed for graduate work, rather than undergraduate courses credited toward a graduate degree.**

WETCC does not offer graduate programs.

**d. The institution adheres to policies on student academic load per term that reflect reasonable expectations for successful learning and course completion.**

WETCC adheres to [Policy 5.617 WETCC Academic Load and Class Standing Policy](#), which states the following:

**Academic Load**

The normal credit load for a regular full-time student is 12-16 credits. The minimum number of credits for full-time student status is 12 credits. The maximum credit load for a student on probation is 12 credits.

Students may enroll for a maximum of 18 credits, without overload approval. A student who desires to take more than 18 credits must petition the Academic Dean to request approval of the overload. A student who carries an overload must hold a cumulative GPA of 3.0.

The normal (Niibin) session credit load is 6 credits. A student with a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher may increase the Niibin credit load with permission of the Academic Dean.

**Class Standing**

| <u>Class Standing</u> | <u>Semester Credits Earned</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Freshman              | 30 or fewer semester credits   |
| Sophomore             | 31 to 60 semester credits      |

**e. WETCC courses that carry academic credit toward college-level credentials have content and rigor appropriate to higher education.**

The College’s general education courses are aligned with parameters established by the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) assuring ease of transfer for WETCC students. Additionally, the process of articulation with other institutions of higher education such as, Minnesota State University Moorhead, University of Minnesota Crookston, University of Minnesota Morris, University of Minnesota Duluth, Bemidji State University, assures appropriate content and rigor through the acceptance of the WETCC Associates of Arts in its entirety. The WETCC’s AA degree is accepted, and is applied toward state college and universities’ Bachelors of Arts degrees.

**f. WETCC has a process for ensuring that all courses transferred and applied toward degree requirements demonstrate equivalence with its own courses required for that degree or are of equivalent rigor.**

The college process for ensuring equivalence involves official transcript evaluation by the Registrar. Courses that are intended to substitute WETCC courses for degree require a course substitution form to be directed to the Academic Dean for transfer credit evaluation. The transfer credit policy

is found on pages 28 and 29 in the 2014-2015 Academic Year Services Catalog which is available and can be downloaded at <http://www.wetcc.edu/academic-catalog.html>. The process compares syllabi and course objectives of similar courses. Grades of only “D” or better are acceptable for transfer. The policy is included in response to question 5a(d) above.

**g. WETCC has a clear policy on the maximum allowable credit for prior learning as a reasonable proportion of the credits required to complete the student’s program. Credit awarded for prior learning is documented, evaluated, and appropriate for the level of degree awarded.**

[Policy No. 5.613 – WETCC Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#) states WETCC gives credit for college-level learning gained in a non-credit or experiential setting. Students may receive four (4) credits for completing their basic military training. These credits will be listed as general elective credits.

Additional credit may be awarded depending on the type of training/education received. Evaluation of these credits will utilize the “Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces” and credits will be awarded as recommended by the American Council on Education.

Students may earn academic credit in certain college courses applicable to their program of study if they have gained skills and knowledge from previous education, job training, self-study, or occupational experiences. Examination, proficiency demonstration, and/or college-level experiential learning as documented by portfolio assessment may determine this competency. A maximum of 6 experiential learning credits will be awarded if competency is determined. These credits may or may not transfer to other institutions.

As described in the WETCC Credit for Prior Learning Policy, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations are offered and afford students the opportunity to obtain recognition for college-level achievement in five general areas, as well as numerous subject areas. In addition, the policy allows for a currently enrolled student in good standing to petition to challenge a college level course at WETCC. A challenge may be granted with the prior approval of the instructor and the Academic Dean. This is an approved change by WETCC faculty and the addendum will be sent to all students and attached to the 2015 Academic Handbook.

**h. WETCC maintains a minimum requirement for general education for all of its undergraduate programs whether through a traditional practice of distributed curricula (15 semester credits for an AAS, 24 for AS or AA degree).**

WETCC General Education Requirements are designed to provide a broad base of knowledge and cultural themes derived from an Anishinaabe worldview as well as the diversity and universality of human experience. Through this requirement, students gain exposure to basic Native and non-Native thought. Interpretations provided by various disciplines enhance the quality of participation in, and understanding of, the Ojibwe and global world.

WETCC does follow the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) as a benefit for students seeking to continue their education at a 4-year institution. Providing a general education using MnTC also fulfills the requirements of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education regarding associate degrees. The Minnesota transfer curriculum requirements provide a basis of 40 hours of general education courses (for a bachelor's degree) that must be completed at a grade level of "C" or higher before graduation or transfer. The college requires 40 hours of general education courses to be in line with the MnTC.

## **2. Faculty Roles and Qualifications**

**a. Instructors possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process that is used in the appointment process.**

The verification process for ensuring faculty qualifications has been updated and put into rigorous enforcement in the fall of 2014. It is conducted by the HR Office in collaboration with the Academic Dean. For new hires, both original transcripts and criminal background checks are required. The Academic Dean reviews all assurance materials. Adjunct faculty whose original transcripts are not obtained by the end of the first term of teaching are not rehired.

In some circumstances, traditional artists or elders with Anishinaabe knowledge or skills are hired to fulfill instructor roles adding to the cultural richness of experiential learning. These individuals are typically considered "elders" of the tribe and/or "experts" in their fields by commonly held belief structures of the tribe.

**b. Faculty participate substantially in:**

**1. Oversight of curriculum- its development and implementation, academic substance, currency, and relevance for internal and external constituencies.**

The exercise of authority over courses, student learner outcomes, learning resources, and faculty qualifications resides with WETCC in accordance with the expectations of the HLC. The Faculty Senate and the Curriculum Committee have the authority to review and approve curriculum of all programs. Furthermore, they are also responsible for the development, review, revision, and approval of academic and curriculum policies.

Participatory decision-making is aligned with the WETCC Mission, Vision, and Values and faculty governance has been significantly strengthened through the participatory process. Evidence of this includes, but not limited to the following: Establishing and approving the academic budget; program development, assessment, and revision; development of the 4-semester course calendar; academic policy development, review, and implementation; development and implementation of the WETCC Institutional Assessment Plan; participation in developing institutional documents such as the Faculty Handbook, the Adjunct Faculty Contract, and the WETCC Course Syllabus Template;

development of individual professional development plans; development of the WETCC Learner Outcomes which is utilized as a foundational tool for strategic planning and numerous others.

Faculty participation is essential to the everyday operations of the College and shared governance is more than a set of boundaries and rules that govern. Faculty has moved towards a shared responsibility responsible for identifying sustainable strategic directions in a participatory environment where open communication is encouraged and faculty members, administrators, and board members are collaborating to align and implement strategic priorities.

**2. Assurance of consistency in the level and quality of instruction and in the expectations of student performance.**

Within the context of WETCC policy and guidelines, the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, and expectations for student learning are all set by campus academic program leaders and are reviewed by Faculty Senate. In all cases, faculty plays a critical role in both the development and the oversight of curriculum.

Every WETCC academic program is required to establish expectations for student learning. Whereas the process for review is just through the approval stages, programs will be reviewed on a regular basis as required by the Program Review Policy. Through evaluation, improvement strategies linked to assessment data determines evidence of student learning appropriate to degree and program levels. Articulated expectations of student learning are required from all faculty. The WETCC Syllabus Template demonstrates the methodology for creating measurable course learner outcomes and objectives.

**3. Establishment of the academic qualifications for instructional personnel.**

Part of its commitment to valuing and supporting effective teaching and learning, and consistent with its accrediting body and MnSCU (Minnesota State College and University) standards, WETCC assures that faculty members are appropriately qualified in their disciplines relative to their responsibilities in teaching effectiveness, assessment, academic advising, scholarship, and service. A part of that assurance includes the verification that faculty hold the degrees appropriate to their disciplines or fields of study. See verification process discussed in section 2a above.

**4. Analysis of data and appropriate action on assessment of student learning and program completion.**

The Faculty Senate developed strategies to assess the quality of learning at WETCC at three levels: individual courses, discipline/program, and overall. At every level, the plan encourages faculty to continually ask questions about student learning.

Instructors assess students regularly and use the results to makes decisions about their curricula and pedagogies. Needed changes that are identified in this process may be instructional or they may necessitate support from the college. The assessment plans are designed to make this process

more transparent and data driven. Rather than imposing specific assessment strategies on faculty, it provides them with a consistent and coherent framework that encourages and supports initiatives that improve student learning. The plan is faculty-driven where the goal is transformative improvements to instruction and curriculum.

### **3. Support Services**

#### **1. Financial aid advising clearly and comprehensively reviews students' eligibility for financial assistance and assists students in a full understanding of their debt and its consequences.**

The financial aid office puts forth great effort towards meeting with each student every semester of their attendance to inform them of their individual financial situation, eligibility, funding opportunities, and their responsibility in the process. Although the college does not grant loans and are not required by federal law to do entrance and exit interviews on the loan and payback process, our office strives to meet with students as a form of financial counseling. During spring semester 2015 this process will become more formal as the Financial Aid Coordinator will meet with the First Year Experience students as a group to discuss financial matters such as FAFSA completion, eligibility, verification, attendance requirements and scholarship availability. As part of this process students will be required to meet with one of the financial aid specialists individually to go over their financial aid packages.

#### **2. WETCC maintains a timely and accurate transcript and records services.**

The registrar's office maintains a one to two day turn around on all transcript request services. This includes checking over the transcripts for accuracy.

### **C. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**

#### **1. WETCC instructors have the authority for the assignment of grades.**

WETCC instructors have the authority to assess and measure student performance which includes the preparation, administration, grading and evaluation of tests, papers, examinations, and the reporting of grades in a timely manner. This is described on page 10 of the WETCC Faculty Handbook.

#### **2. WETCC refrains from the transcription of credit from other institutions or providers that it will not apply to its own programs.**

The college does not include credits from other schools on its official transcripts.

WETCC accepts transfer credits from other institutions of higher learning as credits towards graduation. Transfer credits are evaluated by the Academic Dean and the registrar and credits applied to either the general education courses or into their program of study. Transfer students must earn a minimum of 20 credits at WETCC to graduate with and AA. [Policy 5.611 – WETCC Transfer of Credit Policy](#) defines the criteria that will be considered when evaluating transcripts for transfer, including transfer courses that have comparable course objectives to those defined in the WETCC syllabi, minimum grade necessary to be accepted, and consideration of transfer courses that may substitute for required degree core courses or required general education courses.

**3. WETCC has formal and current written agreements for managing any internships and clinical placements included in its programs.**

WETCC has a formal and current written agreement for managing internships included in the Business Program. This includes a field placement site at the Shooting Star Casino, located in Mahanomen, Minnesota. The goals of this internship are for the student to acquire familiarity with human resource operations in a casino environment, to develop an understanding of the internal structure of office procedures and methods, and to develop professional skills relevant to working in a human resource/office position.

**4. WETCC instructors communicate course requirements to students in writing and in a timely manner.**

WETCC instructors use the WETCC syllabi template for creating their syllabi and course outcomes. Instructors develop a course plan and syllabus for each of their courses using the template provided.

The WETCC Faculty Handbook outlines what information is required for a complete course syllabus. The course syllabus is given to the student at the beginning of the first class meeting and is intended to be an agreement between the instructor and the student for the semester. ([WETCC Faculty Handbook, pages 12-13](#)).

**5. WETCC institutional data on assessment of student learning are accurate and address the full range of students who enroll.**

To further address student learning and success indicators, assessment tools and data collection points are being identified, developed, and evaluated. Exit interviews for all 2015 graduating students will be completed prior to graduation providing data regarding their WETCC educational experience. Furthermore, Student Services will be contacting WETCC alumni to provide additional success indicators. This will be completed throughout the 2015-16 academic years.

**6. WETCC institutional data on student retention, persistence, and completion are accurate and address the full range of students who enroll.**

The college reports on student retention, persistence and completion in line with common practices of accuracy and student range. The common reporting sites include the National Center for Education Statistics (IPEDs), the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC—AIMS/AKIS), and this past year a rather large and unique report to the American Indian College Fund. The data represent the full range of students who enroll at WETCC.

## D. Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

### 1. WETCC is able to meet its current financial obligations.

Although governmental appropriation may be volatile, WETCC's primary funding sources (BIE, Title III, USDA, Tribal Appropriations, etc.) have been stable for several years. This is demonstrated by the increase in Unrestricted Net Assets. WETCC doesn't anticipate any major reductions or disruptions in the primary funding sources.

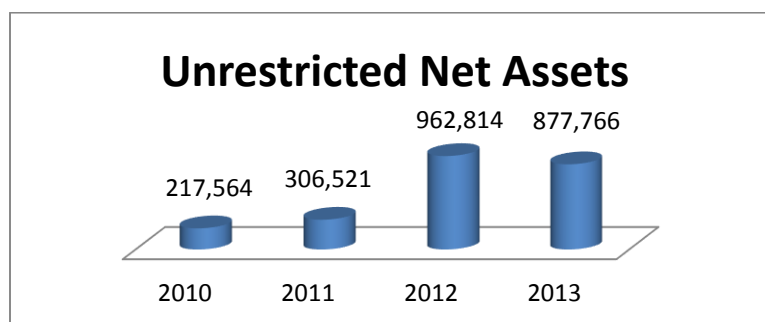


Figure 11: WETCC Unrestricted Net Assets, 2010-2013

WETCC has maintained adequate cash on hand to meet its obligations. The excess cash on hand for FY2012 was related to construction of the main campus.

| Audit Report              | FY 2010   | FY 2011   | FY 2012   | FY 2013   |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$399,011 | \$427,862 | \$938,422 | \$498,001 |

Table 7: Cash and Cash Equivalents, 2010-2013

WETCC has sufficient human resources to support operations. This can be demonstrated by the budgeted amount dedicated to Human Resource expense and "Student-to-Faculty Ratio." The College has continued to increase the amount budgeted for human resources. Over a four year period, WETCC increased the percentage of expenses for human resource compared to total expenses by 10%.

| IPEDS Data                                   | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| % of Human Resource Expense to Total Expense | 45.8%   | 46.6%   | 56.4%   | 56.5%   |

Table 8: IPEDS Data, Human Resource Expense to Total Expense

WETCC's "Student-to-Faculty-Ratio" for 2012-13 was 7.54 and for 2013-14 was 7.33.

WETCC's physical and technological infrastructures are sufficient to support operations. WETCC has a Master Campus Plan. Over the past few years, WETCC has been able to complete Phase I and II of the plan.

**2. WETCC has a prepared budget for the current year and the capacity to compare it with budgets and actual results of previous years.**

The College prepares an annual institution-wide budget every fiscal year. A budgetary process has been established that has encouraged departmental input in developing the budget. Each employee has some input into the budgeting process for their department.

**3. WETCC has future financial projections addressing its long-term sustainability.**

The College through its annual budget planning addresses the long-term financial sustainability by looking at necessary future expenditures (e.g. capital projects) as well as future revenue projections (e.g. tuition and fees, tribal appropriations, Bureau of Indian Education core funding).

**4. WETCC maintains effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using institutional information.**

WETCC is currently using CAMS for its Student Information Management Systems. The system is currently under review with possible conversion to Jenzibar to improve the college's ability to gather and utilize institutional data. The accounting software currently used by is Quick Books Pro. The College has purchased the Great Plains Dynamics business software and plans to transition to this system spring 2015. Survey Monkey is used to develop and collect data from employees, students, and community members.

**5. WETCC conducts an annual audit.**

The College undergoes an annual external audit by a certified auditing agency of its own financial and educational activities and maintains audited financial statements. In addition, the College meets the criteria established by generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as an independent reporting entity and the College's finances are not tied to any other entity or institution. (see criterion 5.A.2 for further information).

**6. WETCC administrative structure includes a CEO, CFO, and Academic Officer with appropriate credentials and experience and sufficient focus on the institution to ensure appropriate leadership and oversight.**

The College's organizational chart outlines the positions and responsibilities of the President (Chief Executive Officer), Chief Finance Officer, Academic Dean, Dean of Student Services, Development Director, and Extension Director. All positions are filled by individuals with appropriate credentialing and experience. All positions include a professional develop plan for continued education and training appropriate to the position. The leadership structure ensures appropriate leadership and oversight.

## CONCLUSION AND REQUEST FOR ACCREDITATION

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White Earth Tribal and Community College approached this process for reinstatement of full accreditation knowing that our current probationary status was appropriately sanctioned and that this is an opportunity to right our ship and truly build a college based on our Anishinaabe Teachings.

In observing Debwewin this self-study report presents our current status honestly from the core strength of our heart. We have shown you where we have taken action that meet the criteria upon which accreditation is based, where we have established a more solid base, and that we are in the process with a clear and concise completion date:

1. Our responses to the HLC Monitoring and Probation findings and our responses to the Observations from the 2012 Comprehensive Visit Report articulate direct action taken by WETCC in response to these findings.
2. Our actions taken in relation to Criterion One shows that our Mission defines the purpose of WETCC, is based on the core teachings and opportunities of this community, is broadly understood and articulated, and clearly reflects and articulates the diversity of this broader community.
3. We have shown in Criterion Two that the integrity of the organization is both ethical and responsible. We have shown a thorough policy review that engaged the participation of all staff and faculty, clear and open communication of programs and policy, a Council of Trustees that is autonomous, informed and engaged, and faculty, staff and students that are fully informed, engaged and committed to student learning.
4. Most importantly we have shown significant achievements in Criterion Three and Four. We have redoubled our efforts to assure and support quality teaching and to assess and evaluate our academic and service programs.
5. Finally, we have made significant advances in management and accounting of our financial base, we have established a clear strategy for integrated assessment, evaluation, budgeting, development and planning, and we have completed a draft Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2020 that will be finalized spring 2015.

The evidence presented in this self-study report indicates that, since the 2012 site visit and subsequent probationary status, WETCC has taken tremendous strides in accomplishing its goals. In fact, the evidence presented in this self-study document reveals an institution of higher education that is stronger and more resilient than at any time in its seventeen-year history.

### **Request for Reaccreditation**

As demonstrated in this self-study report, White Earth Tribal and Community College fulfills the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. Therefore, White Earth Tribal and Community College requests that the Higher Learning Commission reaffirms our accreditation.

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